

further explanation. That outlays were incurred for repairs and washaways is understandable, but the figures were not given by the Minister. The Minister admitted that the position of the State was better 12 years ago than it is now, and by implication, if not by direct statement, sought to place the blame on the Commonwealth. I am prepared to support that view to a large extent, but it is true, nevertheless, that we should do more to help ourselves. I hope that, when we listen to the figures and the statements next year, we will find that the greatest possible effort has been exerted to balance the finances. I regret the absence through sickness of the Premier and trust it will not be long before he has thoroughly recovered. We are so accustomed to seeing him in his place that the possibility of his being laid aside by sickness had not occurred to us. During the comparatively long period that I have been a member, I cannot recall his having been absent for any length of time through sickness. Evidently the Premier needs a good holiday and I hope he will have it. No one in this Chamber, or in another place, would do other than wish for the Premier a speedy recovery. We all wish to see him back in his old job—that is, so long as the present party remain in power—fit and well, and I hope he will have an opportunity to get well, which in my opinion will necessitate a respite from office cares.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 7.38 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 11th October, 1934.*

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

### QUESTION—RAILWAYS, CONTRACT CONDITIONS.

Mr. HAWKE asked the Minister for Railways: 1. What labour conditions, if any, are stipulated in contracts let by the Railway Department to private firms? 2. Are any of such conditions stipulated in the contract let for the raising of ballasting material for the Meenaar deviation work?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, The clause governing labour conditions reads as follows:—Tenderers to pay wages and comply with conditions of current Arbitration Court awards governing the industry, and to employ none but British workmen on the contract; also to comply with Tender Board conditions. The relative Tender Board conditions are:—Tenders from British subjects only will be considered, and it is a condition precedent to the acceptance of any tender that the successful tenderer shall employ only British subjects in the carrying out of the contract, and that if at any time he makes default in compliance with this condition, the Government shall be a liberty forthwith to cancel or determine the contract, and the contractor shall not be entitled to any compensation by reason thereof. For all work done in Western Australia under this contract, not less than the minimum rate of wages ruling in the district where the work is to be executed must be paid. The contractor shall not, without the express permission in writing of the Tender Board, employ or permit to be employed on any work in or appertaining to this contract any Asiatic or African labour; and such permission shall be granted only for special service or duty, and when it is proved to the satisfaction of the

Tender Board that such labour is absolutely necessary for the due completion and carrying out of the work of the contract. The contractor shall not employ or permit to be employed any person of enemy birth on any work in or appertaining to this contract. No contract or any portion thereof shall be transferred, assigned, or sublet without the written consent of the Tender Board. 2, Yes.

## BILL—TIMBER WORKERS.

### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [4.35] in moving the second reading said: This measure is no stranger to most of us; it has been before us previously. Although a somewhat similar Bill was passed in this Chamber, it was rejected by the Legislative Council. Briefly, the position is that, owing to a recent Full Court decision, timber hewers find that they do not come under the definition of "workers," within the meaning of the Industrial Arbitration Act and the Masters and Servants Act. Right up to the end of 1929, the hewers were mainly employed by the big timber companies and their working conditions were governed by a Federal Arbitration Court award. Their working conditions and rates of pay were thus regulated, and their position as workers under the two Acts I have mentioned was never disputed. That had been the position from my own knowledge for over 25 years. But when the Timber Workers' Union transferred from the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court to that of the State Arbitration Court, the State court issued an award that practically continued the then existing rates. All matters affecting what may be termed the payment-by-result system—that is, piece work rates and so forth—were dealt with by a board of reference that the State Arbitration Court set up for that purpose. Although the faller works out in the bush, just as the hewer does, his position has not been challenged. However, owing to two foreigners, one a contractor and the other a hewer, having an argument that resulted in the launching of court proceedings, the case was ultimately taken to the State Full Court where the point was raised that the timber hewer was not a worker within the meaning of

the Arbitration Act. The Full Court upheld that view and the next time the union approached the State Arbitration Court to secure improved conditions for the hewers, the same legal point was advanced, and the court held that they had no power to make provision for the working conditions governing timber hewers. It will be remembered that the Mitchell Government, in 1923, shortly after I entered Parliament, introduced legislation to extend the benefits of the Workers' Compensation Act to the timber hewers. At that time it was doubtful whether the timber hewers would be deemed to come under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act, and the Mitchell Government, over 11 years ago, introduced legislation to extend the provisions of the Act to them. The State Full Court decision, however, has upset everything, and the timber hewer has been left practically unprotected. I know the argument will be advanced, as it was when similar legislation was before the House on a prior occasion, that there can be no supervision over a timber hewer who, it has been contended, is his own master and his position really that of a contractor under piecework conditions. The point has also been taken that if the timber hewer is brought within the scope of the Acts I have referred to, all kinds of devious practices will be resorted to, and an employer will not know where he stands, with the result that there will be no safety in the relationship between the two parties. In fact, I presume it will again be contended that it is impracticable for the timber hewer to be classed as a worker. The obvious answer to such contentions is that the position has existed for over 25 years. When timber hewing was booming and the larger timber companies were employing many men, no difficulty was experienced to an extent greater than has had to be faced with quite a number of other classes of workers. That there is very little supervision possible over the timber hewer has to be admitted, but it matters little to the employer whether the hewer works hard or loaf half the day, because the worker is paid by results at piece work rates. If the employer, at a time when he is faced with the necessity to comply with contracts, finds that he is not securing the return of sleepers in sufficient quantities from a hewer, there is an obvious remedy for the employer. He need not employ the timber

hewer any more, but can get rid of him. The provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act have applied to the hewers during all the years I have mentioned, and I am afraid the difficulty arose as the result of the foreign element being introduced into the operations and after foreigners commenced to employ one another.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They increased the premiums tremendously.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I know, and the results of the introduction of the foreign element into these operations proved at the time anything but satisfactory. Members will recollect that when a Bill was introduced to amend the Workers' Compensation Act, it was on that score that I offered my services to the Government, although I was sitting in Opposition, in order to assist in tightening up the Act so as to deal with the abuses that had arisen. Everyone was aware at that period that the abuses did exist. That aspect has largely been overcome, because there is now very little approaching the volume of complaints that were voiced some years ago. Should there be any revival of those abuses—I do not think any useful purpose can be served by attempting to deny that the abuses did exist under the Workers' Compensation Act some years ago—members can rely upon the Government to take drastic action to remedy the position. It is that sort of thing that makes it so hard for the genuine man, and makes it hard for Parliament to provide decent legislative provisions for the employer and employee who are prepared to do a fair thing by one another. We will not be a party to the continuance of such abuses while in office, any more than we were prepared to approve of them when we were sitting in Opposition. We will not hesitate to take any drastic action required to overcome such a difficulty should there be a return to that type of practice. I do not think that element has been apparent to any extent during the past few years. The Bill merely sets out that the timber hewer shall be a worker within the meaning of the Masters and Servants Act and the Arbitration Act. That will make sure of his position under the Workers' Compensation Act. I do not wish to detain the House by enlarging on some of the abuses that have been inflicted on men since this decision of the Full Court was given, but

undoubtedly advantage has been taken of the situation, and the timber hewer has lost a considerable sum of money. I was approached, and I think a number of other members also were approached, at one period when, owing to the timber hewers not being able to get their money, a lot of them could not pay their storekeepers, many of whom were in a pretty tight financial position because they had financed the hewers while a big order was being executed: as I say, many members of the House were then approached to have the position remedied. If the faller can be supervised, and if his position under the existing law is sound, there cannot be much difference between the faller and the hewer, because both are employed away out in the bush far from the mills; and so it appears to me that what can be applied to the faller, can certainly be applied to the hewer, and therefore the hewer's position should be reinstated at what it was prior to the decision of the Full Court. Personally I think if the foreign element had not come into the industry the existing situation would never have arisen. The big timber firms were employing 100 per cent. of the hewers and there was always a perfectly good relationship between them. Now that the industry is reviving there is considerable activity, and the industry is brighter than for many years past, while the outlook also is favourable. So we wish to do a fair thing by the hewers, who are paid so much per sleeper or so much per load. Moreover, they are paid at the stump. They do not have to cart the sleepers in and sell them at the railway siding. They are paid out in the bush where they hew the sleepers, and so they are men selling their labour. They have only their broad axe; they do not have to invest in expensive plant; it is merely their labour that they sell, for their whole equipment consists of an axe. So it cannot be held that they in any way approach a contractor, who has to set up in business and perform a lot of functions in order to supply a commodity. The hewers merely sell their labour, undertaking to produce sleepers at so much per sleeper or so much per load, and sell them at the spot where the work is done. The Bill merely seeks to re-establish the timber hewer where he was prior to the decision of the Full Court. I will leave it to

the member for Forrest (Miss Holman) to give the details, if required, and show how the decision of the Full Court has inflicted many hardships on the men engaged in this calling; for there is a long list of hardships that can be told. A perfectly good case was put up when last the Bill was before us, and it was only on account of the lateness of the session when the Bill reached the Council that the measure was not agreed to. The Mitchell Government in 1923 acknowledged that the men were entitled to come under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act, and that Government put through a special Bill for that purpose. If there were any danger at all that the passing of the Bill or any similar Bill would inflict financial loss or hardship on the employers, that danger would arise under a workers' compensation measure; it would not arise in relation to piece-work rates, because the employer is not so much concerned there, since he pays only for what he gets. As I say, any financial risk that would be taken by the employer would be under a workers' compensation measure, and that has already been put through by the previous Government. I commend the Bill to the House, since it asks that a very simple thing be done, which is merely to put the hewers back into the position they occupied for 25 years and which they lost a couple of years ago. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham, debate adjourned.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1934-35.

### *In Committee of Supply.*

Debate resumed from the previous day on the Acting Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates; Mr. Sleeman in the Chair.

*Vote—Legislative Council, £1503:*

**MR. WISE** (Gascoyne) [453]: It is not my intention to deal particularly with the financial aspect of the Estimates, but rather to place before the House many vital matters affecting the State as a whole and the North-West in particular. I should like, even at length, to trace the history of that part of the State in an endeavour to show

that although progress can be said to have been made, and although industry is at present languishing, there is a remarkable opportunity even in the present depression of all the industries the North is capable of; and to point out that there is awaiting it a future of prosperity for the people therein, for the State and for the nation. In briefly tracing the historical development of the North, some matters in connection therewith are seen to be very interesting. The first knowledge of North Australia acquired by white folk was that of the Dutchmen who, in the 16th century, trading from the Indies to their homeland, sighted our coast. The member for Pilbara (Mr. Welsh) will be interested to know it is on record that before the 17th century the Dutchmen were aware of the existence of gold in Pilbara. It was mentioned by an early Dutch trader that the coast of Australia appeared to them to be decidedly unattractive, as were also the women inhabitants. In the century following that, we find that Flinders made particular mention of the uninviting inhospitable coast of North Australia; and Flinders, after the lapse of two centuries following the Dutchmen, in 1803, described it as a poor land afflicted by fever and flies, fit perhaps for a college of monks whose religious zeal might cope with the mosquitoes and the suffocating heat. From 1803 to 1841 very little was heard of it or very little advancement was made in the knowledge of North-Western Australia. But with the discovery of the Victoria River lands by the explorers King and Wickham, about 1840, there came the beginning of intense interest in that part of Australia by people within Australia and people overseas. Chiefly the interest lay in the very rich pastoral belt of the Victoria River, whence the Wyndham Meat Works even to-day draw a goodly part of their supplies. The disaster of Port Essington in North Australia is well known to all students of Australian history. It was following the failure of Port Essington that one Englishman described it as the most barren country God ever made, if indeed He had anything to do with it. However, in 1877 something happened to which I should like to draw the attention of the House. Many people, in discussing the possibilities and probabilities contained in the development of North Australia, regard the empty space therein as a

distinct menace and invitation to the yellow or some other coloured peril. It is interesting to find that in 1843, due to the efforts of Gladstone, most of North Australia was advertised in Singapore and the Near East as open to colonists. No response was made to the invitation. In 1877 the Japanese Government were invited by the South Australian Government to colonise North Australia. That, I am sure, will seem to most members a rather startling statement. It is fact. The South Australian Government, through one of their missionaries, a man named Hack, offered free transport to the first 400 colonists that Japan would send, and offered in addition any easy means of providing transport to the interior—in fact, they were prepared to give every facility to encourage the Japanese to colonise that part of Australia. That was in 1877. In February of the same year the Japanese Government said that they would treat any advancement to encourage people from that country to colonise Australia in a very hostile manner; if necessary, they would resent it by force. In the early eighties, when Alex. Forrest discovered the rich pastoral area of the Fitzroy, many Queenslanders were interested, on his return to Perth, in the glowing reports he made of that country. One of the families so interested was the Duracks, who were then in Western Queensland at Thylungra station. In fact, two members of that family journeyed to Perth to confer with Alex. Forrest concerning the possibilities of the Kimberleys, and it was due to the investigation and inquiries then made that the Durack family started that remarkable trek of cattle from Queensland to the Kimberleys. That was between 1880 and 1884. Another Queenslanders struck the first trail with 2,000 head of cattle and delivered them on the Ord River two years later. That was the foundation of the Kimberley cattle industry. On the 15th June, 1884, the first cattle station was formed on the Ord River by people and cattle from Queensland. The difficulties and dangers that those people faced can be well appreciated by everyone—not only the dangers from the natives but the dangers of an unknown country and the attendant natural diseases and the difficulties arising from isolation and lack of transport. It is a remarkable tribute to the country and to the people who have developed it under very adverse conditions that the North has been, and still is, an asset to the Commonwealth.

In spite of statements to the contrary, that is a fact. The North is a valuable asset to this State. I intend to show the capacity of the North and the future outlook for it. It is useless to harp on what could be done and should be done unless some possible solution is given. In the very early days, the Duracks and others were naturally interested in the sale of stock from their properties. They opened the trade to Manilla in the nineties, and that continued for many years. In those days Perth and the south-western districts and the goldmining centres derived their beef supplies from the Kimberleys. But with the development of the South-West they have lost those markets—markets that by right of priority were theirs. That is unfortunate for them, but it does not minimise the troubles they are experiencing to-day in not having a market for any of the produce that the country is so capable of raising. Before dealing at length with the beef industry I would like to dispel many notions that exist, even among some members here, concerning the climatic difficulties pertaining to the North. It is not necessary for me to dwell on the mighty chapters of early world civilisation, although they have some bearing on the development of the North and its climate, but it is only 600 years since, in the semi-arid countries of Europe, early civilisation had its birth. Only 300 years have elapsed since Britain became a first-class power, so that in the march of time the 50 years of occupancy of the North-West is really a very small matter. We should not be discouraged by the results achieved in that short space of time, but should make every endeavour to utilise the experience of the past towards securing some profit from future operations. The conquest of climate, as I have previously mentioned in this Chamber, particularly in tropical countries, resolves itself into a conquest of disease. No matter what argument may be advanced against the White Australia policy, I should like to insist that the greatest menace in any tropical country is not the climate but the natives and the coloured labour, regardless of whether the coloured labour be indigenous or not. Any one wishing to question the wisdom of the White Australia policy should delve into the history of the American colonies in the working of them by what is called cheap coloured labour. The lessons of history in

those colonies cannot be denied. Experience of our North, in common with other parts of tropical Australia, has been sufficient to show that all Nordic races find it a healthy place to live in. In comparing the tropical west and the tropical east of Australia, people who have not been fortunate enough to visit both sides of the continent cannot appreciate the serious differences that make serious difficulties. Eastern Australia, in the latitude of the Kimberleys, enjoys a rainfall of 80 to 200 inches per annum, which renders possible not only the industries that the land is capable of maintaining, but brings about an entirely different set of natural conditions. The North of Western Australia is primarily and essentially pastoral country. It has proved its capacity to produce the equal of the world's best beef without the introduction of fodder plants and under adverse conditions regarding the breed of cattle. It is a striking tribute to the North that, in the space of 40 to 50 years, it has been possible to turn off young stock  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years old weighing 450 lbs. dressed, although there has been no introduction of fresh blood since cattle were originally taken there in the eighties. That is surely a remarkable tribute to any country, however rich. Owing to the collapse of world prices, the outlook for the exportable margin of beef produced in the East Kimberleys particularly has made conditions for the pastoralists almost hopeless. For example, it is impossible to sell frozen beef in the markets of the world to-day. Actually frozen beef is a liability. It costs £4 per head to produce, and for it an average of under £3 per head is received at Wyndham. But if, with the advent of the chilling process, the markets of the world can be utilised to the advantage of the whole of the Kimberleys, a different prospect entirely confronts them. Chilled beef has meant much to every country that has embarked upon that form of marketing the product. The differences between frozen and chilled beef may for the moment be disregarded, but not until very recently, by the utilisation of carbon dioxide gas in the marketing of beef, has it been possible to land in the world's market fresh beef from New Zealand and Australia. That difficulty having been overcome, the prospects, granted that the requisite amount of money is made available for the development of the country, have

become tremendously bright. It is interesting to note the market that exists within the Empire. No less than 80 per cent. of the beef and veal entering the world trade is consumed in the British Empire. Only 20 per cent. of it is of Empire origin, and 3 per cent. of it has its origin in Australia. No matter how we regard the future of the beef industry, if the fullest consideration is given to the proper and profitable utilisation of our resources, the outlook is distinctly bright. But it is quite beyond the capacity of this State to handle it, although the State may be able to assist. The task may be beyond the capacity of the Commonwealth, but if the so-called empty spaces are to be made productive areas, it is certainly an Empire matter, particularly when 80 per cent. of the world's beef and veal finds a market within the Empire. Chilled beef has revolutionised the industry throughout the world. It is interesting to note the anticipated development of the industry by such firms as Vestey's, Angliss & Co., and others. There are 38 vessels in the Australian trade which, within the last  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years, have been fitted to carry chilled beef. The owners were sufficiently wide-awake to recognise the possibilities of the trade, and the Port line and Blue Star line have converted 38 vessels to cope with the expected trade. The Blue Star line is simply a subsidiary company of Vestey's Limited. When Vestey's are mentioned, many people visualise a strong American combine. That is not so. Vestey's are an English company, and to us are most important people in the beef business, inasmuch as they are associated with Union Cold Stores Limited, having a capital of £12,000,000 and controlling 4,000 to 5,000 butcher shops in the British Isles. Probably many members have been circularised concerning the activities of the Blue Star Shipping Company, indicating the manner in which it is fostering the New Zealand trade and developing that of South Africa. These activities have been the means of placing upon the English market a direct competitor of the famous Argentine beef. It was my privilege early in 1929 on behalf of the Commonwealth Government to inquire in the North-West of Australia and the Northern Territory into the possibilities of doing in the North of Australia in the

matter of beef production what is done in the Argentine, that is, adopting the migratory movement of the cattle from the rougher or inland country where they may be bred towards the coast, finishing up there as fats. The results demonstrated at Wyndham prove positively that the whole of the Kimberleys, including the Fitzroy area, can become a practical competitor, if chilled beef is to be the product, with any country in the world. I have received figures to-day from the general manager of the Wyndham Meatworks indicating that four years ago baby beef,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years old, weighed between 400 and 500 lbs. per dressed carcass at the works. That exceeds the average for all ages delivered at Wyndham, because most of the stock is reared under open range conditions. The animals are never near a fence, and there is no such thing as the segregation of calves, cows or bullocks. Water is provided in many instances where Nature has caused it to appear. There are no facilities for the direct handling or breeding of stock, but notwithstanding these circumstances this baby beef has been turned out weighing better than bullocks which have been kept five or six years. When we remember that such beef is acceptable in every country in the world it must be conceded that it is within the capacity of that part of the State to produce what the world requires. Mr. McCann, who is Agent-General for South Australia and once managed Bovril's interests in the Argentine, and who passed through here recently, was very much impressed with the possibilities existing at Wyndham. He said the cattle appeared to mature earlier there than in any other part of the world he knew of where natural forage was available. That is a striking tribute to the capacity of the country. He also pointed out that the North-West ports of the State had a definite advantage over Eastern States ports. Vestey's recently paid £300,000 for the obsolete works at Port Alma, solely for the handling of chilled beef in that area. Wyndham has the advantage over Port Alma of at least seven days in the journey to London. It is interesting to note that the development should have begun from that side of Australia, because of the facilities for handling a better quality of beef compared with the kind of beef that can be produced on this side of the continent owing to the lack

of facilities in the unfenced areas of the North. The early maturity of stock is a big factor in the trade. I should like to refer to what the Commonwealth are doing in this respect. They have recently taken a small but paternal interest in the Barclay tableland in the Territory. They are endeavouring to start meatworks out from the McArthur River in the Territory, and are prepared to spend half a million pounds on the undertaking. The site of the works is on an island. All the cattle will be ferried or barged over to the works, for the reason that by so doing they will save a few days on the journey to England. Evidently the Commonwealth are actuated by a desire to open up that country. How much more is it to their interests and ours to divert that money towards the languishing industry we have in this State, not a developing one, but an established industry, to make it possible for those who have devoted their lives to it to continue producing wealth for the Empire.

Mr. Warner: You will not make them see that.

Mr. WISE: If the case for the North were prepared and presented there would be sufficient argument for those people who are on their way to England now to enable them to talk about this State from the aspect of the North alone, apart from any question of secession, or any question of empty spaces. Above everything else is the asset for the British Empire that exists, and yet within it we find industries languishing. That is a sufficient case in itself. I should like briefly to refer to the possibilities concerning the obligations first of the State, secondly of the Commonwealth, and thirdly of the British Empire towards the part of Australia of which I speak. It is no use complaining that that portion of the State is not receiving the millions it might receive, and which would no doubt produce many more millions. It is no use citing Canberra as an illustration of a very bad investment. Within this State and within the capacity of the Administration of the State is found a wonderful avenue for good, and a wonderful avenue for those who reside in the North. Let me first of all refer to the difficulties of transport. In the reconditioning of the beef industry that will be an important problem. First of all comes the necessity for providing freight for materials for necessary improvements. It is a remarkable tribute to the country that wherever water is desired it may be

found. If it is necessary to mark out a pad-dock in a certain place it is possible to obtain water by sinking an artesian bore. Unfortunately it used to be the case that wherever natural water was provided, that was the only place where it was found to exist. Luscious feed has gone to waste within ten miles of natural water, and cattle have died for want of it. If it is possible by concerted action to do something in this respect the State has an opportunity to assist those people by waiving the wharfage charges on the materials required for improvement, and to reconsider the rental charges, many of which are never received because the pastoralist cannot afford to pay them. It is fortunate that transport by road is receiving consideration, and costs to the industry will ultimately be reduced by reason of that consideration. There are many ways within the administration of the State whereby the burdens cast upon the producers there can be relieved. The Commonwealth can do much more than that.

Mr. Cross: They will not do much.

Mr. WISE: Let us hope they will. Even though we may disagree with every form of subsidy, I suggest that a subsidy at a rate per pound for chilled beef, or for beef suitable for chilling, could well be made by the Commonwealth authorities. Even an advance of three-farthings per pound for Kimberley beef would return to the producers £50,000 or £60,000 per annum. If only that means were adopted the investment of a very large sum of money up there would be possible. I claim that the Commonwealth have a duty towards the development of the markets. The shipping companies are somewhat concerned. A revision of freights over a period of years would be of material assistance to the producers. Last but not least, scientific research could profitably be carried out by the Commonwealth authorities. From the Imperial standpoint the question calls for urgent action. The whole of the North is becoming depopulated, and it is not likely to be settled within our time, or within the next generation, more closely than the pastoral pursuits will permit. It is a pastoral country. Even if it is settled as is compatible with pastoral pursuits, there can be no great influx of population there. It does not interest the coloured races adjacent to us, for they turned it down fifty years ago. Even if that were not so I feel sure that if

an Empire interest were taken in the country that part of it could be made secure. The empty spaces are not a menace in themselves, but, unless they are producing to the limit of their productive capacity, they constitute a menace to the capital cities of the Commonwealth. It would be an unsound policy on the part of any Imperial authorities to neglect that portion of the Empire. I should now like to touch on the wool industry, which perhaps more naturally belongs to the temperate or sub-tropical parts of the North. The wool industry is one of the greatest factors in Australia's wealth production. The industry is now in such a position that it is useless to propound schemes or to make utterances which might be referred to as a politician's peroration. Unless something can be done in the matter of transport, little else can be done by governmental authorities. The woolgrowers have their business wonderfully well organised; but the low prices ruling, although perhaps offering a small margin of profit to men not paying interest, are a serious worry to many engaged in the industry. If we analyse the cause of that, we find that Germany's self-inflicted bankruptcy is one cause, while a major cause is the internal strife in Central Europe. No one would be foolish enough to forecast anything which might happen in that direction. Certainly no amount of data or figures could make up for the lack of cash on the part of people who are usually purchasers of our wool. Germany's position is a vital matter as regards the wool industry. The trade balance between Australia and some of its most important wool buyers has an important bearing on the case. Italy, for example, has a six to one trade balance in our favour. There is Japan, which needs 700,000 bales of wool per year. When we find the wool market of the world so disrupted that the potential sale of a million bales has gone west, internal schemes for reconstruction of the industry are of little avail. Germany is said to be secretly buying wool and holding it in free ports, but the chief outlook for the people in an industry which returns so much of the material wealth of Australia lies in the political storm centres of Europe. I would perhaps be considered as neglecting my own constituency if I did not mention the small industry developed therein. May I take this opportunity of dispelling many unfounded notions people have regarding



the banana industry at Carnarvon. One misguided person recently mentioned, in the "West Australian," that it was foolish to grow bananas at Carnarvon, because they were being grown uneconomically where Nature never intended that they should be grown, and that therefore the industry must be a charge on the community. The statement is so foolish as hardly to need contradiction, but it may be as well to allay the fears of any who might regard the industry as uneconomical. It is no more uneconomical than is provision for winter or summer feed for stock in the South-West. It is no more uneconomical than the provision of silage, or the establishment of irrigation where irrigation is necessary. On the aspect of cost, Carnarvon is producing bananas more cheaply than they are being produced under the opulent conditions of Queensland. I would like to broadcast the statement that bananas are being produced more cheaply at Carnarvon than Queensland or New South Wales can produce them. I ask, have bananas ever been so cheap in Perth as they are to-day? And that cheapness is due to the development of the industry at Carnarvon. I conclude by saying that whatever can be done by the State Government or the Commonwealth Government to alter the unfortunate and unnecessary position of the cattlegrowers in the North should be done. We must face these questions not as questions of politics at all. They must be faced by us as the temporary holders of a great heritage belonging to all Australia.

This concluded the general debate.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Legislative Assembly, £2,425; Joint House Committee, £3,915; Joint Printing Committee, £4,126; Joint Library Committee, £250—agreed to.*

*Vote—Premier's Department, £15,709:*

Item, Ministerial and Parliamentary Visits and State Ceremonials (not including departmental visits), £2,000:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Last year the amount of this item was £2,000, and the expenditure £4,018, showing an excess of £2,018, which appears very high.

The Minister for Works: There is a decrease this year.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: What is the explanation of last year's excess?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This item covers a wide range of activities—opening of Parliament, State ceremonials, Parliamentary and Ministerial visits, and also the cost of conveying members to their homes after late sittings.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Last year's excess is extraordinary. Is there any connection between this item and Government House expenditure? In any case, there should be some explanation of an expenditure representing more than double the vote. The item has nothing to do with the recent Royal visit.

The Minister for Works: We are discussing this year's expenditure.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We must not limit ourselves to that. However, I am not worrying about it.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Governor's Establishment, £1,718; Executive Council, £5; London Agency, £9,016—agreed to.*

*Vote—Public Service Commissioner, £1,345:*

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: Is it possible to discuss under this vote the proposed adjustment of the Financial Emergency Act whereby persons in receipt of salaries up to £500 are to be subject only to the basic wage variation?

The CHAIRMAN: I do not consider that that matter arises under this heading.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Government Motor Car Service, £2,833; Printing, £52,048—agreed to.*

*Vote—Tourist Bureau, £1,752:*

Mr. SAMPSON: What is being done outside Western Australia to make the Tourist Bureau better known, and to give information regarding the beauty spots of the State? I have long felt that we do not do all we should in that respect. Western Australia is in an especially favourable position to attract tourists, but we do not take advantage of our opportunities. In the past we have been indifferent regarding the outside world. Is it proposed to make any greater effort in the future than has been made in the past?

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** It is not the intention of the Government to extend the operations of this department. The vote shows that there is an increase of only £101, but we do co-operate with the National Travel Association whose literature we distribute and they distribute ours. Members may have seen their pictorial posters on our railway stations and ours appear in other parts of Australia. The association operates throughout the Continent and they advertise and make widely known the attractive places throughout Australia. Because of the existing economic conditions we are not launching out on anything of an extravagant nature. All we can do at present is to continue to co-operate with the National Travel Association in making our beauty spots known.

**Mr. SAMPSON:** I should say that the times being difficult and money scarce would be very good reasons for doing more than is being done to advertise the State from the tourist point of view. These are times when we should exercise our thoughts and try to improve the position. There is a lot of tourist money available and those countries that cater for the tourists are the countries that get it. The income it is possible to derive from tourists is tremendous. There are many countries that would be worse off than they actually are but for the steps they take to secure a fair share of tourist business.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The hon. member is getting away from the item, which deals merely with salaries and allowances.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Literary and Scientific Grants, £8,715; Fisheries, £3,847; Treasury, £21,525; Audit, £12,022; Compassionate Allowances, etc., £2,786; Government Stores, £12,549—agreed to.*

*Vote—Taxation, £32,130:*

Item, Amount payable to Commonwealth Government for collection of taxes, £31,230:

**Hon. C. G. LATHAM:** Can the Minister tell us why this amount has exceeded the £30,000 which was the sum agreed upon between the State and the Commonwealth to be paid to the latter for the collection of our taxes? Last year the amount was exceeded by £1,757 and this year it is to be exceeded by £1,230.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I have not any information on the subject but for some time we have been discussing with the Commonwealth a proposed alteration of the existing arrangements. I cannot say why the amount was exceeded last year; it may have been due to overtime worked. The hon. member will notice, however, that the estimated expenditure is less than the actual expenditure of last year by £527.

**Mr. Lambert:** Is there no chance of abolishing the department?

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Workers' Homes Board, £14,180:*

Item, Salaries and allowances, £11,321:

**Mr. LAMBERT:** The Workers' Homes Board has done quite a lot of good, not only in the coastal districts, but also on the goldfields, where there is a great scarcity of accommodation. On two or three occasions representations have been made by the goldfields in the direction of securing additional accommodation and only a day or two ago I received a letter—

**The CHAIRMAN:** The hon. member cannot continue in that strain on this item, which refers to salaries and allowances.

**Mr. LAMBERT:** On which item should I discuss the subject of additional accommodation on the goldfields?

**The CHAIRMAN:** The hon. member should have referred to it in a general discussion under the heading of "the Treasury."

**Mr. LAMBERT:** But we are now discussing the Workers' Homes Board.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The hon. member is discussing the first item and that is all he may do at the present time.

**Mr. LAMBERT:** May I not discuss the whole ramifications of the Workers' Homes Board?

**The CHAIRMAN:** The hon. member must keep to the first item.

**Mr. LAMBERT:** Under what item do you suggest that I should discuss the board generally?

**The CHAIRMAN:** The hon. member missed his chance: he should have discussed it when the first Treasury vote was called.

**Mr. F. C. L. Smith:** Raise the question of reducing the salaries.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The hon. member may discuss only salaries and allowances at the present time.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is a most extraordinary thing. Very well; if it is your decision, Mr. Chairman, to limit my remarks I will allow it to go.

Mr. SAMPSON: I daresay if the Minister is asked to let the House know what it is proposed to do regarding the desire so frequently expressed that the Workers' Homes Board should extend its operation, he will give us some information. The board is a very important body to many people—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member offered a suggestion but he must not make a speech on the general question.

Mr. LAMBERT: Was the hon. member discussing the first item, salaries and allowances?

The CHAIRMAN: I stopped him from proceeding further.

Mr. LAMBERT: Of course if you are really going to—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Does the hon. member wish to dispute my ruling?

Mr. LAMBERT: I should like to know who is making the speech, you or I?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. member wishes to dispute my ruling he had better do so in writing.

#### *Dissent from Ruling.*

Mr. LAMBERT: If that is your ruling, I am going to move to dissent from it.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must put it in writing.

Mr. LAMBERT: I move:

That the Committee dissents from the Chairman's ruling.

#### *[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]*

The Chairman reported the dissent.

Mr. Lambert: The Chairman of Committees did not give me much opportunity to speak or to indicate to the Committee whether I desired to carry on a general discussion or to ask for certain information. Unfortunately, the Chairman immediately presupposed that I intended to make a speech generally on Item No. 1. My remarks were preliminary to asking certain questions as to whether it was the intention of the Government to extend the advantages of the Workers' Homes Board to certain localities on the goldfields. I regret the Chairman of Committees was so very impatient and did not wait to give

me an opportunity to indicate what information I really desired. I think I have every right, when speaking on the first item of a Division, to ask for an indication of the Government's intentions in the direction I have suggested.

Mr. Sleeman: After listening to the explanation of the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie, I would point out that in dealing with Item No. 1 of the Workers' Homes Board Division, he was proceeding along the lines of a general discussion speech, and I ruled he must confine his remarks to the matter covered by Item No. 1, which relates to salaries and allowances. After I had given that ruling, the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie decided I was wrong. He evidently desired to indulge in a general discussion of policy, and I pointed out that he should have spoken along those lines on the Treasurer's Vote when it was called. It is useless for the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie to say now he merely desired to ask one question. He has been a member of this Chamber long enough to know that the general discussion proceeds on the Treasurer's Vote, and not on Item No. 1 of the Workers' Homes Board Division. If the Chairman of Committees errs, it is on the side of leniency. There are many times when members should be pulled up, but I do not want to be hard on them. The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie was proceeding along general lines and was not speaking to the item in any shape or form.

Mr. Speaker: I am asked to decide, upon a ruling of the Chairman of Committees, whether the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie was justified in discussing matters of policy affecting the operations of the Workers' Homes Board on Item 1 of Division No. 22, which relates to the Workers' Homes Board. Standing Order 372 provides that in Committee members may speak more than once to the same question, but Standing Order 386A reads—

Notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order No. 372, no member (except the Minister, who shall have the right of reply) shall speak more than once during—(a) a general discussion on the whole of the Estimates held on the first vote; (b) a general discussion on the administration of a Minister's department held on the first vote of that department.

Personally I have always held that the language in which that Standing Order is couched is somewhat ambiguous. The ques-

tion arises under paragraph (b) as to what is "a Minister's department." I understand from the Chairman of Committees that, for the purposes of the current debate, the Treasurer's department is the one concerned. The Workers' Homes Board is represented by Division No. 22, and I should say that the general discussion would proceed when the Vote for the Department of the Treasurer was called. When consideration was given to a division such as that relating to the Workers' Homes Board and Item 1 was called, I would rule, if called upon, that a member was only entitled to discuss the matter contained in Item No. 1. In this instance, the item relates to salaries and allowances. Admittedly it has been customary in Committee for the Chairman to give members latitude to ask questions, to which Ministers may reply, but a discussion on the whole policy relating to the Workers' Homes Board, that being the division in question at the moment, would not be allowed.

Mr. Lambert: I never made the slightest—

Mr. Speaker: Order! It is not usual for members to interrupt when the Speaker is giving a ruling. I cannot give a ruling regarding what happened between the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie and the Chairman of Committees, but with reference to the motion to disagree with the latter's ruling, I think the Chairman of Committees would be entitled to allow members some latitude so that they could ask Ministers, when replying, to give certain particulars, but not to permit them to discuss matters of policy and the general ramifications of the board.

#### *Committee Resumed.*

Mr. LAMBERT: I presume, Mr. Chairman, you would consider me in order if I moved to reduce the vote?

The CHAIRMAN: Perfectly in order.

Mr. LAMBERT: I move—

That the vote be reduced by £1.

In doing so, I want to explain that I am not satisfied with the present attitude of the Workers' Homes Board and their interpretation of their functions under the Act, as evidenced in their attitude respecting

certain parts of the State. If you will permit me to proceed, Mr. Chairman, I will emphasise that representations have been made from many parts of the State with a view to having the operations of the board extended. In the first place, the board was appointed with the idea of establishing workers' homes in the metropolitan area. My duty as a representative of a country constituency impels me to emphasise the fact that to-day the work of the board should be infinitely more important in the country districts than in the metropolitan area. Therefore, I lodge the strongest possible protest against the rather arrogant and limited attitude, together with the narrow vision of the Workers' Homes Board, in refusing to recognise the fact that their functions should extend beyond the metropolitan area. I take this opportunity to express my strongest disapproval of the present policy, particularly as this is a fitting time, when the Treasurer is making money available for the building of homes, for his eyes to go a little beyond the Darling Ranges. Because of the development of the goldmining industry in my electorate and the agricultural development at Southern Cross, it is necessary, unless we are to permit hardship because of the shortage of housing accommodation, for the Workers' Homes Board to recognise the necessity for building homes in that part of the State. If a worker is sent to Southern Cross, he gets about £4 a week, and, even if a house should be available, he will be called upon to pay £1 or 25s. a week for rent alone. If development advances as anticipated during the next 12 months, there will be a great shortage of homes in my electorate. The same thing can be said respecting Kalgoorlie and Boulder, where most extortionate rents are demanded. I have previously urged the advisability, having regard to the nature of the mining industry, of designing a suitable cottage of a type that, if the Workers' Homes Board received a deposit of 10 or 20 per cent., would not entail any loss, if left on their hands. If bolts were used instead of nails, the removal of the building would be facilitated in the event of the necessity arising for transferring the dwelling elsewhere. If that method were adopted, the depreciation would not

be so great. Before the Treasurer makes further funds available, I hope he will see that the operations of the Workers' Homes Board are considerably extended. I dare say the same position arises in the agricultural districts as I have indicated is apparent in the mining areas.

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

Mr. LAMBERT: I ask leave to withdraw the amendment to reduce the Vote by £1.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Miscellaneous Services, £533,153:*

Item, grant to Empire Parliamentary Association, £100:

Mr. SAMPSON: Was there any special reason why the amount for last year should have been £200; and, if not, why should we have a reduction in the amount this year?

The CHAIRMAN: There is no reduction. Last year's amount covered two years.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Forests, £18,025:*

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [7.33]: Are we not to have a statement from a Minister on any departmental Vote? I should like to know what the position is regarding our forests, and what likelihood there is of a resumption of activities. I would appreciate some information from the Minister.

The Minister for Works: Which is the point you wish explained?

Mr. SAMPSON: I want to know what the department is doing in reforestation, and whether the work is proving practicable and economical. Also I should like to be told whether the pine plantations are satisfactory. In to-night's paper there is a reference to the Canadian whitewood box, which has been adopted by the Apple and Pear Export Council of New South Wales. That has a direct bearing on forestry work, and if we are to have, as I understand we are, whitewood cases for export, I should like to know what is being done by the department. I am merely seeking information and I feel sure that the Minister in charge of the Vote will give the committee any explanation he can.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [7.35]: The estimated revenue from the department is £92,000. The revenue collected last year was £89,895, which was £24,020 greater than the revenue for the previous year. As the reduced royalties and lower inspection fees were again continued, the increased revenue must be considered very satisfactory. A further concession—a rebate of 5s. per load on sawn timber exported beyond Australia on or after the 1st July, 1934—has been granted to the timber industry. However, in spite of this it is estimated that £92,000 will be collected during the year. The major portion of the revenue, namely £85,000, will be derived from royalties, license fees, etc., and £7,000 from departmental reimbursements. There is a whole lot of information in the annual report of the Conservator of Forests, which members have had before them for some time past. In that report all the activities of the department are set out, and that information has been available to the House for many weeks. However, as I said earlier in the evening when dealing with another Vote, a very substantial improvement in the position of the timber industry has taken place during the past year. The volume of milling timber produced has shown an increase of 37 per cent. over the previous year, and the production of hewn timber has been increased by 273 per cent. During the past five years the cut of sawmill logs from all State forests has been regulated by working plans which aim at a sustained yield of milling timber, and the additional information obtained during this period serves to emphasise the immediate practical importance of careful regulation of cut, associated with a vigorous programme of reforestation and fire protection. The outlook for the hewing industry is still more serious. A working plan to regulate the output of hewn timber from State forests, timber reserves and other Crown lands, aims to provide continuity of employment for 250 hewers for a term of five years, but in certain districts difficulty is being experienced already in finding suitable forests, and if exploitation is continued at the present rate, within two years the question of sleeper supplies for local and Commonwealth railways is likely to become a matter of serious concern. The economy of selling sleepers of the present high standard to overseas countries at the low rates which

are operating throughout the industry to-day is a matter deserving of careful consideration. On the expenditure side the estimate is £17,315, or an increase of £2,573. This provision is to meet administration costs such as timber inspection, patrolling State forests, timber reserves, etc., and revenue collected. There is still a considerable area of jarrah forests awaiting regeneration treatment before the leeway resulting from neglect of reforestation measures in pre-war years is overtaken. By using the permanent organisations now in existence it has been possible to make use of a large number of relief workers in carrying out the work. At present 850 men are employed on the part-time basis applying to all relief workers, and within the next week or two there will be an increase of another 150 or 200 men.

Mr. Sampson: That is on silviculture mostly, cleaning up the forests?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, and regeneration, and cleaning up and cutting out the old growth, so allowing them to use the younger, more vigorous growth. Heavily cut-over jarrah forests treated for regeneration during the period July, 1933, to July, 1934, was 29,411 acres. The work of establishing a new crop of young timber on these cut-over forests consists of the cutting back of useless trees to make way for the vigorous young growth, the clearing of old formation and tracks to provide means of access and assist in fire protection, and the construction of fire lines around compartments of approximately 500 acres. Then there is the thinning and protection of existing regrowth which is capable of developing into good timber. During the period July, 1933, to July, 1934, the area thus treated was 14,870 acres. In this work the regrowth is thinned to ensure that the dominant trees of the young crop are of good form and escape suppression by overtopping trees of the useless crop remaining. Fire lines and green fire breaks are established round compartments of approximately 500 acres. From July, 1933, to July, 1934, no less than 22,519 acres were treated for top disposal. After logging operations take place, the debris resulting is cleared away for some distance round the base of coals, piles, and small mill logs. That, I think, is the work the hon. member referred to. As for permanent establishment, during 1933-34 no less than 384 miles of road and feeder tracks were opened up to render accessible country

treated for regeneration, and to assist in fire protection. An additional 82 miles of telephone lines were constructed to link up new centres of work with the existing system. In the karri forests the area treated for regeneration during 1933-34 was 3,778 acres, while 428 acres of karri country carrying no seed trees were spot sown with seed. On the useless poison land in the Narrogin district 1,429 acres were cleared and sown with mallet seed. The sowing of past years continues to show remarkable promise. Under reforestation the area of plantations was increased in 1933 by a further 1,486 acres, bringing the total area now established to 8,257 acres. The project of bringing small areas of non-jarrah country into productivity by the development of small holdings worked by men employed part time in the forest and part time on the holding is being extended. At present eight homes are occupied, and it is intended to increase this by establishing a further six. So, as the hon. member will see, there has been considerable activity, and certainly by the end of the month there will be at least 1,000 men employed by the department in creating fresh assets for the State.

Item, Salaries of officers, etc, £14,875:

Mr. SAMPSON: I was pleased to hear the report of the work of the department. For a long time I have had faith in such work and the statement made by the Minister is most encouraging. We are fortunate in having a Conservator who is so practical-minded, and who is assisted by such good officers.

Vote put and passed.

*Department of Public Works and Labour*  
(Hon. A. McCallum, Minister).

*Vote — Public Works and Buildings,*  
£52,959:

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [7.46]: The activities of this department, as members know, are financed mainly by loan funds. This vote applies chiefly to salaries, and the opportunity for a general discussion on the work of the department will occur when the whole programme is outlined on the Loan Estimates. This is the big spending department under the Loan Estimates. Provision is made in the Revenue Estimates

for the deduction of proportions of salaries chargeable to loan. Roads, bridges, harbours, jetties, water supplies, hydraulic undertakings and similar activities are financed by loan money, and when the Loan Estimates are being considered, I propose to give members some interesting information on the work of the past year and the programme for the current year. I invite members on that occasion to express their views, particularly on road work. I should like to have the benefit of their ideas and criticism.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Do you propose to table a schedule of the works under the road grant?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member so desires.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You asked for it when you were sitting in Opposition.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, when in Opposition I asked on two or three occasions for a discussion of the road vote but could not get it. There was no item under which it could be discussed as the money came from the Commonwealth. Unfortunately, in my opinion, a good deal of money has been spent out of loan, but we have to continue the works that were started when we took office. We have had to provide for an increase in the architectural and engineering staffs. In the year before last the Chief Architect had only £30,000 to spend, whereas last year the expenditure exceeded £100,000. We have had to employ outside architects and have had difficulty in retaining them. Owing to building activity and to the payment of higher salaries outside, we have lost some good men. The increase in the engineering staff is largely accounted for by cadets having finished their cadetships and having been promoted to be assistant engineers. We were short of staff; the officers were working at full pressure and even working overtime, and I am afraid that some of the most responsible men were overloaded because of the big works in hand.

Item, Under-Secretary, £800.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not think we have a more competent officer than the Under-Secretary, Mr. Munt, but in my opinion the Minister is overloading him. When discussing the State transport co-ordination measure, I said I considered that

Mr. Munt's time was fully occupied as Under-Secretary for Works. He is the administrative head for all the important work being carried on and must keep in touch with everything. With all the money being spent, his is a full-time job for any man. Now he has been made chairman of the Transport Board, though eventually those duties will not be so onerous. I understand that Mr. Munt is also chairman of the Irrigation Board. Does that mean that he is responsible for collecting water rates, etc?

The Minister for Works: That comes under a later vote.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am referring to the Under-Secretary for Works. We must have spent 1½ millions on irrigation in the South-West, and to see that the money is collected would be nearly a full-time job in itself. I appeal to the Minister not to over-work good officers, because they cannot give the satisfaction they desire to give. All Ministers have a tendency to over-work good men until they reach the stage that Mr. McLarty has reached. The Minister should ascertain exactly what work and responsibility Mr. Munt has to bear and decide whether it is fair to appoint him to all sorts of boards.

Mr. Lambert: It is the same with other under-secretaries, such as the Under-Secretary for Mines.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not think he is so overloaded as is Mr. Munt.

Item, Repairs and maintenance, North-West harbours, buoys, jetties, tramways, rolling stock, and other works as may be required, £11,770.

Mr. ROROREDA: I presume that this item includes the money now being spent on the marine survey of the approaches to the Onslow jetty.

The Minister for Works: No; this item is merely for maintenance.

Mr. RODOREDA: The other amount would come under the Loan Estimates?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Items, Roads and bridges, drainage and wells throughout the State, including grants and road board audits, etc., £3,000; repairs and improvements to drains in South-West, £500.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Over a long period much money has been spent on drainage in the South-West, and I am

inclined to think that the necessary authority has not been obtained for such expenditure. A few years ago there was a sum of £412,000 for certain irrigation and drainage works. It seems to me that we are not obtaining proper authority for the expenditure, and will be in difficulties when it becomes necessary to rate the people served by those works. I am afraid that the people are being loaded with debts that they will not be able to meet during a lifetime. The Minister should pay attention to works being put in hand as a matter of expediency to provide work for the unemployed. I have yet to learn that the people have been consulted and have agreed to the construction of the works in accordance with the Act. It is all very well for the Government to provide employment by putting such works in hand, but they should remember that landholders are being loaded up with a heavy responsibility. Works have been put in hand rather hurriedly and, I believe, without consulting the people who will have to foot the bill. I should like the Minister to tell us what the Government propose to do in respect to these works, and what their responsibility will be. To what extent will the Government be prepared to forego the rents that people are called upon to pay? In many instances the settlers have not been given the opportunity to approve of the carrying out of drainage works, but nevertheless they have been carried out illegally. Some provision should be made to safeguard the settler.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** Shortly after I took office I made a statement in the House to the effect that the Government did not propose to put in hand any additional irrigation or drainage works in the South-West until the areas already being served by those works had proved themselves. We have lived up to that policy. No additional works have been started. Those that were started before have not yet been completed. To-day I approved of an expenditure of about £30,000 for the lining of drains and other improvements of a minor nature. This will pretty well complete the drainage and irrigation works that were put in hand before. I know of no instance in which works of this nature have been put in hand outside the law. When the Collie dam was opened several persons at the function said they had refused to sign the petition in fav-

our of it, but that when they saw the completed works and visualised the prospects ahead they were sorry they had not done so. I can recall three areas that put up petitions for work of this nature, but as they did not seem to be good business propositions I turned them down. If the member for Kalgoorlie knows of any area in which works have been carried out without the necessary legal authority he might inform me, because I know of none. No complaint has been made to me. The rates could not be enforced unless the proper legal procedure had been followed.

**Hon. P. D. Ferguson:** Would the Government proceed with such works unless the majority of the settlers desired them to do so?

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I do not know of such a case. If the Government did so they could not collect the rates. Some drainage works have been put in hand by the Government to improve certain areas, but these have been regarded as national works, and the Government have borne the cost without any call for rates being made upon the settlers. Large drains have been constructed alongside main roads, without the settlers having been asked to pay anything. These are regarded as head works. The same thing holds good with water supplies in the wheat areas. These are a national charge. Only when the water is reticulated are the settlers called upon to pay rates. We have spent considerably over a million of money in drainage and irrigation works in the South-West. If the member for Kalgoorlie knows of any definite cases in which irrigation works have been carried out without legal authority I should like to know of them so that they may be examined.

**Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM:** My statement is absolutely correct. I know it has been the policy of the last two Governments to put in hand certain drainage works in order to provide relief for men out of employment. The drains themselves may be regarded as national works, but what I am thinking of is the subsidiary drains. I warn members representing the South-West that many settlers will be called upon to pay up to a maximum of 5d. in the pound under the Drainage Act, to provide for maintenance. In many cases they were not consulted before the works were put in hand, and there is no doubt that the rates will be



levied in accordance with the Act. The Leader of the Opposition seems inclined to think that all these works will be declared national works.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I am worried about the collection of the revenue.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The settlers affected will be saddled with the liability for many years to come. The Minister questioned my statement that some of these works had been carried out illegally.

The Minister for Works: I said I did not know of any.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Of course they have been constructed illegally. Some years ago works of this nature were carried out under the Public Works Act. The land which was served has since been alienated from the Crown, and the works are now the property of the settlers. Large sums of money expended by the State are therefore out of control. Not a foot of land is available on either side of the drains on which to place the silt in the event of maintenance work being put in hand. I hope the Minister will look into the matter and safeguard the interests of the State.

Mr. McLARTY: I have heard of no complaints from settlers on this score. Most of the drainage works have been carried out on rivers and streams. These are regarded as national undertakings, for which the settlers have not been called upon to pay. It is necessary that rivers and streams should receive attention so that the settlers may be able to drain their properties. Farmers in the South-West have kept up a continuous agitation for years, begging the Government to put these works in hand. I assure the member for Kalgoorlie that there is no desire on the part of South-Western settlers to stop the works which are proceeding on the rivers and brooks, where such works are needed in order that a comprehensive drainage scheme may be carried out. I do not agree with the hon. member that provision is not being made to let the settlers use the drains.

Hon. J. Cunningham: I made no such statement. I said that the beds of the drains had been alienated and were no longer the property of the Crown.

Mr. McLARTY: I am sorry I misunderstood the hon. member. The settlers were consulted before the work of irrigation was taken in hand. They have to pay a rate. In each of the areas where irrigation has been

established the majority of the settlers agreed, in accordance with the Act, before the works were undertaken. The head works are regarded as a national work, as is the case throughout Australia. Nowhere in Australia have settlers been asked to pay for head works.

Mr. CROSS: In connection with the Riverton bridge, the Works Department effected some repairs, and made a good job of them. But they spoilt that good job by not finishing it. They omitted to do the tarring that was needed. I hope the Minister will see that the job is finished properly.

Mr. SAMPSON: Some time ago, in association with the member for Middle Swan, I attended a conference representative of local authorities at which the question of the Belmont-Maida Vale road was discussed. That road, built by the Government some years ago, has been a source of worry and anxiety to all concerned. At present part of it is under water. We hope the Minister will give sympathetic and practical consideration to a reconstruction of portion of the road. Travelling on it just now is in the nature of an aquatic adventure. The road has never been constructed properly. When properly constructed, it will open up a considerable area of land. Reconstruction of the Middle Swan section and of part of the Swan section will be put up to the Minister as a necessary work.

Mr. HEGNEY: The proposition advanced by the previous speaker is most important. Something needs to be done to the roadway. It is not within the financial competence of the road boards concerned to do it. Three years ago I was invited out to this area to meet about 80 or 90 local settlers, who desired to demonstrate to me that the road was impassable. They had me conveyed over a lake in the middle of the road; fortunately I could swim, or I might not be here now. In winter the road is simply inundated.

Item, Additions, repairs and maintenance of public buildings generally, £11,000:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Last year's appropriation for this item was £24,000, and only £11,028 was spent. This year the Government ask for only £11,000. From the small sum expended last year it is evident that related repairs did not amount to so much as has been represented. The Loan Council

have ruled, I understand, that all school and hospital buildings must be constructed out of revenue.

The Minister for Works: I have never heard of that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That was the instruction the previous Government had. Is the amount of this item to be used for building country schools, with regard to which we are a long way behind?

The Minister for Justice: This item is only for repairs. There is a big list of schools to be built.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is no use to ask for £24,000 and spend only £11,000. The member for North-East Fremantle last year drew attention, with tears in his eyes, to belated repairs of schools and school quarters.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: In connection with the Loan Estimates I will undertake to draw a comparison between what we have done this year and what was done previously. Then it will be seen which Government has really done repairs. We have employed 100 men for 52 weeks in the year on repairing Government buildings.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Was the cost of those repairs met out of loan funds?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The work has been done. We have spent over £100,000 on those repairs. In that respect we have done a long way more than did our predecessors. We got money where the previous Government could not.

Hon. N. Keenan: The whole of Australia has been getting it; you are no exception. You are just one of the ordinary beggars.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: When we were in office before, the same complaint was made about us. We were then told that we could get money, although the former Government had not been able to get it.

Hon. N. Keenan: The point is that in this instance you had £24,000 to spend and you did not spend it.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes, and out of revenue.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have spent over £100,000.

Hon. N. Keenan: But out of loan funds.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member's Government proceeded for two years and did not spend sixpence on this type of work. Schools, hospitals and other public buildings did not have a paint

brush put on them, and the assets of the State were drifting into still further disrepair all the time. The present Government have speeded up operations, but if we have to undertake still more work, I will require a bigger staff, because the present staff cannot possibly do more work than they are carrying out. They are taxed to their utmost limit. The Chief Architect is certainly much overworked, and I gave him authority to engage architects from outside the public service. We have lost a couple of them during the past two or three months, because Public Service salaries are not so enticing as those private architects are able to offer. We have certainly saved the few thousand pounds referred to by the Opposition, but the money has gone elsewhere.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Tell us where the money went; it is not shown. All this work ought to be done out of revenue, and you should not pay interest on repair work.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would agree with the Leader of the Opposition in normal times, but I presume he would not expect the Government to impose increased taxation to get the £100,000 that we spent during the year.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You will have to do so directly in order to pay interest.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: But surely it paid us better to keep these men in work than to continue as previously. Some time back I went round my electorate and saw painters and artisans that I knew, clipping grass off the footpaths whereas with the next shower that grass would grow again. Government money was given to the local authorities to do that sort of work.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It was a question of doing something for the men at that time, because we could not allow them to starve.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Money spent in that manner was absolutely wasted.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I do not say it was not, but we had to do something for the people then. The men did that rather than accept money for nothing.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The then Government could have used the limited funds at their disposal and employed men in preserving the assets of the State. A carpenter or a painter could do more to save the assets by doing work at their trade, than was achieved by employing them to cut grass off footpaths.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Was it not a question of buying materials just at that time?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The work I refer to would not require a large quantity of material. Consider the condition of the roofs of Parliament House, the Wooroloo Sanatorium, the Claremont Hospital for Insane, and many of our schools. The member for North-East Fremantle told me of a school at North Fremantle where the water came through the roof on to the blackboard.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And despite your expenditure on Parliament House, water still came through the roof a month or six weeks ago.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is typical of contract work!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That water came from the flat roof near the doors and came through over the bar in one place and into the strangers' room at the other end. That was caused by some fault in the flat-roofing, but it was remedied the same day. I had no idea that the Government would be challenged on this particular item, which shows a saving on the expenditure authorised.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I want to see revenue used as it ought to be used, and loan funds used as they should be used.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: And I agree it would be well if that could be done. But the Leader of the Opposition will not argue that the expenditure of £13,000 shown as not expended out of last year's authorisation would have enabled the work to be done on public buildings that the Government carried out during the last financial year. There is no school in the metropolitan area where the conditions were reported to the department, that has not had some attention.

Hon. N. Keenan: Nothing has been done at the Nedlands school.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If nothing has been done at the Nedlands school, it must be the fault of the member for Nedlands for not having reported the conditions obtaining there. Opposition members know that our expenditure is curtailed in accordance with the determination of the Loan Council, but we had to incur excess expenditure in some directions that were unforeseen. We actually exceeded our authorised deficit by about £40,000.

The Minister for Railways: The Leader of the Opposition was at York during wash-away time and knows what had to be done there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We had to scrape together what money we could get, and yet keep as close to the Loan Council margin as we could. During their present term of office, the Government have been able to put their policy into effect to a considerable degree in dealing with public buildings from one end of the State to the other. The member for Kalgoorlie told me that when the member for Nedlands was Minister for Education, he took him to some schools on the goldfields that required repair, and the then Minister said he would have the repairs carried out, but they were not effected.

Hon. N. Keenan: Are you sure?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is what I was told, and I know I had to carry out the work when I became Minister for Works. Our expenditure in the North has been three times as much as it was in previous years.

Mr. Coverley: The North has been so sadly neglected that even that does not say very much.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We intend to speed up and do even more work than during the past year. In a report he made to me, the Chief Architect stated that some public buildings had been so neglected that the walls were fretting away because of the water that was leaking in through the roof.

Mr. Hawke: The paint was holding some of the walls up.

The Minister for Employment: There was a change of Government just in time.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The buildings must have been in a pretty bad state to have reached that condition, and that shows you must have neglected them when you were in office before.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There has been a tremendous improvement this year. I am surprised at the criticism on this item, because a comparison with what has been done in former years will be greatly in our favour.

Mr. TONKIN: I am primarily interested in the condition of public buildings in my electorate, and I have no cause for complaint. There are four schools in my elec-

torate, and their requirements in each instance have been attended to:

Hon. C. G. Latham: I was told that some are a bit small. Have they been enlarged?

Mr. TONKIN: A considerable sum has been spent on repairs to the Fremantle Boys' School. It is no wonder I have no cause for complaint, because the position in my electorate is quite satisfactory. The Leader of the Opposition sees that nothing is being done in his own district and concludes it is the same elsewhere, but, as I say, the department has done very good work in my electorate.

Mr. CROSS: I have a lot more schools in my electorate than has the last speaker in his. A good deal of work has been done in repairing those school buildings, but I wish to draw the Minister's attention to the Forrest-street school at South Perth, which needs the addition of an extra room immediately. In the school grounds there is a cottage which has been empty for some years, and the fittings have been taken away, perhaps stolen. I think that building should be fitted up, and either used as a school building of some sort or let.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is not often the Minister for Works is as candid as he was to-night, when he confessed that loan money has been spent on maintenance work. And here we have members on the Government side treating the whole thing more or less as a joke. In view of that, I ask whether the Yallingup Cave House, which was destroyed by fire, could not be restored under this Vote? I am amazed at the attitude of the Government in expending Loan Funds on maintenance.

Mr. LAMBERT: Some of the schools in my electorate are in a most deplorable condition.

The Minister for Works: We are spending a lot of money on those schools.

Mr. LAMBERT: Then you would have to take a microscope to find the repairs. There is great necessity to recondition those schools. Moreover, additional schools are required, but every possible subterfuge is resorted to by the department when a new school is applied for. In a farming district one centre applied for school facilities, and was told that unless the proposed scholars were within three miles of the proposed school, the request could not be acceded to.

I hope that the Government, while boasting of painting schools in the metropolitan area, will have some regard for the necessity of establishing small schools in country areas, and that the Minister will see to it that gold-fields schools, for so long neglected, shall be reconditioned.

Mr. SEWARD: The Minister said a certain number of men had been kept employed all the year on painting public buildings. Recently in one town in my electorate we have had the police station, the school, and the railway buildings repainted. The painters employed on the railway buildings were brought down from Northampton. A local painter, resident 25 or 30 years in Pingelly, drew my attention to this and said that unless he could get a share of the work he would be forced to leave Pingelly and go elsewhere, probably to the city, to look for work. I bring this before the Minister in the hope that, when Government work is being done in country districts, the local artisans will be given a chance to do it.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Labour, £4,658; Arbitration Court, £3,775; and State Accident Insurance, £6,064—agreed to.*

*Department of Minister for Justice (Hon. J. C. Willcock, Minister).*

*Vote—Crown Law Offices, £65,320:*

**THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE** (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [9.0]: When introducing the Estimates of this department it is not usual to enter into considerable detail because the department is really equivalent to a legal firm doing business for all Government departments. We have been carrying on the good work during the past year with very little variation from the practice of former years. It is expected that the revenue for the year will amount to a little over a quarter of a million pounds, which will represent an increase of about £37,000 on last year's collections.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That includes the Titles Office.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, all departments under the Crown Law. Some of the estimates are quite problem-

atical. The biggest item of revenue is probate duty. If we had an epidemic that carried off a large number of people possessed of property, we might get considerably more than has been estimated. On the other hand, the actual amount might be less than that expected.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: We show a profit if we die.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I merely wish to indicate how difficult it is to estimate the revenue.

Mr. Patrick: There should be increased revenue from share transfers.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The majority of transactions affect mining shares which do not pay any stamp duty. Under the proposed amendments to the Administration Act it is expected that considerably more probate duty will be collected. If the Bill becomes law within the next couple of months, an additional £35,000 should be collected, but that is purely an estimate. The amount collected in probate has varied as much as £25,000 a year, equal to 40 or 50 per cent. This year we expect to collect £100,000 compared with £90,000 collected last year. The revenue from law courts is fairly constant year by year, totalling about £50,000. Under the Crown Law Department reimbursements and unclaimed trust money are estimated at £12,500. Land titles, which, with the Railway Department, supply a fairly true reflex of the business conditions prevailing, should produce £22,000.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Two pounds more than you got last year, which is not too optimistic.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: But in the latter portion of the last financial year there was a considerable increase. I do not wish unnecessarily to boost the expected revenue, but during the first two months of the current financial year we collected £4,200 out of the expected total of £22,000. The Perth Clearing House, which also reflects the business conditions, records an increase of £5,000,000 to £6,000,000 compared with the corresponding period of last year. Those factors show that conditions are improving, and I believe the improvement will continue. Revenue from licenses does not begin to come in until December, and it is expected that the estimate will easily be realised. The estimate has been increased because three or

four new premises have been licensed and there are applications for further licenses which, if granted by the Licensing Court, will result in increased revenue. The expenditure of the department is estimated at £65,000 or a saving of £13,000 on the expenditure of last year. The whole of the salaries, including those for licenses, are now included in a bulk item, which shows an increase of £2,890 compared with the expenditure of last year. In common with other departments, there will be increased expenditure because of the rebates granted under the Financial Emergency Act. The rebates of last year operated for only six months, whereas they will operate for the whole of this year and, in addition, it is proposed to grant further relief this year. Thus increased expenditure will be recorded against each department.

Hon. C. G. Latham: For this department it will be £1,900.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. I have a wealth of information about the activities of the department, including the number of letters written, summonses served, actions taken in the courts and fees collected. One item of expenditure may be increased. We are endeavouring to establish courts in additional country centres. We hope to be able to re-establish a magistrate at Carnarvon, the centre of a vast territory. This will not involve a great increase of expenditure, but will give satisfaction to the people of the district, who have been agitating for the re-establishment ever since the position was abolished. That, however, will not be done for some months. Wherever warranted, we hope to supply such facilities. While that will mean increased expenditure, it will also bring increased revenue, besides giving satisfaction to the people. The member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty) has been insistent that a local court should be established at Harvey, the centre of a large and comparatively prosperous district. At present residents of Harvey have to use the court at Pinjarra or Bunbury.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Only because they are prosperous can they afford to have such facilities.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: When people are prosperous they can afford to have arguments and pay to settle them. Facilities granted to such districts really pay for themselves.

**HON. C. G. LATHAM** (York) [9.11]: I protest against the appointment of the Crown Prosecutor as legal adviser to members on Bills. At this time of the year when Parliament is sitting, the Supreme Court is also sitting, and the Crown Prosecutor is not available to members when they want his services. Amendments desired by members should be drafted by a Parliamentary draftsman and members should not have to rely upon a man who is otherwise very busy. I am of opinion that while Parliament is sitting we should have a draftsman in the building. This session we shall be sitting late in order to cope with the business, and it is likely that no end of trouble will be experienced later if amendments are inserted without due advice and consideration as to their effect on existing legislation. I do not know why the Crown Prosecutor was selected. It is the first time he has been chosen for the work. I understand that the Crown Prosecutor will be leaving the State shortly and should like to know who will then be available for the work.

**THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE** (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton—in reply) [9.13]: To an extent I agree with the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. For many years we had a Parliamentary draftsman in the building to draft amendments, but members did not avail themselves of his services to any extent. It was considered that he was wasting his time and the practice was abolished. That was 18 years ago.

**Hon. C. G. Latham**: A lot of consolidation is required and he could do that.

**The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE**: Seven or eight years ago the then Crown Solicitor (Dr. Stow) was appointed Registrar of Titles and Commissioner of Titles. We also had a Deputy Commissioner of Titles in the person of Mr. Harvey. Those positions have been amalgamated and Mr. Fewings has been appointed Commissioner of Titles. From an administrative standpoint the duties are now considerably greater than when Dr. Stow held the office, and Mr. Fewings would not have time to devote to the work of drafting amendments.

**Hon. C. G. Latham**: Probably he is not a Parliamentary draftsman.

**The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE**: They are all men with a legal training.

**Hon. C. G. Latham**: He has been specialising for a long time.

**The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE**: He has been Assistant Master of the Supreme Court for ten or 12 years.

**Hon. C. G. Latham**: What would he know about drafting Acts of Parliament?

**The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE**: The man who relieves the Master of the Supreme Court deals with more general legal work than most people. At any rate, it was deemed that he would hardly have time to devote himself to Parliamentary draftsmanship. Members must have some officer of the department to consult with regard to the drafting of amendments and private Bills, and the only other legal officer available in the department was the Crown Prosecutor. I am not saying anything against him.

**Hon. C. G. Latham**: Neither am I.

**The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE**: The Crown Solicitor and his assistant are engaged in drafting Government measures. They are entirely in the confidence of the Government and are not available to private members.

**Hon. C. G. Latham**: The Crown Prosecutor is in court from ten to four.

**The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE**: The Criminal Court does not sit every day. Now that the Criminal Sessions can be held in February, the sessions are not likely to be so congested.

**Hon. C. G. Latham**: He also represents the Crown at important inquests, and is sometimes out of the city.

**The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE**: If members find that the legal adviser placed at their disposal is not available, I will endeavour to make other arrangements to suit their wishes.

**Hon. C. G. Latham**: It would help the Government if you did.

**The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE**: It is helpful in regard to all legislation that members should have available to them legal advice. Particularly is this so when amendments have to be drafted hurriedly, say, late at night. For years Dr. Stow acted in this capacity, but his services were seldom availed of. If there is any cause for complaint as to the Crown Prosecutor not being available to members, I will endeavour to meet their wishes in some other way.

Item, Magistrates and District Allowances, £2,333;

Mr. HAWKE: The Northam magisterial district, owing to the continued development of the wheatgrowing areas, and the establishment of an increasing number of local courts, has become unwieldy. A great deal of the time and energy of the magistrate are expended in travelling from one part of the district to another in the discharge of his duties. I should like the Minister to look into the question of readjusting the boundaries so that the district may be made more workable and that no magistrate is called upon to carry out what is practically an impossible task.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is a large district. Some four or five years ago there was a proposal to make Merredin the headquarters of a new magisterial district so that all the work at that end of the Northam district might be carried out there. Had the position developed as was expected, a new magistrate would have been appointed at Merredin. Since the depression, however, the expenditure has had to be kept down, and anything that meant further outlay has had to be frowned on. We could not, therefore, give the facilities the district warranted. It may be possible to rearrange the boundaries so that some of the duties of the magistrate at Northam may be carried out by other magistrates. We might even alter the boundaries of both the Albany and the Northam magisterial districts so that there may be greater equity between them as regards the amount of work to be performed. The hon. member was quite right to bring the matter forward, and I can assure him it will receive attention.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 9.28 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 16th October, 1934.*

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

### ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieutenant-Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Roman Catholic Church Property Act Amendment.
- 2, Supreme Court Criminal Sittings Amendment.

### BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

*Second Reading.*

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.36]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put.

Hon. J. Cornell: Under the Standing Orders it is necessary that the bells be rung.

The PRESIDENT: Following the inviolable practice of the House, since there are more than 16 members, an absolute majority, present and there has been no dissentient voice, I declare the second reading carried.

Question passed.

Bill read a second time.

### BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT.

*Second Reading.*

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.38]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put.