

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 5th December, 1928.

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

LAND AGENTS BILL SELECT COMMITTEE.

Report presented.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [4.33]: I move—

That the report of the select committee be received and read.

I wish to point out that amendment (g) should not have been embodied in the report. It is not a recommendation of the select committee, and slipped in unintentionally.

Question put and passed.

Report read, and Bill ordered to be re-printed with the amendments as recommended by the select committee.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Town Planning and Development.

2, Poor Persons Legal Assistance.

Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—HOSPITAL FUND.

Reports of Committee adopted.

BILL—COAL MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans) [4.40]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) [4.41]: I oppose the third reading. I tried during the second reading and Committee stages last night to prove there was no necessity to pass this measure. The figures I submitted as authentic were vigorously disputed by the member for Collie. The Minister for Mines, by his silence during the debate, acquiesced in the hon. member's denial. The member for Collie was so sure of his ground that he issued a challenge to me. I said that only 26 inspections had been made during a period of three years. This worked out at 132 hours, equal to 18 days 4 hours, at seven hours a shift. These are the hours laid down by agreement, and ratified by Act of Parliament, between the coal cutters and the employers. The hon. member said he had inspected the books. The Act of 1902 provided that inspectors should inspect the mines at the expense of the employees. It is laid down in the schedule that the inspectors have to make a report and sign it. A copy of this report is kept in the books by the management and can be inspected at any time by those authorised to do so. The hon. member said he had himself been an inspector and had seen the books. He said he knew I was wrong. In other words he inferred I was lying for the purpose of opposing the Bill and putting up a case which had no foundation. He said he would resign from the Collie electorate if I would resign from the Mt. Margaret electorate if his figures were wrong, or if mine were wrong.

Mr. Wilson: The challenge still holds good.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Then I am afraid, Mr. Speaker, you will receive the hon. member's resignation to-day. I said my figures were authentic. In Committee the Minister said he had official figures indicating exactly the number of inspections that had been made during the period covered by my statement, namely, three years. The only difference was that the Minister said his figures were up to the time when he had the conference at Collie some two months ago. He had mislaid the figures, and had tried to find them. This morning I telephoned to him and said, "Last night you mislaid some figures. They are the official figures. Can you find them now and let me have them so that I may compare them with my own?" Mine was only an authentic statement, while

the Minister's figures were official. The Minister replied, "I have found the figures, and ascertained that your figures are correct. The only difference is that I think you said 3½ years and my figures are for three years." In my first statement I referred to three years, but later on may have said 3½ years. As these were figures, I read them from my notes and was careful to make no error in the matter. The Minister now says my figures are correct. I told the Committee last night I had not had fair play, that progress should be reported so that I might prove my figures to be correct. That privilege was denied me. I was taunted by the member for Collie and the member for Menzies while the Minister sat in silence.

Mr. Panton: On a point of order. I did not say anything about the hon. member's figures. I ask for a withdrawal of that statement. I do not know anything about his figures.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I shall have to withdraw the statement. I cannot refer to "Hansard" of this session, but we shall be able to do so next year.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will proceed.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I know; I have withdrawn the statement! I could not secure an adjournment in order that I might investigate my figures; I had to stand here with an array of evidence being furnished against me and condemning me for telling untruths. I told the member for Collie that if I were given time and found that I had been wrongly informed and that my figures were inaccurate, I would be honourable, apologise, and withdraw my statement. On the other hand, what has been the attitude of the member for Collie? Will he resign his seat, or will he deny the figures officially supplied by the Minister?

Mr. Latham: Knowing the member for Collie, he will play the game, and resign!

Hon. G. TAYLOR: What is the member for Collie going to do about it.

Mr. Wilson: Sit down, and I will tell you.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: As soon as anyone says a word about this subject, we have the spectacle of the hon. member rising in his seat, with his Caledonian impetuosity, declaring that he will resign his seat, if his point of view is shown to be incorrect! We get tired of that sort of

thing, which is rather childish. As though it would make any difference if the hon. member, or any other hon. member here, resigned his seat on such a point! It might be of great advantage to the people of Collie if the hon. member did resign! That is beside the question.

Mr. Wilson: Of course it is.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I oppose the third reading of the Bill because there is no justification for the appointment of a workmen's inspector, particularly in view of my statement. I have pointed out that during three years there have been but 26 inspections and there have been 91 inspections in the course of 10½ years. Does that record justify the appointment of another workmen's inspector at a cost of £7 13s. 10d. per week? The mining industry and most of our other industries are overloaded already, hence the unemployment that we have in Western Australia to-day. We should endeavour to encourage the production of wealth in this State, and not pass laws merely to make jobs for other people. If the Bill be agreed to, the Minister will be pressed by the unions to appoint an inspector, and he will not be able to resist that pressure.

The Minister for Mines: There will be no pressure upon the Minister if the Bill is passed. I will appoint the inspector without that.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Minister did not say that to the men! He told them it might be a half-time inspector.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, and I do not know that they will get even that.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: In view of the way the price of coal has increased, we should not do anything to still further increase it. I have before me an article dealing with the coal mining industry of New South Wales.

Mr. Wilson: What has that to do with the Bill under discussion?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The article deals with the coal industry of New South Wales and what happens in one part of the world in connection with coal mining, affects the coal industry in this State. If we cannot produce an article that can compete with other countries, our industry must decline. Apparently the Government cannot find genuine reproductive work for people without incurring expenditure that is not reasonable and uncalled for, when expended

on appointments such as that proposed under the Bill.

Mr. Panton: How will that affect the price of coal?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The article I have referred to was written by Mr. Harold Burston of New South Wales.

Mr. Wilson: Yes. Burston wrote several articles.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: In the course of his article Mr. Burston said—

Whenever the coal mining industry has encountered difficulties there has been a clamour for a Royal Commission, or some other form of Government inquiry. No other industry has been subjected to such persistent and comprehensive investigations. Practically every successive inquiry involved the collieries in increased costs, which intensified the artificial conditions that have been the direct cause of their existing serious condition. Demands for a Royal Commission are again being made, particularly by the Miners' Federation. Any such inquiry can serve no remedial purpose, except to expose for future guidance how serious have been the consequences of the intrusion of Governments into the affairs of the industry. The "peaceful settlements" that were made at the cost of prohibitive prices are the root troubles of the trade to-day.

Mr. Panton: You can blame William Morris Hughes for that.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Mr. Burston contends that no Royal Commission can assist and says—

No Royal Commission is needed to reveal existing problems or to seek the solutions. The causes of the crisis are apparent to any observer who investigates the cause of events over a comparatively short period.

He proceeds to show how the price of coal has increased during the period referred to, when Government interference resulted on each occasion in increased prices. He then indicates how coal prices soared and says—

The crisis in the industry is directly attributable to inflated prices. Prior to 1916 the price of Newcastle large coal had for many years been steady at 11s. a ton. Since then the increases have been—

		Increase.		Price.	
		s.	d.	s.	d.
1916	1	0	12	0
1917-18	3	0	15	0
1919	2	9	17	9
1920	4	0	21	9
1926	1	6	23	3
1926	1	0	24	3
1927	0	9	25	0
1927	0	6	25	6
		Decrease.			
1928	0	6	25	0

The 6d. added for child endowment in 1927 was removed in November last, and the ruling

price is 25s., with small coal at 19s. 6d. But these are Newcastle prices, and 3d. a ton for outward harbour dues and 10d. a ton railway (crane) charges, imposed since 1925, must be added for large coal leaving Newcastle.

Those figures are startling.

Mr. Panton: Those figures represent the selling prices.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Yes.

Mr. Panton: The companies have made great profits.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The prices were increased every time the workers came at the companies for more.

Mr. Panton: You know better than that! You know all about the working alliances.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker himself represented one of the mining constituencies in the New South Wales Parliament many years ago, and he knows something about the position. Mr. Burston proceeded—

Against 11s. a ton only 13 years ago, the cost of large coal on leaving Newcastle is now 26s. 1d. This means that £234 is required to purchase the same quantity of coal that £100 bought prior to 1916, and to this figure must be added the increased freight and handling charges to and at the point of delivery. Freight charges between Newcastle and Melbourne are to-day alone equal to the cost of coal in Melbourne 22 years ago. Prices ruling in 1906 were from 7s. to 8s. a ton, and freight amounted to 3s. 6d. Transport alone now costs 11s. 6d. a ton.

These statements and figures are enough to make us pause before we take a step that will place an additional burden upon this small industry of Western Australia. Practically the only client of the Collié coal companies is the Western Australian Government railways, and if the railways were to cease using Collié coal, the companies would have to close down the mines. At present there is a very capable inspector in Mr. McVee at Collié and he gets between £400 and £500 a year. He is a capable man and is the departmental inspector. The Government have to pay him, and his duty is to check the work of the State departmental inspector.

Mr. Wilson: That is nonsense

Hon. G. TAYLOR: That is the position, but members opposite will not admit it. They want a workmen's inspector to be appointed, who will be another check inspector and they want the State to pay his salary.

Mr. Panton: You do not know too much about it.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Under the second schedule of the 1902 Act, power is already provided for the appointment of check in-

spectors. That will be found in articles 52 to 54. In these days we would have regulations governing the position, but in those days such matters were included in the Act. By means of a subterfuge—I refer to the Bill—we are asked to appoint another inspector, and he is to be called a workmen's inspector, and he is to look after the interests of the workmen and be paid for his services by the State.

Mr. Thomson: Does that mean finding fault with the departmental inspector?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Should the workmen's inspector differ from the departmental inspector, the Minister or the State Mining Engineer will have to be sent down to adjudicate between them. We know what the position is on the goldfields. Every Saturday morning the inspectors meet and discuss the work of the week, and the programme for the succeeding week. The workmen's inspectors come along and discuss any points they wish to raise. Everything has gone on smoothly on the goldfields, but, as I have pointed out, should a clash of opinion arise at Collie, either the Minister or the State Mining Engineer would have to go down and decide as between them. Apparently Government members do not like the term "check inspector" so they want their inspector called "workmen's inspector." Part of the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1902 and part of the Mines Regulation Act of 1914 or 1915 which was passed in Mr. Seaddan's time, are similar. The provisions in the latter Act were included as a result of pressure brought to bear on Mr. Seaddan, with the result that he provided for workmen's inspectors on the goldfields. The same pressure is now being brought to bear on the present Government.

Mr. Panton: Did you put up the same fight then as you are putting up now?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not know. I have not looked up "Hansard," but I could not have supported it.

Mr. Wilson: I have it here.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Then go on and read it! Whatever I may have said then, I have had experience since. I do not want to say anything about the workmen's inspectors on the fields.

Mr. Panton: You could not say much about them.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: There is a lot of talk about them, and if one is to believe state-

ments he hears, it must be admitted that some funny things have been done. I will not repeat some of those statements, because I have not verified them.

Mr. Panton: There is nothing wrong with the workmen's inspectors at Kalgoorlie.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: I have not heard any of those funny stories.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: One of the workmen's inspectors recently contested the Leonora seat.

Mr. Cowan: There is nothing wrong with that.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am not saying there is anything wrong with it. Pressure will be brought to bear upon the Minister regarding the appointment of these men. There is no necessity for it. The men to be appointed will be appointed to supervise and check the work of qualified inspectors who have had to pass searching examinations.

The Minister for Mines: Pretty stiff examinations, too.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: They are highly capable men. If there is any set of men employed in highly technical work, it is those departmental inspectors. We have always been able to get good officers in the Mines Department, yet we are to put on a workmen's inspector to check them, a workmen's inspector who has only to pass the popularity test in the union. If he is a good unionist and has had five years as a coalminer, he will be eligible for appointment under the Bill.

Mr. Panton: Miners are good judges of other men.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is of no use the hon. member trying to make me believe that a workmen's inspector without going through the necessary examinations can check the work of a mining inspector who has gone through the mill. If you can pick a man out of a face, a man capable of supervising the work of a mining inspector, why do you put a mining inspector through such severe tests?

Mr. Chesson: You cannot fault any workmen's inspector.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: You cannot expect to get as capable a man from the face, a working miner, as is a departmental inspector who has devoted his life to the technical side of his work. A number of our

inspectors have graduated in the School of Mines at Ballarat.

Mr. Panton: The best mine managers in Australia to-day are men who have graduated in the mines from the truck upwards.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I have seen a few of them and I am bound to say the men who have gone through those tests must be more capable than the men who have never passed any examinations. They start out with all the knowledge of the workmen, plus their own studies.

Mr. Chesson: They do not start out with the knowledge of the workmen; they get that afterwards.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: There can be no doubt that these billets are created for "valued members of our party." If the country could afford these appointments, it might not be so objectionable. But when we have so many men unemployed in December, and when we remember that never before have we had unemployment at this time of the year, it ought to make us pause before adding to the costs of the industry. We have had unemployed men tackling this Chamber. Last night the galleries were full of young unemployed men, men who on their appearances ought to be able to do a good day's work: yet they say they cannot get work and that they are hungry. They cried out from the gallery, "We are workless and hungry. The pangs of hunger have brought us here. What are you going to do for us?" That ought not to be in a young State like this, spending millions of money per annum on development. In those conditions we are not justified in passing the third reading of the Bill. I ask the member for Collie what is his attitude now that the Minister has borne out my statement and said that the figures I gave last night were correct. They have been proved correct by the officials of the Mines Department. What is the hon. member going to do? Let him own up and apologise for having attacked me and accused me of telling untruths in the House. I have never been guilty of that, and I am not guilty now, and I will not stand such accusations from the member for Collie.

MR. WILSON (Collie) [5.6] The hon. member who has just sat down has left me entirely perplexed. The more he spoke the less I understood what he was talking about.

The very thing he is condemning now is the thing he supported and voted for in 1915.

Hon. W. J. George: He has reformed since then.

Mr. WILSON: He was taken to task by the then Leader of the Opposition, the late Hon. Frank Wilson, for adopting the attitude he did. I have not twisted. If there has been any twisting it has been done by the hon. member. Let me come to the price of coal. The hon. member spoke of Newcastle coal. With the half truths he has been telling, he forgot to mention that the last four increases, totalling 4s. 6d. per ton, have not applied to Collie. In 1926 the Eastern coal owners and miners got an increase of 1s. 6d. per ton. Again, in the same year they got an increase of 1s. per ton. In 1927 they got an increase of 9d. per ton and again in the same year another increase of 6d. per ton. This year they have lost 6d. per ton. So that since 1920 the Newcastle companies have had an increase of 4s. 6d. per ton in the price of coal, whereas the Collie companies have not asked for one penny increase.

Mr. Thomson: They must have been on a jolly good wicket.

Mr. WILSON: It serves to show the jolly good sense of the coal miners and those who have led them and told them to let well enough alone. More than that, we could have got that money, or alternatively the department would have had to take Newcastle coal.

Hon. G. Taylor: You did not wish to kill the goose that was laying the golden eggs.

Mr. WILSON: The hon. member insults the intelligence of his leader when he speaks of the price of Collie coal as against the other coal. Figures have been given in the House showing that at the present time the Government are getting a 7s. per ton bonus when they use Collie coal. Now we come to the question of those figures. I have got the figures issued by the department. What I said last night was perfectly true, but my friend is not in the know.

Hon. G. Taylor: The Minister is.

Mr. WILSON: No, he is not.

Hon. G. Taylor: Well, then, I am in good company.

Mr. WILSON: I am in better company, for I know the whole truth. The hon. member questioned my right to be a check inspector. I have been a check inspector for

years past, and I know my duties from A to Z. Many inspections have been made in Collie and the reports have not been entered in the books. My friend quoted six mines, whereas the figures deal with only four mines. One mine that stopped some time ago has not been mentioned at all. I refer to the Premier mine. The inspector's report was honest in not including that mine, but still inspections had been made in that mine. Again, it is not the inspector's duty to take notice of the workmen's inspectors if they do not sign a report. The hon. member talks about the hours those men work. A check inspector is appointed from, say, Al-lanson, and has to go to Cardiff, 11 miles to inspect the coal mines. It takes him three hours to do the inspections. How is he going to get back 11 miles to finish the day's work? Would anyone do it? No. He could not be expected to do it. It is a day's labour lost. The hon. member has counted only four mines, and there should have been five mines. Further than that, inspections often are made by the check inspectors, and they know there is no cause for anxiety, and so sometimes they do not sign the book. They are justified in thinking that everything is correct. But if they see anything that ought to be reported, they sign the book and draw the attention of the manager to the fact that that place is in a very dangerous condition. The manager sees these reports, and if he takes no notice of them the inspector comes along and may summon the company into court. To show that I was correct in my contention last night, I wired to the general secretary of the union this morning. This was my message to him:—

Have union check inspectors made any inspection of coal mines, Collie, within past three years, and did not enter reports in company's inspection book?

Here is the answer from the secretary—

Yes. Several inspections made, and no record entered in the books.

I knew I was right.

Hon. G. Taylor: Then the mining regulations are of no consequence at Collie.

Mr. WILSON: Collie is the best managed coal mining place in the world, and that without the interference of the hon. member. It seems to me a remarkable thing that after 15 years he should change his ground altogether after voting for the same

provision he is now so bitterly opposing. Two years ago he was hypocritical enough to vote for workmen's inspectors in the timber industry. Now he objects to the Collie miners getting the same justice as the timber workers. On page 1932 of "Hansard" of 1:15 it will be seen that the hon. member voted for this very principle we are asking for. I leave it to hon. members to take that for what it is worth.

Hon. G. Taylor: I suppose that was a party vote.

Mr. WILSON: Anyhow, I have wiped the floor with you.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans—in reply) [5.15]: I do not intend to be drawn into the argument.

Mr. Teesdale: You will be drawn into it all right.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Last night the member for Mt. Margaret made a good deal out of the fact that he could not get the Committee stage adjourned. I told him then, and I reiterate, that it does not matter whether there were six or 60 inspections, it does not affect the appointment of workmen's inspectors.

Hon. G. Taylor: The number of inspections was denied point blank.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: By the member for Collie, not by me. All I said was that I thought the hon. member was a bit light in the number he gave. What was running through my mind was that there had been 37 inspections. I searched my bag to find the notes but unfortunately they were in the office. To-day the hon. member rang up and I told him that the report showed 26 inspections made by the check inspectors in the last three years. I wrote for the information a couple of months ago and that was the reply.

Hon. W. J. George: What was the cost to the State of those inspections?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Nothing.

Hon. W. J. George: Then what is all the fuss about?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: That is what I want to know. This Bill is designed to sanction the appointment of a part-time workmen's inspector, and if it becomes law the State will have to pay his expenses. Under existing conditions the union have to pay.

Hon. W. J. George: The member for Mt. Margaret is protecting the State and the Government are protecting the union.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Nobody single-handed makes an inspection as a check inspector. Every time such an inspection is made it is made by two men. Consequently the 26 inspections recorded in the three years were made by two men, so that if there was only one workmen's inspector on the job the number would have to be doubled. If there is no bad air in a mine and if the ventilation is satisfactory, no entry is made in the record book.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is not what the schedule to the Act says.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am told that only when it is discovered the ventilation is bad, the air insufficient, the ground bad, or that there is some other defect, is the result recorded in the book. When the inspector comes along he sees the entry, as also does the mine manager. If the mine manager does not attend to the defect the inspector draws his attention to it, and if the manager still neglects to take action, he is summoned before the court.

Hon. W. J. George: Has not the Government inspector power enough to see that that work is done?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

Hon. W. J. George: Then why have two?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Why have workmen's inspectors in the gold mines? Workmen's inspectors are essential in the interests of the miners. It has been stated that the workmen's inspector simply checks the work of the official inspector. Sometimes for a year on end the departmental inspector does not see the mine from an inspection point of view.

Mr. Davy: Have you sufficient inspectors?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have sufficient departmental inspectors for both the gold mines and the coal mines. At Collie we have a man who, I believe, is very competent.

Mr. Wilson: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: At the same time the Collie miners have a perfect right to ask for the appointment of a workmen's inspector. It is idle for the member for Mt. Margaret to talk about pressure being brought to bear on the Government. If the Bill passes, when the regu-

lations are framed, I shall notify the men and make arrangements for the election by them of a workmen's inspector. He will be appointed without any pressure whatever. No pressure is needed. I would not have introduced the Bill had I not intended to appoint a workmen's inspector. I shall not appoint one until the time comes. That is why I wrote to Collie to ascertain the number of inspections made. I told the mine managers and the men at the conference—I did not then know the number of inspections made—that in all probability I would be prepared to give them 100 per cent. on the number when considering the appointment of a workmen's inspector. I am still prepared to do that. No reason has been advanced by the member for Mt. Margaret why the Bill should not be read a third time. The hon. member indulged in heroics about this legislation increasing the cost of coal. It will not add a half-penny to the cost of coal. I admit that it will affect Consolidated Revenue to the extent of the inspector's wages during the period he acts as inspector, but it will have no effect on the price of coal.

Mr. Davy rose to speak.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister's reply closes the debate.

Mr. Davy: I thought the Minister moved it formally.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister was in charge of the Bill and has replied to the debate.

Hon. G. Taylor: We would have disapproved his statement.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I move—

That the Bill be transmitted by message to the Legislative Council and its concurrence desired therein.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) [5.24]: I desire to oppose the motion to transmit the Bill to the Council. When I told the Minister that under the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1902 the inspectors had certain powers, he stressed the point—

Mr. Wilson: You cannot discuss the Bill again.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am opposing the motion to send the Bill to the Council.

Mr. Wilson: You want to make another speech.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Rule 50 states—

Persons employed in a mine may from time to time appoint two of their number, or any two persons not being mining engineers who are practical working miners, to inspect the mine at their own cost Every facility shall be afforded by the owner, agent or manager, and all persons in the mine for the purpose of inspection—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member can in no sense traverse the merits of the Bill when opposing the motion to forward a message to the Legislative Council. No stage of the Bill is embodied in this motion. Therefore the Bill cannot be discussed afresh. The motion for the third reading of the Bill has been carried and it is now only a question of pursuing the usual course of business by forwarding the Bill to the Council. The Bill cannot be discussed on this motion.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: With all due respect to you, Mr. Speaker, I am not discussing the Bill. I am discussing the regulations under the Act of 1902, which constitute a denial of the statement of the Minister. The rule continues—

The persons appointed shall forthwith make a true report of the result of the inspection, and that report shall be recorded in a book to be kept at the mine for the purpose.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is introducing new matter, the stage for the discussion of which has passed.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Then I shall have to bow to your ruling.

Question put and passed.

Bill transmitted to the Council.

BILL—ROADS CLOSURE (No. 2.)

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. H. Millington—Leederville) [5.26] in moving the second reading said: This measure deals with the closure of certain roads within municipalities and is similar to the Bill introduced each year in conformity with the requests made by local governing bodies in the districts mentioned. The Bill sets out the portions of roads that the municipalities desire should be closed. The business of the Lands Department is to make sure that the local authorities endorse the application in each case. When that is done we call for a report from the Surveyor

General and he certifies that the roads can be closed, and that the proposal meets with the wishes and requirements of the local authorities. Provided that is done the necessary enabling legislation is presented to Parliament. At this stage I do not think it necessary to deal severally with the various requests beyond stating that the road closure in the North Fremantle district has to do with an application by the Texas Oil Company. Clauses 3 and 4 are to give effect to an application for closure by the Shell Company, and Clause 5 has to do with the closure of portion of a road in which the Ford Motor Company is interested.

Mr. Teesdale: There is a good deal of the Yankee about it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Clause 6 is designed to give effect to the wishes of the Busselton council, and Clause 7 deals with the resumption of a recreation reserve on behalf of the City Council. In Committee I shall give the details and they can be examined as the clauses are considered. I am not permitted to give the details now. Measures of this kind are regarded as more or less formal. The point is that they have the consent of the municipal councils, and it is not permissible to close roads without Parliamentary sanction. The department have satisfied themselves in each case and the municipalities are satisfied. After the Surveyor General has reported, the requests are scheduled and put in the form of a Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Davy, debate adjourned.

BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—CREMATION.

Second Reading.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [5.32] in moving the second reading said: I do not desire to speak at length, because I do not consider that either the Bill or its clauses will need much consideration if hon. members are in favour of such a proposal becoming law. The practice of cremation is spreading throughout the civilised globe. There is

nothing new about it. In the United States of America there are nearly a hundred crematoria, and there are a great many in England and quite a number in the Eastern States of Australia. In view of the importance of many of the Bills and matters coming before this Chamber, it may be thought that Western Australia is in too early a stage of development to bother about the manner of the disposal of our bodies after we are gone. On the other hand, those who have given the subject some thought realise that the existing method of burial adopted by the white races is not altogether the best. Those who have given serious consideration to the future of Karrakatta, for instance, realise that cremation should become law, enabling those desiring it to be cremated. Thus we should probably in the long run effect a great benefit for the metropolitan area and for the State at large. The question of burial is not one which receives much attention in this workaday State, but the more one considers it the more one realises how inefficient, unhygienic, and wasteful of space in the existing system. There is nothing in the Bill which would suggest the taking away of trade from anybody. Should hon. members see fit to pass the measure, the effect would be merely to enable any of the existing firms of undertakers to erect suitable buildings and deal with cases in which cremation was requested from time to time. In Karrakatta cemetery there is already a site reserved for a crematorium. Under the English law—it is not often I talk law in this House, but I must do so on the present occasion—it is laid down that cremation is quite legal at Common Law. In other words, there is nothing whatever to prevent people from burning corpses subject to certain conditions relating to the police and otherwise. Already in this State, at Woodman's Point, several cremations have been effected. I think they dealt with Afghans and Chinamen mostly. Seeing that other Australian States have made provision for cremation, and seeing that we do not wish to have the Common Law of England running in here and making cremation legal without any restrictions, we should, if the measure passes, in a sense be restricting cremation rather than extending it. Cremation would be limited to the burning of corpses under certain conditions prescribed by the Bill. That, indeed, is necessary. We very seldom give thought to ourselves as we shall be when we

shall have passed away, but a nasty reflection has occasionally occurred to me. I ask every hon. member who may look askance at the Bill, thinking there is no need at this stage of the State's development to bother with such a measure, to consider what happens on those few occasions when a body is buried not yet dead. Such things do happen, and always will happen in every community that adopts the system of burial, because the regulations do not provide that a person should be knocked on the head when he has passed away. If that were the regulation, or if we carried out the provision sometimes inserted in wills, whereby nervous or neurotic people require that an artery should be cut, or something of that sort, there might be less need for the Bill. In 99 cases out of 100, beyond the certificate of the doctor there is no real proof of death. None of us can realise, until the occasion brings realisation, what it must be to lie in the coffin with the awful thought that he has to await death there. If that awful position should befall a member of the House. I think he would thank God if he could be committed to the flames, instead of lingering on for some days to a terrible death. We have heard of cases where people have been disinterred and it has been found that their nails have grown, and that other unpleasant things have happened. Another reason in favour of cremation is that medical knowledge is not absolutely aware how soon the brain dies after the body is already dead. There again, it would be terrible to think that members of our race, which does not practise cremation as it is practised in the Eastern world, should be condemned to lie in the coffin with the brain active although the body had passed away. A merciful committal to the flames in place of such a horrible fate justifies the measure, even if there were no other argument in favour of it. But the opinion of all cultured and civilised persons has been and is that when once we have passed away, the sooner we become ashes the better for each one of us. From the community point of view one cannot deny that there is no benefit from having a large territory like Karrakatta holding up the development of the metropolitan area and obviously becoming very soon too full to permit of additional burials. I believe that in 20 years the enormous Karrakatta cemetery, which already is blocking settlement and progress

in the metropolitan area, will be unable to accommodate any more corpses under our system.

Mr. Stubbs: It was a great mistake to put the cemetery there.

Mr. NORTH: That may be so. In any case, is it not better that those who have passed away should be reduced to a few ashes which can be placed in a little phial, over which the rights and observances can be made, and many thousands of which could be accommodated in a single house? Again, those who have questioned the effect of putrifying bodies are not too happy in their views; but that is a medical question and need not be stressed to justify the passing of the measure. I am told there is another reason why the Bill should be passed. It is said that the last member of the Western Australian Parliament who had the audacity to deal with the question passed away before he could bring his measure to fruition. That consideration is not going to stop me.

Hon. G. Taylor: You have got a bit ahead of him.

Mr. NORTH: If the Bill should pass, it would not have the effect of compelling anything. It would merely limit the Common Law of England, which runs in here and does not limit or prevent cremation. There is nothing of which I know in our existing statutes on cemeteries to interfere with cremation. Therefore I consider the time has come when we should fall into line with the Eastern States and other parts of the world and make provision whereby existing firms of undertakers, should they wish, could put up crematoria under proper regulations. Further, where permits are given for cremation, there should be proper safeguards to prevent crime, which might of course welcome the substitution of cremation for burial. It is obvious that the one little weak spot which may strike hon. members with regard to cremation as opposed to burial, is that cremation is inclined to hush up crime. We had an example of that not far from Kalgoorlie a year or two ago in the case of the horrible outrage committed on Messrs. Walsh and Pitman. The case shows that criminals were anxious to secure the benefits of cremation from their aspect. Therefore the measure provides carefully that in the event of cremation being desired by the trustee or executor, two doctors must certify to the death being from natural

causes. The Bill contains other provisions with which I need not weary the House at present. They substitute another safeguard for other cases, leaving the whole matter absolutely secure from the aspect of cremation causing hidden crimes to remain undetected. There is also a clause preventing persons interested, whether under the will or by some other reason, in the estate of a deceased from signing certificates of death. Again, there is a provision whereby near relatives may object to cremation in any case unless the deceased has actually directed it in his will. Apart from these aspects the Bill is quite simple. The rest of it is merely clauses providing for machinery and regulation; and a few penalties. I have placed the Bill before the officials of the House, and they assure me that it is free from snags such as requiring a message from the Governor or anything of that sort. I trust, therefore, that the Bill will have a short and healthy passage through the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Health, debate adjourned.

BILL—RESERVES.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. H. Millington—Leederville) [543] in moving the second reading said: This is another of the Bills which are introduced periodically to meet the requirements of local governing bodies, agricultural societies, and so on. Requisitions have come from various districts; and in every instance, as in the case of closing of roads, the local authority has been consulted. Inspection has been made by the Surveyor-General, and every care has been taken to ensure that the alteration is at the wish of the local authority or other body concerned. In some cases, as at Kojonup, an agricultural hall or a road board hall has been erected on land dedicated to that purpose or leased for that purpose to the local governing body, and afterwards it is desired to erect a building on a different location. Legislative authority has to be obtained so that the body concerned may dispose of the land, or so that they can build on another site more suitable to the residents and desired by the local auth-

ority. In connection with such a measure it is necessary that in each instance full information shall be given to the House. That will be done in Committee because each of the 16 clauses deals with different parts of the State and all have been set out so that they can be carefully examined. The Bill has relation to alterations such as I have mentioned and the districts referred to are Kojonup, Kondinin, Bruce Rock, Victoria district, Perth, Swan View, Mullewa, and several others. In Perth it is desired that town lot T28 shall be resumed and re-dedicated for church purposes. At Swan View it is desired to build a hall on a Class A reserve, and before that can be done it is necessary to have Legislative sanction. The agricultural society at Mullewa ask that a show ground be established on a Class A reserve and the clause dealing with that seeks Legislative authority. Another clause deals with the transfer of a portion of the land now on the reserve at the Old Men's Home, the object being to include it in the Dalkeith recreation reserve which adjoins it. The purpose for which the land in question is used at the present time is a rubbish tip. The Wongan Hills-Ballidu Road Board asked for authority to sell a block held by them so that the proceeds may be applied towards the erection of a new hall. In the Williams district it is asked that a Class A reserve shall be used as a school site. This request meets with the approval of the local authorities and the Education Department. In fact, in every instance the requests have been submitted to the closest examination and in no case has the Lands Department offered any objection to the request. I shall be prepared to give the fullest information to members when the Bill is in Committee. I move—

That the Bill now be read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Kojonup Lot 122:

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This lot is leased to the Kojonup Road Board for 21 years for business purposes,

and the board now desire to obtain permission to sell it and devote the proceeds towards the cost of erecting a memorial hall. A new hall has been built on Lot 247 and the land has been purchased by the board for £225. There is no objection to the granting of Lot 122 with power to sell, but there is no authority to endow the road boards and Legislative sanction is necessary.

Mr. THOMSON: I am pleased that the department have seen fit to agree to the request of the road board. The block is the site of the old road board offices and has become too small. The returned soldiers raised a sum of money for the purpose of erecting a memorial hall, but the trouble was to secure a block that was suitable. By the good offices of the then Minister for Works it was possible to enforce the resumption of an estate and the required block was secured and a fine memorial hall erected on it. The desire is to make it revenue-producing, but the necessary authority is required. I express my appreciation of what the Government have done.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: According to the clause, the Government find that fee simple is quite the proper thing. I suppose in that respect the Minister will not give preference to Kojonup over any other local body or individual who may ask for the fee simple in similar circumstances. The Government seem to have departed from their original policy. I am pleased they are weakening on what they considered in the past was essential.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member does not understand. First of all the road board was granted a lease and they afterwards purchased a more suitable site and built on it a hall. Now they desire to sell Lot 122. What the Bill proposes does not mean that the Government are departing from a principle. It is a concession that is being granted to a board that will utilise the money raised in a proper manner.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Kondinin Lots 31 and 63:

Mr. BROWN: It is at the request of the Kondinin Road Board that this clause has been included in the Bill.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Kondinin Lots 91 and 41:

Mr. BROWN: Lot 91 is the recreation ground at Kondinin. It is half a mile long and about ten chains wide and, as can be imagined, is quite unsuitable for recreation purposes. The desire is to sell this and go elsewhere or to sell a portion of it and buy a neighbouring farm and make the ground square.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—Reserve 10581, Bruce Rock:

Mr. LATHAM: I would like to know on which side of the road this reserve is situated, the east or the west side. There was a misunderstanding with the Lands Department some time ago. Two reserves were divided by a road. One reserve was set aside for water purposes and there was no well on it. Boring took place on private property and the land was afterwards resumed. The water supply, however, is now run from the goldfields main and therefore no exception can be taken to doing away with the water reserve.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Bruce Rock Road Board has applied for permission to sell this reserve and as it is not now required for water purposes, no objection is offered. The proceeds of the sale are to be applied towards the purchase of an area adjacent to the townsite for recreation purposes.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6—Victoria Location 7864:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I presume this clause will give the local authority power to raise money on mortgage on this particular land.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Turf Club have a 999 years' lease of this land. They have expended £1,400 on improvements, and desire to expend another £750 on building a grandstand. They have no statutory authority to mortgage the land without Parliamentary approval. It is desired that authority be given to raise this money on the property.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I take it the £1,400 was their money and that they now want to spend more on the property. I understand they wish to raise this extra money by mortgage. I suppose the Minister is satisfied that everything is all right.

The Minister for Railways: I am quite satisfied everything is all right.

The Minister for Agriculture: Yes.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7—Perth Lot T28:

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This land was vested in the church for a cemetery at East Perth, which is not now required. It is proposed to resume the land, and re-invest it in the Congregational Church for church purposes.

Hon. G. Taylor: It will not interfere with any graves?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No. It is part of the cemetery which has never been used by the Congregational Church.

Mr. SAMPSON: I take it that the bodies are gradually being moved from East Perth and that in a few years they will all have been taken away.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8—Reserve A2994:

Mr. SAMPSON: What area is it proposed to reserve for the hall site at Swan View?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The area is $1\frac{3}{4}$ acres. It takes off one corner of the reserve. The clause meets with the approval of most of the ratepayers.

Mr. Sampson: Will this be under the control of the Greenmount Road Board?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I presume so.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am glad this alteration is being made. Swan View has long been in difficulties because of the lack of a hall site. This is one of the finest residential areas in the hills.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: This is part of a Class "A" reserve. The clause will have the effect of rededicating portion of it to the Greenmount Road Board.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 9—Reserve A17409:

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This clause will permit the Agricultural Society at Mullewa to take part of the Class "A" reserve as a showground. The proposal has the approval of the local authority and is desired by the agricultural society. The department have no objection.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: These reserves were preserved against alienation by Governments by executive authority. We should

be informed whether we are justified in alienating this part of the reserve at Mullewa. The alienation of 58 acres may render valueless the remainder of the reserve. We ought to be satisfied that we are not doing a hardship to any locality affected by the Bill.

Mr. KENNEDY: Last year the people of Mullewa formed an agricultural society, but they had no land available for a show-ground. There is no proper reserve near the township for recreation purposes, except portion of this particular reserve. The township and district are going ahead rapidly, and there are now several hundreds of people to be catered for.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. SAMPSON: I wish to further the efforts of the member for Greenough in securing the block for the purpose of a show ground. Mullewa is progressing rapidly and the capacity of the land in the district is beyond question. Under Mr. Warren, the chairman of the local road board, considerable progress has been made with road construction.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I cannot allow the hon. member to enter into a general discussion on the clause.

Mr. SAMPSON: I quite understand that. I was just pointing out that the road board have recently made arrangements to spend £8,000 on the construction of a new town hall.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The clause does not deal with the town hall, but with a reserve for the purposes of a show ground. The hon. member cannot proceed along those lines.

Mr. SAMPSON: Exactly. I wish to indicate my appreciation of the work of the member for the district and the Minister in securing land for the show ground.

Mr. TEESDALE: Unlike the member for Swan, I have nothing complimentary to say about the clause. I have distinct recollections of remarks made by the Hon. W. C. Angwin on the floor of this House. That gentleman was jealous of any attempt made to cut down Class "A" reserves. It shows an extraordinary inconsistency on the part of many members that they are now so willing to agree to hundreds of acres being lopped off our public reserves.

Mr. Sampson: This is the best use that such land could be put to.

Mr. TEESDALE: All over the place we see parts of Class "A" reserves closed in with wire fences and cyprus trees. There must be an end to that sort of thing. At one time Class "A" reserves were regarded as something absolutely sacred. I will not weary members by quoting some of their own statements, as they appear in "Hansard," when we discussed this question on a former occasion. Here we are agreeing to cutting off 150 acres here and 100 acres there, and soon there will be no nice green reserves left where women may rest and children play about. All over the place we can see portions of the people's reserves cut off for the purpose of tennis courts, bowling greens, and so on. I shall not agree to the Bill without placing on record my decided disapproval.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 10—Reserve A1667:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I want some information about the clause. Will the Minister explain why some portion of the Class A reserve, where the Old Men's Home is located, is to be set apart as suggested?

Mr. NORTH: Will the Minister also inform the Committee whether the Claremont Road Board were consulted.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In each instance the local authority has been consulted, while in respect of this clause, the Chief Secretary has been consulted as well. The object of the clause is to cut off an unsightly corner of the reserve on which the Old Men's Home is situated, and to transfer it to the Dalkeith recreation reserve with a view to its beautification. The transfer will not mean taking it away from the people, and as it will be improved and beautified, it will represent an improvement.

Mr. MANN: If the area is to be taken away from the Old Men's Home and added to the reserve under the control of the Parks and Gardens Board, the move is desirable because the board have done excellent work along the foreshore from the Causeway to Claremont.

Mr. Corboy: Particularly at the foot of William-street!

Mr. MANN: The hon. member can deal with the foot of William-street when the

member for North Perth places his motion before the House.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 11—Reserve A15834.

Mr. DAVY: Apparently the road board is to have the block handed over with the right to sell. Will the Minister explain the position?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Wongan-Ballidu Road Board have applied for the block with power to sell. At present the block is vested in the board and an old hall was erected on it in days gone by. The board now wish to sell the property and to use the proceeds for the construction of a new hall on another block. Authority is sought to sell the old hall and the land and devote the money to the building of another hall on another site.

Mr. FERGUSON: Ballidu is not in my electorate, but I happen to know the circumstances of the case. The original hall is a derelict old building in an unsuitable part of the town, and the ratepayers propose to raise by loan £1,000 for the erection of an up-to-date hall in a more central position. That is why they ask permission to sell the old hall.

Mr. Davy: What will happen to the old hall?

Mr. FERGUSON: It will be sold with the block on which it stands. Actually the new hall is now under construction at the expense of the local people. It is only fair that the money realised from the sale of the old hall should go to meet the cost of the new one.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The hon. member tells us the local people are already building the new hall at their own expense and trusting to Parliament to pass the Bill. Really they are asking us to validate what they have done. If we were not to pass the clause, what would be the position?

The Minister for Railways: They would not get the money from the sale of the old hall.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Exactly. They are asking us to validate what they have done.

Mr. Latham: Nothing of the sort.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: If those people have done something they had no right to do—

Mr. Lindsay: They had every right.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: They cannot get any more money unless we pass the clause.

Mr. Ferguson: They are building the new hall at their own expense.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: If they have innocently done wrong, we will validate their action, but we should not validate it if they have done it with a full knowledge of what they were doing.

Mr. LINDSAY: I am surprised at the attitude of the member for Mt. Margaret.

Mr. Marshall: Nobody else is.

Mr. LINDSAY: At Ballidu the people raised money to erect the original hall, which is now too small for their purposes. So they are building a new hall at their own expense and are asking permission to sell the old hall in order to put the funds into the erection of a new one. The same thing has occurred in my electorate at two places, namely, Bencubbin and Trayning. In both instances the road boards borrowed money and erected new halls.

Mr. Lambert: Did they put the new halls near the local pubs?

Mr. LINDSAY: No, at Bencubbin the old hall actually adjoined the pub. That was why it was sold.

Mr. LAMBERT: The member for Toodyay seems to think it a mere formality to give the local authority power to sell a building on a Class "A" reserve and take the money for a new hall on another site. All such proposals ought automatically to be sent to a select committee. It should not be for the Government to decide whether a local authority shall sell one hall and spend the money on another hall to be erected on a new site. People should not be lulled into the belief that they can do that sort of thing without Parliamentary authority. We should have a most jealous regard for the ownership of these reserves, and we should preserve that regard. It should be no excuse that some people at Ballidu have started a building and desire to sell a reserve, and are using that as a lever for getting the proposal through Parliament. I regret that we have not some settled principle in respect of these reserves under which, although the Government may make promises, it is for Parliament alone to ratify the transactions.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member should have made his speech on the second reading. We are dealing with Clause 11.

Mr. LAMBERT: Having voiced my objection, I hope the Bill will be referred to a select committee.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The road board have asked for certain powers and members are saying that we are trying to validate something that is wrong. The road board have done nothing wrong. A block of land was purchased on which a new hall is being erected and now Parliament is being asked to give the board permission to sell the old block.

Hon. G. Taylor: To give them permission to do something they should not have done.

Mr. SLEEMAN: If Parliament refuses permission, Ballidu will have two blocks of land and two halls. It seems that some members are trying to hang up the business.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The member for Fremantle is not in order in reflecting on the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I called him to order.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am not satisfied with the statement of the member for Moore.

Mr. Corboy: What does the member for Irwin say about it?

Mr. North: Silence gives consent.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am not in favour of supporting people who start to do things illegally.

Mr. Sleeman: They have done nothing illegally.

Mr. SAMPSON: It would be wrong to allow the statement to pass unrefuted that the road board had done something wrong. The opposition to the clause is entirely unwarranted.

Hon. G. Taylor: There is no opposition. We are merely asking for information.

Mr. SAMPSON: The old hall at Ballidu has done service for many years and a new hall is being constructed of concrete. I inspected the building a few days ago and it would do credit to any town. The board should be allowed to sell the block on which the old hall stands.

Mr. FERGUSON: I am not surprised that the member for Mount Margaret had to refute the accusation of the member for Collie.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is out of order.

Mr. FERGUSON: This is not a Class A reserve. If a local body can acquire a quarter acre block of land, surely it should

have power to sell it and buy another. Asspersions have been cast on publicans by the member for Coolgardie. Even if the hall and the hotel are close together, both are lined with plaster boards, so what does it matter.

Mr. Teesdale: Brilliant!

Mr. FERGUSON: The clause will assist the laudable desires of the people and should have the approbation of members.

Mr. Davy: Who is opposing it?

Hon. G. Taylor: We are only seeking information.

Mr. FERGUSON: The hon. member has all the information he needs.

Mr. Davy: There is not the slightest chance of anyone voting against it.

Mr. FERGUSON: Then why make such a fuss about it?

Clause put and passed.

Clause 12—Reserve A4307:

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This Class A reserve at Williams was originally used as a recreation reserve. The local people have acquired a more suitable recreation ground, and the Education Department desire to have this block transferred to them for a school.

Mr. Latham: Will you strike out the latter portion of the clause that the block may be used for such other purpose as may be approved by the Governor, so that it will be used exclusively for a school?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is actually required for a school.

Mr. DONEY: Until the Minister had spoken I knew nothing about this matter. The present school is built on low-lying ground and the block referred to is on a rise and therefore suitable for a school. Perhaps the Minister might explain why he requires power to devote the block to such other purpose as may be approved by the Governor.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: There is conclusive proof that members should be vigilant when a measure of this kind is under discussion. It is a shocking state of affairs that the member for the district should know nothing about the matter.

Mr. Latham: He is only newly elected.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: He should have been apprised by the local authorities and by the Government so that his voice might have influenced members to do the right thing:

Mr. Brown: There has been no opportunity to advise him.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: He has been in the House for a week or two. We have no information as to the area of the block and for that reason the concluding words are necessary.

Mr. Griffiths: The area is eight acres.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The whole of it may not be required for a school and the Government are retaining power to use portion of it for another purpose. I am jealous of our Class A reserves and no alteration should be permitted unless ample reason is advanced for the change.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The member for Williams-Narrogin has been a member for only a few hours and cannot be expected to know everything about his district, which has about 5,000 electors. If it had only 300 or 400 electors, as has Mount Margaret, he would probably know all about it.

Hon. G. Taylor: But ten times the area.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Evidently the Minister is satisfied that the proposal is quite in order.

Mr. Teesdale: Do you belong to the Country Party now?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Teesdale: You have had two says already.

Mr. SLEEMAN: That has nothing to do with you.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Well, keep the member for Roebourne in order.

The CHAIRMAN: There is altogether too much cross-firing.

Mr. SLEEMAN: No doubt the ex-member for the district has been in touch with the Minister.

Mr. DAVY: I do not think anybody intends to offer the slightest criticism of the member for Williams-Narrogin. The discussion on the clauses has made it clear that before a reserve is to have its destination changed, the recommendation of the member for the district ought to be before the Minister. Such a procedure obtains in connection with the appointment of justices of the peace.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow the hon. member to pursue that line of discussion.

Mr. DAVY: I merely wish to point out that the change of the destination of a reserve is a much more important matter.

I do not say that if a member does object to such a proposal it should not be pursued, or that if he approves it is necessarily right.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In all these instances the Lands Department endeavour to satisfy themselves that the local people have no objection, or else that they approve. The piece of land here concerned appears to be in the heart of the town, and the local authority have to do with the lay-out of the townsite and reserves and so on. I do not know that it is the Lands Department's business to inquire of the member for the district. I consider that it is the business of the local authority to get the member to interest himself in the matter. I cannot guarantee that this particular case was referred to the member for the district, but in the vast majority of cases the member is consulted. Of course there is no slur on the present member for Williams-Narrogin in saying that he is not fully conversant with a matter which has been in process of negotiation for 12 months.

Mr. Davy: Will you lay down as a practice that the member's opinion should always be obtained?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I could not lay that down as a policy. I say it is desirable that the local authority should consult the member. When acquainting the local authority with a decision in such a matter, it is the practice to communicate the decision through the member for the district.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I hope I did not convey any reflection on the member for the district. I wished to convey that the hon. member should have been advised of the transaction, so that he would be able to inform the Chamber. The fact that the late member knew all about it no doubt explains why the local governing body did not inform the present member.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 13—Balingup Lot 198:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I have no objection to the proposed transfer, but the Minister might explain it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: An agricultural society is not a corporate body, and here the desire is to transfer to the Balingup Road Board. Mr. J. H. Smith has been consulted in the matter. It is

highly desirable that the land should be transferred to a corporate body.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 14—agreed to.

Clause 15—Merredin Lot 16:

Mr. TEESDALE: Here the Government are concerned. They appear to have valued the block themselves at £600. It might be worth £1,000. Therefore it should be put up for public auction. It would be interesting to know where the money is to go.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The transfer from the Lands Department to the State Savings Bank is not at the request of the local governing body, but is a departmental action; and I presume that is the reason why I have not been advised on the subject. The block in question is right opposite the Merredin hotel. On the other side of the street a similar block was sold some time ago for £850, a phenomenal price for Merredin. The block referred to in the clause is equally good. I wonder whether the local authority has been consulted. I know there was a move in Merredin to apply for the block with a view to utilising it for a market, and another move to obtain it for the site of a welfare centre. The member for Roebourne pertinently wished to know where the £600 is to go. I presume that like so many other amounts it will go into revenue. The clause represents a shrewd move on the part of the Government to get the best possible site for the savings bank. The Commonwealth Bank are building premises a little further down the street.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This is merely a departmental transfer. If this authority were not given, the land would have to be put up for auction, but as a savings bank is required, a valuation is made. The transfer, however, cannot take place because of the provisions of the Land Act that make it compulsory for the land to be put up by auction.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Why should we be called upon to legislate to give the Savings Bank an advantage over anyone else?

The Minister for Mines: The only complaint I have to make is that they did not fix the price at 6d. instead of £600.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Treasurer might have said that he wanted revenue and he would not be altogether pleased to hear the remark of the Minister for Mines. If the

Minister for Mines is going to administer the Mines Department under those conditions, he will soon have the Treasurer after him. I enter my protest against this form of legislation.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: We took seven minutes the other night to pass a million of money and now we have been for over an hour quibbling about a matter such as this. As a matter of fact, whatever money passes, will pass from one department to another.

Mr. LAMBERT: The State Savings Bank is run as a trading concern.

The Minister for Agriculture: Oh, is it?

Mr. LAMBERT: In a sense, it is. It is a State institution which takes care of the people's money and lends that money to the Government at a certain rate of interest. It may be more readily available to the Government and at a more profitable rate than to anyone else.

The Minister for Mines: And to the local authorities.

Mr. LAMBERT: If the bank acquires property which belongs to the people, the bank, like any other institution, should pay for it. We might as well say that if the State Implement Works required a block of land at Merredin for a showroom, some departmental officers could agree amongst themselves that the land was worth £3,000 or £4,000, that the price should be fixed at £600 and that the block should be merged into the asset of the trading concern. The underlying principle must be that no Government should be allowed to tamper with State lands unless it be for a certain specific purpose.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is why the Bill has been introduced.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes, so that the pros and cons can be ventilated and to enable us to determine whether the Government are right in making cross-entries of this description.

Mr. Corboy: The £600 goes into revenue. Move to strike it out.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not know that this initial slip on the part of the Government deserves the stricture of eliminating it. It is sufficient that we voice our protest. No matter whether we are on this side of the House or the other these are subjects for the wholesome consideration of all and we should ask ourselves whether we should allow the Government to barter by way of

an arrangement an exchange of this description.

Mr. THOMSON: I move an amendment--

That all the words after "apply" in line 5 be struck out.

I entirely agree with the interjection of the Minister for Mines, who said he would fix the amount at sixpence. I cannot understand members seriously suggesting that the Government requiring a block of land for one of their own departments should be compelled to throw it open for competition with the outside public. I never heard a more absurd suggestion advanced.

Mr. Mann: Suppose it were the State Hotels Department, would you say the same thing?

Mr. THOMSON: Yes.

Mr. Mann: Notwithstanding that it was a State trading concern.

Mr. THOMSON: We are not likely to sell the State Savings Bank.

The Minister for Mines: Many people would like to get rid of it.

Mr. THOMSON: It belongs to the people, to us. To charge ourselves money and put it into revenue is to place ourselves in a false position. We have objected to the transfer of loan funds to revenue, and the principle in this case is equally wrong.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I agree with the member for Katanning. This is a public utility. The State should be able to resume this block without any fee. I would apply the same principle to State hotels. I am opposed to the clause.

Mr. ANGELO: I am opposed to the amendment. Instead of striking out the words indicated we should add the words "to the Treasury to be placed in a suspense account." By so doing we would be following the principle that was adopted in the case of the central office of the bank. Taking the value of a block that was sold in Merredin for £800, I think £600 is good value for this one.

Mr. LATHAM: Why did not the Lands Department charge the Education Department for their land at Williams?

Hon. G. Taylor: That is not an earning department.

Mr. LATHAM: The profits of the Savings Bank go into revenue. Between departments the sale of Crown lands should be

without fee. No doubt if the bank were to buy private lands it would do so out of loan funds.

The Minister for Railways: No, out of capital.

Mr. LATHAM: It would only be a book entry between the departments in any case.

Mr. MANN: The assets of the Savings Bank must be fairly assessed. Less than a year ago a block of land between the coffee palace and the National Bank at Merredin was purchased for £650. The sum of £600 is a fair value to pay for the land in question. It is right and proper that the bank should be debited with the cost of the land.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I cannot accept the amendment. It is ridiculous to suggest that the Savings Bank and hospitals are run on similar lines. The bank owns land and buildings, and a proper account is kept of all transactions and investments. It is suggested that Crown lands should be handed over to the bank free of charge. If private land were acquired it would have to be paid for.

Mr. Angelo: Do the State Sawmills pay for the land?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. We had better not tinker with the manner in which the bank keeps its accounts. When it requires land it must pay for it. There is no book entry about the matter. The money will actually be paid.

Mr. Corboy: How was the price arrived at?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: By the Government Valuer on behalf of the Lands Department. The bank took no exception to it.

Mr. Angelo: It is a very fair value.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Instead of this land being put up to public auction, it is proposed to enable the bank to purchase it at a definite figure. The transaction could not take place without Parliamentary authority.

Mr. LATHAM: This is the first time Parliament has been asked to transfer Crown land from one department to another. Not long ago two blocks were transferred to the Agricultural Bank without legislative authority. In every new townsite land is set aside for public purposes. If this land is vested in anyone, it is vested in the Government.

Mr. Withers: The Savings Bank should not object to the method.

Mr. LATHAM: No; but we are setting up a precedent for the selling of lands required for public purposes per medium of an Act of Parliament. In my seven years here the only other Bill for the sale of land that has come up for consideration referred to a piece of land in Barrack-street required by the Savings Bank. In every new area a site has been set aside for the State hotels, and has been transferred to that State trading concern without any charge. I do not say that is not right. If the State hotels are sold, the State will then obtain the value of the land. Why should the State Savings Bank in particular be made to pay for land?

Mr. THOMSON: I am sorry the Minister cannot accept the amendment. The precedent which the clause sets up is dangerous. The amendment would empower the Government to hand over this Merredin lot to the State Savings Bank without holding a public auction. Then the transfer could be effected without this clause. As it is, the Treasurer, who is the Premier, as head of the State Savings Bank proposes to charge himself £600 for a block of land which he owns. He will take £600 out of his right hand pocket and put it into his left hand pocket, and then say that the State revenue is £600 greater. That is not a principle which the Chamber should accept. The Government are using considerable amounts of money from the State Savings Bank. Out of the bank's total funds of £6,690,458 the Treasurer has utilised for State purposes £6,487,412. I hope the amendment will be carried.

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

Ayes	10
Noes	20
			—
Majority against	..	10	—

AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Brown	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Doney	Mr. C. F. Wansbrough
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Griffiths	(Teller.)
Mr. Latham	

NOES.

Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munse
Mr. Corboy	Mr. North
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Cowan	Mr. Rowe
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Kennedy	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Withers
Mr. Maon	Mr. Wilson
Mr. McCallum	
Mr. Millington	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 16—Nungarin Lot 63:

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Nungarin Lot 63 was vested in fee simple in the trustees of the Ancient Order of Druids, Nungarin Lodge No. 89, and the Australian Natives' Association, Nungarin Branch No. 78, jointly. Since then the branch of the Australian Natives' Association has, I regret to say, become defunct. The Druids are now in charge. The board of the Australian Natives' Association have no objection to the whole block now being vested in the Druids.

Mr. Thomson: You should charge them something.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The land was granted originally to the two lodges.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: This clause is quite different from any other clause dealt with to-night, and can be passed without objection.

Mr. LAMBERT: I want the Minister to inform the Committee whether there is a building on the block, and if so where it is erected. The fact that the local branch of the A.N.A. has ceased to function is no reason why the block should be vested in the Ancient Order of Druids. Would it not be possible to reserve portion of the block for the A.N.A. for future use?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The block was originally vested in the two organisations, the A.N.A. and the Druids. I am under the impression that there is no building on the block.

Mr. CORBOY: I am not concerned about the clause, but I think we should take a stand against the granting of land to bodies such as the Druids. Two or three days ago a statement appeared in the Press that the Manchester Unity Order of Oddfellows had paid £250,000 for the business site in

Melbourne formerly occupied by Stewart Dawson. If these bodies, which should really take their place as trading concerns, can afford to pay such prices for blocks in the centre of one of the large cities of the world, we should not agree to blocks being given away to them without any charge.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not confining himself to the clause.

Mr. Teesdale: He has had a wonderful run!

The CHAIRMAN: The question before the Committee is whether we shall agree to the transfer of the block to the Druids.

Mr. CORBOY: I am not opposed to the clause, but I think the Committee should decide that land must not be given away to the Druids or any other organisation that is in a position to pay.

Mr. LAMBERT: I will move to strike out the clause.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot do that. He can vote against the clause.

Mr. LAMBERT: Then I advise the Committee to vote against it. The present is not the time to decide whether or not the A.N.A. at some future date will require their block at Nungarin.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We are not discussing the objects of such organisations, but merely the question of transferring a block. The hon. member should have dealt with this phase during the second reading stage. The hon. member must keep to the clause.

Mr. LAMBERT: One can hardly discuss the merits or demerits of the question at issue, without going into other phases.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I will not allow a general discussion.

Mr. LAMBERT: Then the only way out of it is to defeat the clause. If the Druids required land for the purpose of erecting a lodge room, it would be easy for the Government to give the Druids half of the block and reserve the other half for the A.N.A. It is not for the present board of directors to say that the association does not require the block. The A.N.A. is a national organisation.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We are not discussing that phase.

Mr. LAMBERT: This is a casual age and you, Mr. Chairman, and I can remember the days when it was possible for us

to get young people to take an interest in organisations such as the A.N.A.

The CHAIRMAN: We are not discussing that, and the hon. member must confine himself to the clause.

Mr. LAMBERT: That is what I am endeavouring to do.

Mr. Davy: You cannot keep the A.N.A. alive there, by reserving their part of the block.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is painful to me, as an ex-director and ex-president of the A.N.A., to know that the present board have sanctioned a proposal of this description. I hope the Committee will take a serious view of this question. I appeal to members to see that such blocks as this, originally reserved for a specific purpose, should be devoted to that purpose for all time.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is out of order in indulging in tedious repetition.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not wish unnecessarily to prolong the discussion, but I hope members will vote against the clause.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The clause is different from the other clauses in the Bill in that this land is the registered property of the two organisations, and it is now proposed to hand it over to the Druids as sole proprietors.

Clause put and passed.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1928-29.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 29th November; Mr. Lambert in the Chair.

Vote—Harbours and Rivers, £233,715:

Item—Fremantle Harbour Works, £83,215:

Mr. DAVY: On this item I wish to mention something that has been told to me, the accuracy of which I cannot vouch for. But it strikes me as being well worth refutation if untrue. I do not know that there is any matter in the public works of Western Australia which is attracting more attention than the proposed extension of the Fremantle harbour. There is a great deal of heart-burning about it among various sections of

people who are advocates of one scheme of extension or another. Earlier in the session the Government said that they proposed to have a consulting engineer brought to Western Australia to criticise or confirm the report of the Engineer-in-Chief. Later it was announced that the gentleman selected was Mr. Rustat Blake. I have been told—I do not state it here as being correct or otherwise; I want information on it—that Mr. Rustat Blake is a member of a firm one partner of which is a relative of the Engineer-in-Chief. I have been told that that firm, of which Mr. Rustat Blake is a partner, was the firm upon whose recommendation Mr. Stileman was appointed Engineer-in-Chief of Western Australia. I am not suggesting that if those facts are correct a man like Mr. Stileman, whose acquaintance I have the honour of having, is going to be influenced by them. I do not think he is the kind of man who is going to endeavour to induce anybody, because of a special relationship to him, to make a different kind of report from that which he would make were it not for that relationship; but I do say that if the statements made to me are correct the people of Western Australia are not going to be fully satisfied with the final decision if it happens to be in favour of Mr. Stileman. After all, human beings are rather suspicious and inclined to distrust each other. Only too often one hears it said that members of Parliament all make a fortune out of being members of Parliament.

The Minister for Railways: Only men who have never been here say that.

Mr. DAVY: But a terrible lot of people say it. In any governmental act, the Government should have regard, not only for the probabilities of corruption, but also for the probability of suspicion of corruption; and any appointment made to criticise the acts of our Engineer-in-Chief ought to be of such a nature that no one would dare to suggest that there could be any bias in his favour. I have not formed any opinion as to how the Fremantle harbour ought to be extended. I do not know anything about it. I have not the time to learn all the facts. Indeed I have not half as much time or opportunity for knowing all the facts as has the Minister for Works, who does not pretend to give a decision on the subject. We have to rely on our experts. We have one expert here who has given an opinion, which may be right or may be wrong. Now his opinion is to be criticised and checked, and

I say it will be a bad thing for Western Australia if the person brought here to criticise Mr. Stileman's views can afterwards be charged, if he supports Mr. Stileman's views, with being a person likely to be influenced in Mr. Stileman's favour. I hope the Minister will be able to state definitely that the information given to me is incorrect. If it is correct a lot of people will not be satisfied if the decision happens to be in support of Mr. Stileman. Of course if it is against him that will be the end of it. The Minister smiles.

The Minister for Works: That is very unfair.

Mr. DAVY: I do not think it is unfair.

The Minister for Works: You would be satisfied one way and not the other.

Mr. DAVY: I gather from the Minister's smile and interjection that perhaps there is something in the information given to me. If a man charged with a criminal offence was the son of a judge and nevertheless was convicted and received the maximum penalty, no one would be worried about the verdict, because it could not have been due to bias; but if, on the other hand, he was found guilty and awarded 24 hours' imprisonment which terminated the day before, the people would say that the father had been biased in favour of his son. So it is not unfair to suggest that if there be the relationship of which I have been told, people will not be satisfied if the verdict is in favour of Mr. Stileman's scheme. I hope no member will think I am casting any suspicion or reflection on Mr. Stileman. I know him and I am satisfied he is an entirely honourable man. I am not competent to judge of his professional capacity because I am not an engineer, but it would be unwise to have such a serious matter decided on a report by someone who may be suspected of being biased in Mr. Stileman's favour.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This is the first I have heard of any such report.

Mr. Teesdale: It is about the town.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have not heard the least suggestion of anything of the kind. The nearest approach to it that I have seen was a report in a newspaper that a man named Stileman had won a prize in a sweep and that he had given his address as care of the firm that had been appointed consulting engineers to the Government on the Fremantle harbour scheme.

Mr. Davy: That does not seem very near. Has the Engineer-in-Chief won a sweep lately?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not that I know of. I have not heard any suggestion until now that Mr. Stileman had any relative as a member of the firm. I do not think for a moment it is correct. Even if it is right, the facts are that the firm were appointed on the recommendation of the British Admiralty, and surely the recommendation of the British Admiralty is good enough for this Parliament to adopt.

Mr. Teesdale: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not want to go past them. The Agent-General asked the Engineer-in-Chief of the British Admiralty for a recommendation. He recommended the firm to whom they give practically the whole of their work—Sir Alexander Gibbs & Parkes. As I explained to the Press at the time, the firm had been engaged by the British Admiralty as consulting engineers. They have supervised the construction of the Singapore docks and big works in India and England for the British Government. The British Admiralty recommended the firm to whom they give their work, and we thought ourselves most fortunate in getting the services of such a firm. Our one regret is that Sir Alexander Gibbs himself is unable to make the trip, but he recommended one of his partners who would come out and afterwards report to him and his other partner. The three partners would then discuss the matter and forward a recommendation from the firm. When that was put to the Agent-General, he again approached the British Admiralty as to whether they recommended Mr. Blake. A wire was received that the British Admiralty strongly recommended him as a suitable man to report.

Mr. Davy: Did that firm have anything to do with the recommendation of Mr. Stileman?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know. I think the British Admiralty had something to do with the recommendation of Mr. Stileman, but the Premier, when in London, appointed Mr. Stileman, and I have an idea that he consulted the engineers of the British Admiralty before he recommended Cabinet here to appoint Mr. Stileman. The Government took the stand that

any recommendation from the British Admiralty was the best they could have.

Mr. Teesdale: Undoubtedly.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think the hon. member would suspect for one moment that the British Admiralty—

Mr. Davy: I do not want you to get the idea that I suspect anybody. I have merely told you what I have been told.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I forget the third partner in the firm, but he is certainly not of the same name as Mr. Stileman. Mr. Stileman comes from an engineering family; his forefathers were engineers and his brothers are engineers, but whether any member of the firm is related to him I do not know. I think the hon. member is mixing up the report I have mentioned. I saw that a Mr. Stileman had drawn a ticket in the Calcutta Sweep, but I have not heard anything about our Engineer-in-Chief being related to any member of the firm. Even if he was, the Government thought they were getting the best recommendation possible. They felt that if they adopted that recommendation they would be on pretty solid ground. I do not think we could go past the British Admiralty. We have gone to the highest authority within the Empire to get a recommendation on the work. The British Admiralty have recommended a firm whom they call in as consulting engineers to advise them. The firm have practically a monopoly of the British Government's work. Mr. Blake will come here and make an inspection and then discuss the matter with his partners, and we shall have the benefit of their knowledge and advice. When we were fortunate enough to get a firm of such standing I thought it would dispose of all suspicion. That is the only information I can give. I am sorry I did not hear the rumour earlier or I would have asked the question.

Mr. Davy: Will you check those statements? I have not merely picked up rumour; I have been told it is a fact.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think there is any hope of the Government going beyond the recommendation of the British Admiralty. We can stand on that.

Mr. Davy: If the statement is correct, would not that influence you?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know. I do not think the British Ad-

mirally would recommend a firm whom they were not satisfied were in every respect beyond suspicion. The Admiralty know Mr. Stileman well enough. I think I am correct in saying that the Premier consulted the Admiralty before Mr. Stileman was appointed, and they know he is here as our chief officer. The Admiralty also know the men comprising the firm who have been recommended to us. If the information were correct, I do not think we could go beyond the British Admiralty's recommendation. It is strange that if the rumour is current it has not reached me in some way or other.

Mr. Davy: I did not say it was current; it was given to me direct.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think the Government have a solid backing and I cannot conceive of our going to a better source. Had we gone elsewhere and engaged a firm haphazardly, there may have been grounds for saying that we had not selected the right people, but when we have a recommendation from such a source, I think it is beyond any question whatever.

Mr. THOMSON: When progress was reported I was drawing attention to the Auditor General's report and I hope the Minister will be able to give me some information. Page 15 of the Auditor General's report states—

Certain sections of the work (Fremantle harbour) were completed at the 30th June, 1927, at a cost of £218,422, regarding which the Engineer-in-Chief estimated the loan portion would represent 56 per cent. and the revenue portion 44 per cent. The former has been charged out, but not the latter, the amount of which is approximately £96,000. The Engineer-in-Chief also estimated that the work in hand would probably represent a fifty-fifty allocation as between loan and revenue. An amount of £72,376 2s. 6d. has been charged to the former, but nothing to the latter. Under the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act the capital expenditure in any year is vested in the Commissioners, and interest and sinking fund thereon is payable from their revenue. The portion decided by the Engineer-in-Chief to be a revenue charge is also chargeable to the Commissioners, but none of the revenue of the trust has been set aside to meet such portion.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think the hon. member is in order in discussing the Auditor General's report.

Hon. G. Taylor: When we get the Auditor General's report we cannot use it.

Mr. THOMSON: May I point out that £70,000 is provided on the Estimates plus £13,215 recoup to Loan Suspense Account,

making a total of £83,215. Surely I am justified in drawing attention to that matter under this item.

The CHAIRMAN: That deals with apportionments that do not relate to the Loan Estimates.

Mr. THOMSON: In this year's report of the Harbour Trust it is shown that the gross earnings have risen to £535,502, being in excess of the previous record by £35,566.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot discuss that matter.

Mr. THOMSON: The surplus over working expenses was £263,904, being within 10 per cent. of the present capital cost.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow the hon. member to proceed along those lines and discuss the trading ramifications of the Harbour Trust.

Mr. THOMSON: We are dealing with a principle that lays down that certain charges should have been levied against revenue. I am protesting against such a large amount being charged to Loan.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow the hon. member to discuss the trading operations of the Harbour Trust.

Mr. THOMSON: I move—

That the item be reduced by £70,000.

We are using the Fremantle Harbour Trust as a taxing machine.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot discuss the trading operations of the trust. They have nothing to do with the Loan Estimates.

Mr. THOMSON: The matter has a material bearing on whether the £70,000 should be charged to loan or whether the £133,849, which has gone into revenue, should have been used by the trust, rendering unnecessary the use of £70,000 of loan money.

The Minister for Works: That will not alter what goes into revenue.

Mr. THOMSON: If the £70,000 is spent it will be charged against the trust, which will have to pay interest and sinking fund upon it.

The Minister for Railways: More money than that will be spent. Some of it will come from suspense account.

Mr. THOMSON: It is proposed to spend altogether £83,215. If the trust used its own revenue there would be no interest to pay. The Treasurer is collaring all the revenue and putting it into the public funds.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot discuss that matter under this head,

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Some five years ago the Harbour Trust Commissioners found it necessary to renew certain portions of the wharf, because the piles had been attacked by teredo. It was also decided to substitute concrete for wooden piles. Had wooden piles been used the expenditure could have been met out of revenue. It was deemed uneconomical to engage in patchwork of that kind and it was agreed that it would be better to use concrete piles. The proportion of the cost of concrete piles was therefore charged to loan, and the proportion that would have been spent on wooden piles was charged to working expenses. In the railways, when 45-lb. rails are replaced by 60-lb. rails, the railway capital account is debited with the additional value of the 60-lb. rails as against the 45-lb. rails. So that it will not disturb the revenue to a large extent when extensive renewals are made in one year, we have a suspense account, by which the payments are spread over four or five years. Each year's revenue also bears a proportion of the cost. The original estimate for the renewals at Fremantle was £232,000. Out of that about £150,000 could have been charged as the value of the work if it had been done with wooden piles. We could not take £150,000 out of the revenue of the trust in one year, so that a suspense account was created and a certain amount debited each year to it. When the work was commenced an Executive Council minute was put through by the previous Government indicating the proportion that was to be charged to loan and that which was to be charged to working expenses to be determined on the completion of the work. The work has not yet been completed, and the allocation has not yet been made. The original estimate has been considerably increased, and more nearly approximates £400,000. The Treasury are now seeking to make an adjustment. They can no longer finance the construction of the work out of the Treasurer's advance, and have to make arrangements with the trust. However, adjustment has been held up in view of the Executive Council minute passed at the time the work was begun. The minute stated that the work was to be financed in the first place from suspense account, and that upon its completion one amount should be debited to working expenses and

another to capital. The work has not been completed, and the amounts have not been allocated; but an adjustment will be made. The amount of £300,000 will be spread over several years through suspense account. The Engineer-in-Chief will certify the amount of money expended on improvements. The Treasurer is just as anxious as is the hon. member to finalise the matter and place it on a proper basis.

[Mr. Panton took the Chair.]

Mr. THOMSON: The Auditor General, on page 15 of his report, states—

The Appropriation Act for the year 1922-23 provided that expenditure on the work, net in the first place from the "Advance to Treasurer," could be adjusted over a period of four years from 30th June, 1924. No such provision has appeared in any subsequent Appropriation Act.

The Auditor General states that the expenditure on Victoria Quay up to 1927-28 totalled £374,086, leaving £179,383 to be transferred to Loan Account. For the years 1921-22, 1922-23, and 1923-24 nothing was charged to Loan Account, though the expenditure in 1921-22 was £673, in 1922-23 £16,483, and in 1923-24 £28,076.

The Minister for Railways: Those amounts were from "Advance to Treasurer."

Mr. THOMSON: In 1924-25 there was transferred to Loan Account £23,300, in 1925-26 £36,128, in 1926-27 £35,585, and in 1927-28 £99,680, making a total of £194,703. That total has been deducted from the expenditure, which bears out what the Minister has stated. On page 16 the Auditor General reports—

Under the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act the capital expenditure in any year is vested in the Commissioners, and interest and sinking fund thereon is payable from their revenue. The portion decided by the Engineer-in-Chief to be a revenue charge is also chargeable to the Commissioners, but none of the revenue of the trust has been set aside to meet such portion.

In spite of that, the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners, after providing for the whole of their statutory obligations, and after purchasing assets to the value of £19,081 out of revenue, paid into Consolidated Revenue a surplus of £133,000.

The Minister for Railways: The suspense account will be adjusted, I assure the hon. member. The Treasury are just as much concerned about the item as he is.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not doubt the Minister's word, but this is the only opportunity we have of discussing the matter. In view of the criticism contained in the Auditor General's report, one is justified in calling attention to the position. I hope that next year's Loan Estimates will disclose a more satisfactory situation.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I hope the amount of £70,000 will be retained. There should be a larger amount on the Loan Estimates for this work. Last year £104,000 was expended, and this year it is proposed to spend £13,000.

Mr. Thomson: The revenue ought to be utilised.

Mr. SLEEMAN: If it is possible to utilise the trust's surplus revenue, it may be possible to spend this year as much as was spent last year. Victoria Quay should be renovated, and the North Wharf requires attention. Moreover, there are quite a large number of unemployed for this time of year. The work is necessary, and should be proceeded with; and sufficient money ought to be provided to furnish work for men now thrown out of employment who will enter other occupations later.

Mr. Thomson: My protest is as a matter of principle.

Mr. SLEEMAN: But the hon. member is trying to reduce the amount.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: This item should be decreased by £70,000, and the money diverted to the Bunbury harbour. In his usual style, the member for Katanning missed the point regarding the possibilities of the South-West. He did not suggest where the money should be spent.

Mr. Thomson: No, because I cannot divert money, seeing that I am a private member.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: This year the fruit-growers of Western Australia will send away a million bushels of apples. Of that quantity, 600,000 cases should go from the port of Bunbury.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot discuss matters relating to the Bunbury harbour on this item.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There is too much centralisation, with the result that Perth and Fremantle have attained their present dimensions. If we reduce the vote, the money saved can be devoted to other ports, and our action will make the Government realise the importance of developing the

ports of Albany, Bunbury and Geraldton, leaving Fremantle to secure its natural trade only.

Amendment put and negatived.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for West Perth raised a point that I wish to reply to straight away. I had this question put to the Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Stileman, by telephone: "Are you related to any member of the firm of Sir Alexander Gibb & Partners?" The reply I have received is that he has no relationship of any sort with any member of the firm. We should nail that statement down quickly. I am sorry I did not hear of the rumour at an earlier stage.

Mr. ANGELO: Ministers will remember that when we discussed Fremantle matters on a former occasion, I protested against huge sums of money being spent at Fremantle without a check being made with regard to the Stileman report. I am glad that action has been taken by the Government and that we are to have the services of a man who has been recommended to us by the British Admiralty. I am glad that the rumour mentioned by the member for West Perth has been denied officially by the Minister. At the same time, I do not know that it would have made any particular difference if Mr. Stileman had any relatives connected with the firm mentioned.

Mr. Davy: I think it would have made a considerable difference.

The Minister for Railways: At any rate, the denial of the rumour will stop the talk.

Mr. Davy: Exactly; that is why I brought the matter forward.

Mr. ANGELO: Now we are to have the services of one of the ablest engineers the world can produce, and it would be a good thing for Western Australia, and for Australia as a whole, if the Minister were to invite the other States to send their engineers to be present when this engineer of such high repute visits Western Australia. If the engineers were to meet here, they could confer and we would establish an important precedent with the result that in the future, whenever works of any first-class magnitude were undertaken in any part of Australia, engineers from the different States could meet and confer regarding the position. Recently a forestry conference

was held in Perth at which the leading experts from the different parts of the British Dominions were in attendance, and the foresters from each of the Australian States were present too. The same procedure could be followed with regard to engineers.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The member for Katingann is to be commended on bringing forward this matter. We are continually seeing references to these loan money propositions utilised to swell revenue, and the sooner we get back to a sound financial footing the better. The Premier the other evening said that certain works could not be carried out because he had to find something like £100,000 for the Fremantle harbour. Jocularly he referred to the Yarramony railway. Nearly half a million of money has been paid into the Treasury from the Fremantle harbour during the last few years. In view of that, the Treasurer should not have to be going to London for money.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Water Supply and Sewerage.
£5,53,000:*

Item—Sewerage and Drainage, Perth and Fremantle, etc., £160,000:

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Recently I had my property connected with the sewerage scheme. I had to pay £64. Hundreds of householders are paying various sums up to £70 and £80. It aggregates a very considerable amount. I should like to know whether that money is going into Consolidated Revenue as proceeds from Loan.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member will look up the report of the department, he will see that the department has to meet all charges. The system has to pay for itself. From that report the hon. member will see the financial position. There can be no disguising the operations of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department, because the balance sheet is annually submitted.

Mr. ROWE: I want to ask the Minister how much of the amount here set down will be available for sewerage at Fremantle and East Fremantle.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The amount is to cover the various sewerage and stormwater drainage works now in hand, which will take £144,000; the Subiaco ocean outfall £13,000; the reticulation area

No. 15, £1,300 to be paid for the balance of the work, and No. 16, £8,500; for the pumping stations Nos. 1 and 2, £5,522 and £7,117; Perth sewerage reticulation area No. 37, £3,200, and No. 38 £11,000; Fremantle No. 16, £8,000; sewerage house connections £60,000. That is mainly advances to householders, to be repaid by instalments.

Mr. NORTH: Touching upon the ocean outfall at Subiaco, I should like to know from the Minister whether he has any further information regarding the sewerage farm proposal for an area just off the septic tanks in Subiaco.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We did have a very good offer to establish a sewerage farm out near the septic tanks in the Subiaco area, and to use the effluent from those tanks to grow lucerne. The department was favourable to it, and in fact we fixed up all the terms ready to sign an agreement. But the City Council took strong exception and would not give its endorsement. So we were unable to proceed. Had the City Council not objected, probably we would have completed that agreement and established the farm.

Mr. ANGELO: A great number of house connections with the sewerage system in the metropolitan area are being put in by the Government, the cost being repaid by the property owners over a term of six years. I presume the expense of making those connections is debited to loan money. I want to know from the Minister whether it is a fact that the repayments are placed to the credit of the Sale of Government Property Trust Account. If so, under the Financial Agreement Bill all these moneys can be taken into Consolidated Revenue before the end of the year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The only money that can go to the Sale of Government Property Trust Account is the proceeds of any sale of Government property. No money from metropolitan water supply, sewerage, and drainage can go into that fund. If the hon. member will look up the accounts of the department, he will see where those payments are accounted for. It is not of much use having reports and balance sheets presented here if members will not read them.

Mr. Davy: Have you read all the reports?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I read all from my own department before they come here. All the loan money the department gets has to meet interest and sinking

fund, and after all charges have been met there is the question of profit and loss, as will be seen in the balance sheet.

Mr. Thomson: What becomes of the repayments?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They are all in the Treasury to meet the London charges.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Development of Goldfields and mineral resources, £82,400—agreed to.

Vote—Development of Agriculture, etc., £1,982,552:

Item—Agricultural Immigration, £7,500:

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am wondering whether we are doing right in bringing more migrants into the country, no matter for what purpose. In my opinion they are being brought out simply to flood the labour market. Only this week we had a number of unemployed in the galleries of this House, and it was unnecessary to question them closely to learn that a large percentage of them were migrants from the Old Country. Unless we have a reasonable chance of placing them in positions worth having, we should not bring them here. According to the Estimates we spent £7,639 on agricultural immigration last year and it is proposed to spend £7,500 this year. We are going to spend that money to bring people here to flood the labour market, put our own people out of work, and make more of them dependent on State charity.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think the vote is for bringing migrants out.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Then what would agricultural immigration be? The item is for immigration for agricultural purposes.

The CHAIRMAN: Then deal with it from that point of view.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Whatever purpose they are brought out for, it is wrong, because the work is not here for them to do. Pretty pictures are painted in the Old Country; people are told they can come here and get work on farms and obtain land immediately. Yet we know that land is not to be had and work is not available when they come here.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is not what the country people say.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do not care what they say. For every block of land open for selection there are 50 or 60 applicants.

Hon. G. Taylor: The farming community say there is plenty of work.

Mr. SLEEMAN: But the Labour Bureau cannot place the applicants for work.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is out of order in discussing unemployment on this item.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am discussing migrants brought here and left without employment.

The CHAIRMAN: This item deals with agricultural immigration.

Mr. SLEEMAN: We had a spectacle the other night—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is out of order in discussing the unemployed. He must discuss the item.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I wish to do away with agricultural immigration until there is a reasonable chance of absorbing migrants successfully. To have them filling the galleries of this House instead of being engaged in agricultural pursuits is wrong. If they are brought here for agricultural work, and there is no work for them, it is the duty of the Government to see that no man goes short of food. If they are brought here, let us be honest with them and see that they are placed in agricultural work. In order that we may avoid repeating the error of last year this item should not be passed. If it is passed, I shall expect the galleries of this House to be, not half-filled with unemployed, but over-crowded.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: On a point of order, I do not know how you hopped from Item 49 to Item 62.

The CHAIRMAN: We put the votes through.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I asked if I could discuss a certain item and then you jumped to 62.

The CHAIRMAN: The votes were put and carried in the usual way.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: That is hardly fair to me.

The CHAIRMAN: The votes were put fairly and squarely. The hon. member must resume his seat.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I specially asked to speak on a certain item.

The CHAIRMAN: It is the hon. member's business to get on his feet if he wishes to speak.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is not fair to hound members like that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must resume his seat.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: There is force in the argument of the member for Fremantle. He stressed the point that we voted £7,639 last year for agricultural immigration and the result was to flood the labour market and create an army of unemployed.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is distinctly out of order.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: What is the £7,500 for? Will you explain what it means?

The CHAIRMAN: I am not here to explain. I am here to administer the Standing Orders.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Will the Minister explain the item?

Mr. Latham: On page 25 it is shown for passages, etc.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The member for Fremantle said the effect is to flood the labour market. He also said they were brought out under false pretences.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has no right to discuss what the member for Fremantle said. He must discuss the item.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am supporting the hon. member's views.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has done nothing so far but repeat something the member for Fremantle has said. I distinctly told the member for Fremantle he was out of order.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The item is for agricultural immigration and the migrants do not fulfil the purpose. I wish to know whether we are justified in following that procedure. Because the member for Fremantle asked the question is no reason why I should not ask it. The Minister is not justified in sitting silent when members ask legitimate questions. I have some sympathy for people who are crying with the pangs of hunger. Apparently people are being brought out under subterfuge. The Minister should give some definite reason for asking for the £7,500, when the effect of it seems to be to fill the galleries of this Chamber with hungry unemployed.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Was I right in what I said about the fares for migrants? How many is it anticipated that it will be possible to bring out during the coming year with £7,500?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The State has not paid the fares for immi-

grants. They are paid by the Commonwealth and Imperial Governments. This item is for advances to nominated persons. The number brought out was limited last year. Those who say that unemployment is solely due to migration are deliberately misrepresenting the position.

Hon. G. Taylor: I am glad to hear you say that.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: People who say we can solve the problem of unemployment by not bringing out more migrants do not know what they are talking about.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister is out of order in starting a discussion on unemployment.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We have a migration scheme which has not been overdone. If we closed down on it, that would not help the unemployed position. Things would become far worse. We cannot control the Southern Europeans who come in, and limit the number of migrants we can absorb. Independently of that, there is the indifference in the Eastern States.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow the Minister to pursue that matter. He is out of order in opening a discussion on unemployment.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If I am to reply I must refer to other statements members have been permitted to make.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister can please himself about that. He was asked a question as to how far the £7,500 would go. I have prevented two members from engaging in a discussion on unemployment, and I cannot allow the Minister to do so.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Minister says that the £7,500 is mostly for the benefit of nominated passages. The time has arrived when these nominated passages should be reviewed.

The Minister for Railways: Yes, and drastically, too.

Mr. SLEEMAN: We know that nominated migrants have recently been coming into the State.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: And those who nominated them have repudiated their agreements.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am not going to remain silent while this is going on. The

local nominators have repudiated their agreements. The Government should stand up to their job and make those who nominate these migrants keep them when they come out. The Government should not set aside the sum of £7,500 to keep the migrants.

Mr. Teesdale: How much do the assisted migrants owe the Government to-day; not much?

Mr. SLEEMAN: I have met many nominated migrants. A boilermaker from Grimsby had been nominated by his son, who was a group settler. When the father and the brother and sister arrived the settler son was being kept by the State. The father, son and daughter were penniless, and the other son was unable to keep them because the State was keeping him. When the old gentleman applied to the Government for food he was told that his son would have to keep him.

Mr. Teesdale: It is not fair to quote an isolated case. You cannot prove more than a dozen such cases.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I know of a signalman from Northumberland. He was nominated and was told that when he arrived he would either get a good wages job or pick up a farm. That man was repudiated by the person who was responsible for his arrival. He approached the Ugly Men in Fremantle, and they asked me if I could get him Government assistance. Yet we talk of spending £7,500 in perpetuating this sort of thing. The Minister says that the man who declares that migration is responsible for unemployment does not know what he is talking about.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have told the Minister and other members they cannot discuss unemployment. I have already ruled the Minister out of order.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Minister for Mines could state the case of a man who was nominated, and the nominator took him to the Minister in the hope of getting him a job.

The Minister for Mines: And he was told he would have to be responsible for the new arrival.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am glad to hear it. If we go on like this the galleries will be flooded with unemployed.

Mr. ANGELO: Members should look at page 24 of the Estimates. This shows that a total of £418,000 has been spent on pas-

sages. I do not think the Minister can have given us the correct information.

The CHAIRMAN: We are not discussing page 24.

Mr. ANGELO: I question the information that has been given to us. The expenditure amounted to £115,000 in 1911, and to £100,000 in 1912. Surely this amount cannot be for assisted passages.

The Minister for Railways: That is the authorisation.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is out of order in discussing page 24.

Mr. ANGELO: Does the Minister still assure us that this money is for assisted passages?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It seems peculiar that we should be borrowing money to pay nominated passages for migrants.

The Minister for Railways: The amount is for advances for fares.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: We are borrowing the money in order to advance the fares?

The Minister for Railways: What else would we do?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: According to the statement of the member for Fremantle we have reached a peculiar situation.

Mr. Marshall: We are borrowing money to bring people out here and feed them.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Yes. When we have a deficit we meet it out of loan funds. We are not justified in borrowing money to pay for these nominated passages.

Mr. TEESDALE: Nominated migrants have caused little expense to the State. They have repaid nearly 80 per cent. of their indebtedness. Unemployment here is not due to them. Money at as small a rate as 1 per cent. is lent to us by the Imperial Government, who surely should be permitted to emphasise the class of migrant they desire to have helped. The nomination system is popular at Home. In several instances I have been responsible for the fares of nominated migrants, and I have never yet had to pay a shilling on their account. I am surprised that a Minister should back up statements which must give offence in the Old Country.

Mr. DAVY: As I understand the Minister, this £7,500 is spent on paying the passages of nominated migrants.

The Minister for Railways: Spent on advances.

Mr. DAVY: Why are we going to spend that sum out of Loan Funds this year?

If that is the purpose, money should be set aside for it, and repayments should go into the same fund. What happens to money repaid? Do they go into revenue?

The Minister for Railways: No.

Mr. DAVY: Where do they go, then?

•The Minister for Railways: You will see the particulars on page 24.

Mr. DAVY: But why should Loan Funds be spent on such a purpose?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: There is a proper system of accounting as regards immigration, just as there is with regard to the Agricultural Bank and workers' homes. The accounts are reported on by the Auditor General. Funds are made available as required. The Government have drastically reviewed the conditions governing nomination of migrants. Ninety per cent. of the nominations result quite satisfactorily, but the remaining 10 per cent. attract a disproportionate amount of attention. The Government now require to be assured that the nominator is a responsible person as well as a near relative of the migrant, and that he is in a position to look after the migrant. Trouble has arisen because a few irresponsible persons have airily undertaken responsibilities which they had no idea of carrying out. I think there will be a considerable reduction in the number of nominated migrants—who are not subject to such strict selection—as compared with the number of selected migrants. The existing system cannot be stopped in a week or a fortnight, and some expense will be incurred this year; hence the item.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The more the Minister has said on the subject, the more he has clouded the issue.

The Minister for Mines: The Minister is not able to give you the brains to understand!

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Minister referred us to page 24 for the details of the expenditure under the heading of agricultural immigration.

The Minister for Railways: That expenditure may be spread over ten years or more.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The details show the amounts from loan money ranging from £10,000 in 1904 to £115,000 in 1911 and back to £10,000 in 1928.

The Minister for Railways: That table gives the details of the authorisations from loans.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not know that we are justified in floating loans for this purpose. I do not object to migrants being brought out and placed upon the land, but do not let us live in a fool's paradise, and be hypocrites with ourselves. If we cannot compel others to stand up to their agreements, we must let things slide and make the best of it. There seems to be something in the suggestion that this sort of thing has had an effect in creating unemployment.

Mr. Teesdale: You cannot prove that statement!

Item, Development of Agriculture, £93,000:

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The vote for the item has increased from £70,174 to £93,000. We have experimental farms scattered throughout the Wheat Belt and elsewhere, but not in the South-West.

Mr. Chesson: What about the group settlements? Are they not experiments?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am astonished at that interjection! Had the previous Government and the present Government established experimental farms in the group areas, there would have been a saving, on a conservative basis, of at least £1,000,000 on the groups.

Mr. Chesson: That would not have cleared the land.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Members who are supposed to represent the agricultural interests cannot see beyond wheat! If they were able to do so, they would realise that there were other forms of production.

Mr. Thomson: So we do, and that is why we include them in our policy.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: And yet the member for Beverley said there was not a bit of good land in the South-West portion of the State, and that he could take a cricket ball and throw it over all the good land!

Mr. Thomson: He said nothing of the sort.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The hon. member is a prevaricator.

Mr. Lindsay: Is that statement you have referred to in "Hansard"?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes.

Mr. Griffiths: You are telling half the story.

Mr. SMITH: I do not know why the Government are so short sighted that they have not made provision for five or six experimental farms in the South-West. At the Manjimup show, Mr. Ferguson had a splendid exhibit of 33 types of fodder grasses. Thousands of pounds could have been saved had the previous and present Governments established something in the nature of experimental farms to show what the South-West could produce. It is not too late even yet, for there is any amount of vacant land available. Then this vote would be warranted. The Government ought to realise even now that the South-West is going to be the salvation of the State.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This item has nothing to do with the Agricultural Department. It is in the Lands Department. Last year the expenditure was considerably lower than this year. The money will be expended largely on survey work. We expect the expenditure to increase this year on account of the increased activities in the Survey Department. The land is being classified and a large number of surveyors are employed on that work between Southern Cross and Salmon Gums, and between the terminus of the Ejangding-Northwards railway and the Cue railway, and also on the vacant Crown lands north of Mullewa, extending past Balla and Dartmore to the Murchison River. This preliminary classification work is undertaken with a view to obtaining definite information before the permanent surveys are effected. It is contended that survey work amounts to a permanent asset. The cost of such work is tacked on to the price of the holding. Money has to be advanced for the survey of all conditional purchase lands, and as the survey fees are paid by the successful applicants, the money is taken into revenue and credited to the loan money originally advanced.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

Item, Development of Agriculture, £14,000:

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Perhaps the Minister will tell us what this item means.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Previously this expenditure was from the Land Improvement Trust Account, which was recently abolished. Practically all this money is required for the development of

the experimental farms recently established at Salmon Gums, Ghooli and Dampawah. The expenditure includes fencing, purchase of stock plant and machinery, new buildings and clearing. The balance of the money will be utilised for freight on water for settlers, and payment of interest on butter factories erected. We give them a concession in interest, the difference having to be paid out of this item. We have had considerable expenditure in establishing the three new farms.

Mr. SAMPSON: I fully realise the importance of fruit experimental farms. Hitherto no provision has been made for that work. I should like to know whether there is on the Loan Estimates any amount for the purpose. It is very important that the fruitgrowers should have the latest information about the best export varieties of fruit, and also that experiments in refrigeration should be made in order to enable the fruit to be carried safely overseas. Every phase of agriculture must be exploited, but there is neglect in regard to fruit production and refrigeration, and the care of fruit in transport. I ask the Minister whether any money is provided on the Estimates to assist orchardists, and whether the fruitgrowers are given any consideration whatever. If no answer is forthcoming it will savour of an indifference, not to me, but to that great primary industry, fruitgrowing.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not know whether the hon. member suggests that the Agricultural Department neglects the fruitgrowing industry. There is no industry better catered for by the department than is that of fruitgrowing. What does the hon. member suggest should be done for the orchardists? Would he have us establish experimental orchards? Already the industry itself is very well established, and it would be just as wise to suggest the establishment of an experimental wheat farm at Northam. We have orchardists possessing a greater knowledge of the business than could be obtained from an experimental farm. At one time we had an experimental orchard but it was uprooted.

Mr. Thomson: That was a State orchard.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not think our orchardists took their time from that orchard. They are well able to conduct their industry. They are entitled to the advice of experts associated with the

Agricultural Department and that advice is freely given them. There is no State in Australia that has more efficient experts than we have. Orchardists are assisted in the matter of coping with plant diseases and insect pests, and in fact in every way. The officers are not only active, but enthusiastic, and throughout the fruitgrowing districts they have given the settlers the best advice. Whenever growers have been faced with a problem the officials have tackled it. Experimental orchards are not desired by the growers. What they want is assistance to solve the problems in their orchards and they get that assistance from the department. I defy the hon. member to show that even in the wealthy States better service is given to the orchardists than is given by our officers. It is not the intention of the Government to appoint any additional experts. The department is well equipped, the orchardists are getting good service and there have been no complaints.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not accuse the Government of neglecting the fruit industry, but experimental farms established to provide pedigreed stock, seed wheat and oats true to type and suited to various districts have performed valuable work. The member for Nelson took me to task and said the only State orchard here had been torn up by a former Leader of the Country Party. We maintain that if it is fair and reasonable to have State farms for cereals we should have State nurseries. The Fruit Growers' Association carried a motion that it was desirable State nurseries should be established. Let me point out the benefits to be derived from a State nursery at Bridgetown or Mt. Barker. We have fruit trees that are giving a higher percentage of fruit than are other trees and, just as it is sound business to propagate prolific cereals, so it should be with fruit trees.

Mr. Chesson: But the fruit industry has passed the nursery stage.

Mr. THOMSON: If a man plants cereals that do not give a good return, he loses only one season, but it takes four or five years for a fruit tree to develop and it means serious loss if a man has carried on an orchard for four or five years and then has to cut out the trees or graft and bud on stock that will give better results. If State nurseries were established, fruit trees could be propagated that would give the best results, and growers could be supplied with young trees true to type. Such a nursery could

be used also to experiment in combating diseases common to the fruit industry. For years we have urged the necessity for establishing experimental plots for the development of pastures. If the South-West is to be developed as we desire, it is essential to experiment on pasture. I can speak of the results achieved as the result of continued agitation by settlers in portion of my district. They asked for assistance in the shape of topdressing to establish their pastures. If the same principle were put into effect in the South-West the desires of the member for Nelson would be attained. I endorse his remarks as to the desirableness of establishing experimental plots in those areas, but most important of all is the need for making available super for topdressing to enable the pastures to be made permanent.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you suggest that should be done with loan funds?

Mr. THOMSON: Where do the Government get the money with which to establish experimental farms? That comes out of loan funds, and we shall be able to get the money back.

The Minister for Agriculture: We conduct experimental plots, but not from loan funds. That is also done in the South-West.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: In a modified form.

Mr. THOMSON: We should establish a State nursery. That would be beneficial to orchardists generally. When a farmer gets wheat from the department he knows that it will be true to type. The same principle should apply to fruit trees. It is difficult to secure trees that are true to type.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is a severe criticism of private enterprise.

Mr. THOMSON: It is possible that the trees become mixed up before they are planted. Many come from the Eastern States. Sometimes the trees have not proved suitable for the district in which they have been planted. From an experimental orchard growers would be able to obtain trees that had been proved to be suitable. At the Narrogin State Farm young men are equipped for their calling on the land. The same principle should be followed in the case of the fruit industry.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have no desire to criticise officers of the Agricultural Department. I have the greatest admiration for them. We might, however, give consideration to the establishment of a fruit experimental farm. The Minister should not suggest that we

have gone so far in the industry that we cannot effect improvements to it.

The Minister for Railways: No one suggests that.

Mr. SAMPSON: In California many improvements have been effected. In Western Australia where we have so much fruit growing land the same policy might well be pursued.

The Minister for Railways: You are discussing agriculture generally.

Mr. TEESDALE: The fruit industry has been painted in gloomy colours. I have here a press cutting which puts a different complexion upon it. It is as follows:—

The Apple Crop.

1,000,000 bushels estimate.

Warning to Growers.

"There is every indication that the apple crop in Western Australia for the Centenary Year will constitute a record for the State," said the Superintendent of Horticulture (Mr. Geo. W. Wickens), who returned to Perth on Saturday from a tour of the fruit districts. "Practically every variety has set heavily; even such in and out performers as Rome Beauty and Nickajack give promise of an abundant harvest, while Dunn's appears to have forgotten its usual alternate year cropping habit, in a generally heavy yield. Granities, Jonathans, Yates, Cleopatras, and Doughertys have all set heavily, and so have the many other sorts which are planted less extensively than those named. Of course, many things may happen between now and the maturing of the fruit, but if nothing unforeseen occurs, Western Australia's apple production next year will exceed 1,000,000 bushels. The highest previous yield was 901,464 bushels in 1927, and this was followed this year by 409,058 bushels, the lowest since 1921. Unfortunately, a light crop of apples does not mean high quality fruit. In fact, the reverse nearly always is the case, over-sized specimens, soft and liable to early decay, being common in a light year. These characteristics were particularly noticeable in this year's crop, and it was fortunate our shipments overseas comprised the comparatively small total of 169,273 bushels, for much of the fruit, though of fairly good appearance at the time of export, did not have the texture and keeping qualities which buyers have learned to expect in apples from Western Australia."

That is a fair answer to the remarks of the member for Swan and the member for Katanning. In the circumstances it seems hardly necessary to go in for an expensive nursery. With the prospect of a crop of a million bushels we might well sit back and feel that the industry is not, after all, in such a bad plight.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I cannot agree with the member for Katanning as to the establishment of nurseries, another State trading concern. Fruitgrowing has been established here on a right basis, by men who know the game from A to Z.

The Minister for Railways: On a point of order. There is nothing on these Estimates relative to the discussion. The subject probably might have been dealt with on the vote for agriculture in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure. Here, I submit, the subject is entirely out of order.

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the Minister that on page 25, in items 63-65, there is a reference to "Experimental farms and plots."

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The time is past for experiments in fruitgrowing here. Western Australian fruitgrowers would reject any suggestion to establish experimental fruit farms and nurseries in their districts. Many years ago a nursery was kept here by a man now deceased. When growers bought trees from him they occasionally found, after five or six years, that the trees were not true to name. The trees now obtained from Eastern Australia are absolutely true to name. At one time we had a State orchard, which a former Minister of the Crown rooted up on the plea that it competed with Western Australian fruitgrowers. That Minister has gone, and his successor now suggests the establishment of more State orchards.

Mr. Thomson: Nothing of the kind.

[Mr. Lutey took the Chair.]

Mr. J. H. SMITH: State nurseries, then. How history repeats itself! We want no more State enterprises. As regards agriculture, assistance is needed, and I hope the Government will expend generously in establishing experimental plots in the South-West.

Mr. THOMSON: I rejoice, with the member for Roebourne, that the fruit industry is in so satisfactory a position this year. Its position was not so satisfactory last year. The hon. member says we should now sit back, everything being all right. Why not adopt the same course with regard to the wheat industry? But we have established experimental farms to determine the classes of wheat suitable for different areas. In their anxiety to attack the member for Kat-

anning, some members on the back benches forget to be even fair. I have never advocated the establishment of a State orchard.

Mr. J. H. Smith: But a State nursery.

Mr. THOMSON: I make no apology for advocating State nurseries on the same lines as State farms for cereals.

Vote put and passed.

12 o'clock midnight.

Vote—Roads and Bridges, Public Buildings, etc., £568,844:

Mr. THOMSON: On Item 66, Mr. Chairman—

The CHAIRMAN: The vote has been disposed of. The hon. member resumed his seat, and I put the vote, and it was carried.

Mr. Griffiths: I must protest, Mr. Chairman, that I—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. THOMSON: Please give a moment to an hon. member, Mr. Chairman. I have been waiting for the item "Agricultural Bank."

The CHAIRMAN: That is not my lookout at all. When you sat down, I put the vote. The vote has been carried. You did not rise until after it had been carried. I cannot go back. I am sorry, but there it is.

Mr. Griffiths: I wish to protest against—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is out of order.

Mr. THOMSON: On a point of explanation, I wish to draw attention to the fact that when I was speaking last, we were dealing with Item 65.

The Minister for Railways: In the Division of Agriculture.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes.

The Minister for Railways: And the Chairman put the division, which was carried.

Mr. THOMSON: But I wished to speak on the Agricultural Bank item.

Mr. J. H. Smith: A man did not have time to sit down!

The CHAIRMAN: I put the vote, and it was carried. The hon. member must take my word for it. The vote now before the Committee relates to roads and bridges.

Mr. Thomson: Is the whole of the Agricultural vote passed?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes; we cannot go back.

Item—New Roads and Bridges in Country and Goldfields Districts (including feeders for railways and grants to local authorities), £300,000:

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH: Has any provision been made for the Red Gum Valley bridge, with reference to which a deputation waited upon the Board some time ago?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is no special item for that bridge, which will be considered in conjunction with other works. The money is voted in a lump sum, but there has been no decision regarding specific items. I wish at this stage to give some particulars regarding the work done by the Main Roads Board upon road construction. The progress made during the last few years has been most marked, particularly during the past two years during which the Board have been operating. The following table will show the work that has been done:—

	1926-7.	1927-8.
	miles.	miles.
Clearing ..	971	1,043
Forming ..	430	409
Gravelling ..	262	218
Metalling ..	54	59
Drains ..	205	173
	cub. yds.	cub. yds.
Earthworks	398,218	332,602

For the two years, the work done on Federal aid roads was as follows:—

Clearing, 1,503 miles; forming, 620 miles; gravelling, 315 miles; metalling, 79 miles; drains, 304 miles; earthworks, 439,693 cubic yards.

During the same period the work done as the result of the expenditure of State funds, was—

Clearing, 511 miles; forming, 219 miles; gravelling, 164 miles; metalling, 35 miles; drains, 74 miles; earthworks, 291,127 cubic yards.

That will demonstrate that material progress has been made during the two years the Main Roads Board have been operating. I desire to refer to a few points raised by hon. members during the general discussion. Dealing with road work, it was stated that an elaborate system of plans and surveys was still insisted upon. The facts are that these have been considerably modified and have been cut down to a minimum consistent with the Federal conditions. It largely depends upon the type of country where work is carried out. For instance,

all that is done in the wheat areas now is to establish the centre line, and to chain and mark at every 500 feet. That has cut down the work very considerably. The member for Katanning has advocated a return to the old system under which the Public Works Department gave grants to local authorities, and allowed them to carry out works with the money. The trouble is that the Federal Government will not agree to that being done, and they insist upon tenders being called. For a period they approved of a system that I inaugurated, under which, when the engineers of the Main Roads Board agreed with the local authorities as to what was to be done on a particular road and that the tender was reasonable, it was submitted to me for approval, following upon which the work could be proceeded with. That was stopped when the Federal Government insisted upon public tenders being called for all work. To indicate the attitude the Federal Government took up on this question, I will quote a telegram sent to the Prime Minister, and his reply to the communication. These will show that although we would have liked to meet the desires of the local authorities and do away with a lot of the delays and expenses that are incurred now in calling for tenders and the preparation of expensive plans and specifications, we were not able to do so. On the 29th September, 1928, the following telegram was sent to the Prime Minister:—

Considerably exercised regarding procedure being followed construction developmental roads and convinced insistence on calling public tenders not in best interests. Desirous of building up system that would justify local authorities purchasing modern plant which they are not prepared to do at present owing uncertainty of tendering. Local authorities with modern plant and supervised by Main Roads Board must be in best position to carry on small developmental works economically, because of intimate knowledge of local conditions and avoidance of necessity of transport of men and plant. Local authorities who have successfully tendered and made profits have spent profits on further road work. Request you approve our entering into contracts with local authorities where in judgment of Main Roads Board such is expedient and price arranged satisfactory. Not only will this result in economy but will enable us to get work out more expeditiously and give greater satisfaction all round. We are not in same favourable position as Eastern States owing to dearth of contractors and scanty equipment of shires. Have discussed matter with Sir James Mitchell who is in accord my views. Sincerely hope you accede request.

On the 9th October, the Prime Minister replied as follows:—

Reply your lettergram 28th September regarding execution certain Federal Aid roads by local authorities, previous representations have been made and whilst the Minister has approved of the utilisation of services of local authorities in out of the way districts, namely the North-West, he is unable under clause nine of the agreement to favourably consider the extension of this method to other districts. Noted basis of present application is much employment pending harvest but point out number of men employed would be the same under both methods and further it is considered that with a continuous scheme extending over ten years and bearing in mind that plans and specifications must be submitted in all cases tenders could be carried and continuous employment afforded by contract or day labour.

The Prime Minister refused to allow us to do what the local authorities had asked for and what we ourselves were anxious to do. So it is not of much use blaming our Government on that score, for the fault does not rest with us at all. The member for Toodyay said no work by the Main Roads Board had been done in his electorate during the past 2½ years. I find by the records that the following expenditure has been made in his electorate during that time:—

	£
Toodyay Road Board	2,538
Goomalling Road Board	3,142
Dowerin Road Board	4,200
Wyalkatchem Road Board	2,879
Koorla Road Board	1,000
Mt. Marshall Road Board	7,516
Kununoppin-Trayning Road Board	1,956
Nungarin Road Board	1,998
Total	£25,229

This refutes the statement that no money has been spent in that electorate since August, 1926, seeing that the Main Roads Board did not start until two months prior to that date. The hon. member said that no expenditure had been made in his electorate, but it is now quite patent that that statement was wrong.

Mr. Latham: Perhaps he was referring to main roads.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, he said there had been no expenditure on the part of the Main Roads Board in his district since August, 1926.

Mr. Thomson: I think he meant main roads.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He could not possibly have meant main roads.

The next point the hon. member made was regarding a road which he said had a beautiful surface. He declared the local authorities were against any work being done on it, but that the Main Roads Board came along and ploughed it up. The facts, as reported to me by the department, are as follows: It is true that the Kununoppin-Marshall Rock road was not one of the Kununoppin-Trayning Road Board's preferences, but nevertheless that board acquiesced in its inclusion, as is evidenced in the following letter, dated the 8th November, 1927, from the assistant engineer of the Main Roads Board to the district engineer:—

I recommend the retention of the present route for the following reasons:—Kununoppin and Marshall Rock route serves considerable settlement and is a popular route for traffic between the two loop lines. It traverses good road-making country and has already been improved by Commonwealth and State funds, and a further £1,000 has been allocated to the north section in the Mt. Marshall Road Board.

Then there is this letter from the secretary of the Kununoppin-Trayning Road Board to the executive engineer of the Main Roads Board, dated 16th December, 1927:—

As a result of an interview between Mr. Pittelkow of your department and the above board, I have to advise that my board has approved of work under the Federal aid scheme for the present financial year, as outlined, being carried out at the earliest possible date.

So there is no doubt about the board having approved of it. Regarding the work that was done on that road, the district engineer has reported as follows:—

On the 24th October in company with Mr. Cooper (chairman) and Mr. Felgate (secretary) I inspected the new works. The "beautiful level surface" is a section of formed road of a clay type; under dry conditions of course a clay-formed road has a good hard surface. Both Mr. Cooper and Mr. Felgate admitted to me that the section required treatment and was one of the sections on which they desired work done. The existing formation is irregular and out of balance. It is thus unavoidable that the contractor must of necessity plough the existing surface. Engineer Pittelkow instructed him to shift his centre line to conform to existing formation and to plough as lightly as possible. On the occasion of my visit, the subgrade consisted of numerous clay lumps; the contractor was instructed to roll before gravelling. In this particular case, apart from the question of irregular and out of balance formation, it appears to me to be a better policy to break the existing crust rather than to place a thin gravel sheet on the hard surface. Under iron-shod wheat traffic considerable crushing of the soft type

gravel against the hard surface would take place. It must be remembered that in placing a thin gravel sheet over clay roads of this nature, the chief aim is to obtain a hard surface to stand up to wet conditions, thus by breaking the surface at this time of the year a mixture should be obtained which will give the desired results in the winter.

So there is another case where an agreement was arrived at after inspection by the Main Roads Board's engineers, and the secretary and chairman of the local authority. Still, there has been so much backing and filling on the part of some of the boards who have discussed the position with officers of the Main Roads Board and then subsequently changed their minds, that a different policy is now being pursued and the local authorities will have to signify their approval in writing before the work is undertaken..

Mr. Griffiths: Then it means that the Main Roads Board will not undertake work without the local authorities knowing anything about it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: An instance has been quoted in the House to show that a local authority was not consulted. The district engineer said he went over the road with the chairman and secretary of the local authority. I have read the letter showing that the board approved of the work, yet the member for Toodyay again gets up here and says they were not consulted. In future we shall have in the office a record from the local authority definitely showing that they have approved of the work.

Mr. Thomson: Do they not have to get the approval for the roads each year?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. Thomson: Well, is not that an acknowledgement that they have been approved?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, that is in the office. There is a 5-year programme arranged ahead, and each year's programme is set out separately. As each year's programme comes in, the Main Roads Board make recommendations to me and I have to submit the programme to the Commonwealth for approval. Then it is handed over to the Main Roads Board, who are told in effect, "There is your year's work."

Hon. G. Taylor: The Minister does not interfere any farther than that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is the only time the Minister comes into it.

Mr. Thomson: The local authorities have been objecting to the Main Roads Board starting work without consulting them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think that in some instances the Main Roads Board have started work without letting the local authorities know. In one instance that I investigated, their explanation was that they had a gang and plant in the district and had finished the work for which the plant had been bought and so, instead of sending the whole lot back to Perth, they transferred the men and the plant to the other road, and got to work without having first notified the local authorities. I did not approve of that. But a lot of these complaints that have come in from local authorities are quite unwarranted. They are getting an enormous lot of work done, and one cannot but be impressed with the wonderful improvement to the roads. Those figures I have read out speak for themselves. I hope now to see a hard and fast business arrangement under which the Main Roads Board will not do a job until they get a letter showing that the local authority agrees to the work. But when there have been so many misunderstandings between the local boards and the Main Roads Board, it is better that this course should be adopted. In future if a complaint is made, we shall have a letter on the file.

Item—New roads and bridges in country and goldfields districts (including feeders for railways and grants to local authorities) £300,000:

Mr. THOMSON: There is a footnote to the item, "Under the Financial Agreement Act, 1928, includes sales credits £54,107 14s. 11d." Will the Minister explain the meaning of the footnote? I direct attention to page 27 of the Estimates where the following paragraph occurs:—

Yilgarn district, clearing roads between Forrestania and Salmon Gums, Mollerin district, Lake King area; grants to road boards and municipalities for improvements to roads; construction of roads and bridges generally as authorised State's contribution to Federal Aid Roads exclusive of group settlement roads and proportion chargeable to revenue fund.

From a statement made by the Premier, I was under the impression that an expenditure of £150,000 had been recommended by the Migration and Development Commission and approved by the Commonwealth Government for the country south of South-

ern Cross. How is it that the Government are providing on these Estimates £300,000 for road work in the same district? Is the £150,000 included in this amount? I am sorry we have not had an opportunity to peruse the statement the Minister has submitted. He read a lettergram sent to the Prime Minister requesting a relaxation of the conditions of calling tenders for road work. I have reason to remember what happened when I asked why our co-operation had not been sought on that occasion. This sum, plus the Federal Aid Roads Grant, is being spent in the country districts and surely the co-operation of country members would have been of some value when such a protest was being made to the Prime Minister. I hope the select committee of another place will be able to put up a sufficiently strong case to back the request of the Government. All members on this side of the House, and particularly those on the cross benches, have stressed the urgent need for eliminating the waste occurring in road construction. Surveys are being made and pegs are being put down every few yards along the roads and, so far as one can judge, it is an absolute waste of money. It is equally wasteful to have expensive plans prepared for many of the roads to be constructed in country districts. From personal contact with the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer I feel sure that, if proper representations were made to them, it could be shown that the system is wasteful.

The Minister for Works: It has frequently been represented to them.

Mr. THOMSON: But the policy of the State Government is to construct roads departmentally, while the Federal Government have laid it down that tenders must be called. Consequently there is a divergence of opinion. If the Minister requested the Federal Government to give local authorities an opportunity to construct developmental roads without going to all the expense that is incurred to-day, I think I could guarantee him the support of Country Party members. We should get back to the principle that existed years ago, when the department gave a special grant to a local authority to construct a certain road. The local authority was told how the work was to be done and progressive payments were made. When a certificate was given by the Government Auditor and the Works Department that the job had been completed in accordance with

departmental instructions, the balance of the amount was paid. Even though the Federal Government have refused the Minister's request, I maintain it is still possible to put forward the scheme we have advocated in season and out of season in the interests of economy. If that were done, we should get better value for the money expended on country roads. While there has been a decided improvement, many of us believe that the cost has been out of all proportion to the service rendered. I admit that good work has been done, but it is argued by local authorities that if they had had the spending of the money, we would have had a considerably greater mileage of roads constructed for the same amount. The Minister pointed out that local authorities were not in a position to purchase expensive plant for road construction. In view of the fact that we have a continuity of policy, and that each road board is assured of a £2,000 allocation each year, the Government should encourage contracting. If they guaranteed contractors that so many miles of road work would be let by tender each year for a period of five years, there are men in this State who are just as competent road makers as any to be found in the Eastern States and who would purchase plant and undertake the work.

Hon. G. Taylor: If they had a guarantee that they could put in tenders and compete with the Government.

Mr. THOMSON: If they had a guarantee of continued work. The present position militates against the chances of the Government receiving any tenders. Many roads could be well made without a lot of plans and specifications. It should be quite possible to draw a set of plans and specifications which would be applicable to most of our roads. I am prepared to admit that the department should put in tenders, but it should be the policy of the Government to encourage private enterprise as much as possible to invest in plant of their own and submit tenders. It would have been better if instead of sending a lettergram to the Commonwealth Government the department had notified the Federal Government in detail concerning the position. It is laid down in the Act that tenders must be called. If none come in and the State Government then desire to carry out a certain work by day labour the Commonwealth acquiesces. Because there has been no effective check as between Government and contract work we have not been able to judge which has been

the cheaper. If the local authorities have been able to make a profit out of road making it is probably due to their local knowledge and the employment of local men. In other words they have managed more economically than the Government have done. It was quite right, in the case cited by the Minister, that instead of bringing men back to Perth the engineer should have shifted men on to another road, even though the local authority was not informed beforehand. That was the commonsense thing to do. The department are at a disadvantage under the present system.

The Minister for Works: The work is not now done by day labour.

Mr. THOMSON: The bulk of it is.

The Minister for Works: None of it is done by day labour. It is all done by contract. Tenders have been called for the smallest job.

The Minister for Mines: You keep on insisting that it is done by day labour.

The Minister for Works: This has been the system for the last 12 months.

Mr. THOMSON: That is news to me. I know that tenders have been called.

The Minister for Works: For every little job that is publicly handled.

Mr. THOMSON: Has the work on the Perth-Albany road been done by contract?

The Minister for Works: No. The tender of the department was below that of the contractors. The department have a few jobs on hand because no tenders were received, or the price was below that quoted from outside.

Mr. THOMSON: I have no objection to that so long as the work is carried out in the same way as if it were a contract job.

The Minister for Works: It has to be passed by the Commonwealth engineer.

Mr. THOMSON: There is a lot of difference between the supervision that is exercised over the department and that which is exercised over a contractor.

The Minister for Mines: And very necessarily so in some cases.

Mr. THOMSON: There are some reputable contractors.

The Minister for Mines: And some who are not.

Mr. THOMSON: The reputable men like to feel that their services will be in demand on some future occasion. Any contractor who has a reputation and a desire to keep it does not care a twopenny stamp whether

there is a supervisor or not. I speak from personal experience. That circumstance never mattered to me.

Hon. G. Taylor: Your future depended on the lasting nature of your work.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes. One hears many innuendoes against the work of contractors. The contractor who is fool enough to deviate from his specification deserves all that comes to him from the supervisor.

The Minister for Works: Stone that had been condemned for the railways was afterwards found carted on to roads for use there.

Mr. THOMSON: It is quite possible that stone condemned in the case of a contractor would be used by the department.

The Minister for Works: But there is the Commonwealth engineer.

Mr. THOMSON: Day-work jobs too have been found not carried out to specification: so it is fifty-fifty. If the price is exceeded in the case of a work carried out departmentally, the excuse is, "We are very sorry, but this, that, and the other cropped up, and there were unforeseen circumstances." That is accepted. I admit such things may happen.

The Minister for Works: A contractor puts in for extras when that occurs.

Mr. THOMSON: But he has his schedule. There is no schedule for the Government. If there is not the quantity of work done by the contractor in accordance with the schedule, the difference is deducted from his contract price. Naturally, he is paid for any excess; but only on the basis of the schedule. I have known the department to cut out schedule items which showed the contractor a profit, and to increase those items which involved him in loss. That was my experience before I became a member of Parliament. The Government, under contract work, are fully protected by the schedule and the plans and specifications. But the Government are not protected in the absence of plans and specifications, which the Minister says mean delay and extra cost. Such a system is not in the interests of the State. Recently the Minister told us that one of the reasons why a certain road in the metropolitan area cost more than had been estimated was that the engineer in charge had substituted granite for ironstone lumps and had widened the road by two feet. Those things could not possibly occur under the contract

system. Nobody knows that better than the Minister. The conditions of contract distinctly lay down that no extra work must be proceeded with until the written authority of the Engineer-in-Chief has been obtained.

The Minister for Works: If that engineer did it against me, he would do it against a contractor.

Mr. THOMSON: No.

The Minister for Works: Why talk nonsense?

Mr. THOMSON: The engineer was dealing with his own work. In all contracts let in country districts the Government supervisor goes round to see that the work is carried out in accordance with the plans and specifications. He has no authority to incur any additional expenses or to deviate in the slightest degree from the plans and specifications. He must submit to Perth any proposed alterations and the cost thereof, and they cannot be proceeded with until he receives authority from his superior officer. That constitutes an absolute safeguard to the Public Works Department. The same principle should be adopted in connection with contracting on country roads. It would have prevented the possibility of such an occurrence as that on the Canning-road.

The Minister for Works: The engineer faced that position against me. He could only get the sack from a contractor.

Mr. THOMSON: The engineer had no plans or specifications, and was there to do as he liked.

The Minister for Works: What nonsense!

Mr. THOMSON: It could not have happened under the contract system. I sympathise with the Minister and the Government—

The Minister for Works: We can do without your sympathy.

Mr. Thomson: —in finding themselves placed in so unfortunate a position that a man apparently in authority was able to increase the cost of a road so considerably, and that without any authorisation whatever. The Minister asks that the Federal Government grant departmental officers the right to expend money just as they think fit.

The Minister for Works: Rubbish.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the member for Katanning is rather anticipating an item.

Mr. THOMSON: I am dealing with construction of roads and bridges and giving an instance of the danger involved in not calling for tenders.

The CHAIRMAN: Probably the same argument will arise on a later item, as the hon. member can see.

Mr. THOMSON: I shall not pursue the argument, Mr. Chairman. I would like the Minister to supply information as to the money to be devoted to clearing roads. I understood from the Premier that £150,000 had been provided for the work.

The Minister for Works: It comes out of this money.

Mr. THOMSON: If a footnote had been attached to the Estimates to that effect, we would have appreciated the position.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I want to draw the attention of the Minister to what I regard as a wilful waste of money.

Mr. Thomson called attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung, and a quorum formed.

[Mr. Panton took the Chair.]

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I wish to refer to the surveys of new roads. Opposite my house at Bridgetown, there have been two camps of surveyors, one for three months and the other for four months. During those seven months, the cost of the camps must have been at least £700. They were officers of the Main Roads Board. Hundreds of survey pegs have been placed through the orchards, and the surveyors even took the measurements of my house. I will guarantee that the road they surveyed over a hill there will cost £10,000 to construct.

Mr. Griffiths: That is a small item compared with the Canning-road!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If the surveyors had followed the natural contour of the country, they could have cut down a couple of small hillocks, and for £300 or £400, they could have secured a road with a ruling grade of one in 16. I believe the Minister has agreed to a ruling grade of one in 20 now, but I think that will be absolutely impossible in that country unless more money is spent. The Main Roads Board intend to construct the road through to Cranbrook. It is most remarkable that in nearly every instance where there is cleared and cultivated land or an orchard, the surveys have been zig-zagged across them in "Ms" or

"Ws." In fact they have gone up behind a house of a man named Moriarty and simply spelled his name in the tracks they have made. It will be the ruination of the men with their orchards established there. In the old days of bullock drays and horse teams a grade of one in eight could be dealt with. But to-day, with up-to-date transport, the Main Roads Board, controlled by the Minister for Works—

The Minister for Works: Nothing of the sort. Read the Act.

1 o'clock a.m.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: You are still the controlling influence. We have the Main Roads Board with all modern machinery, and they declare they must have a grade of one in 20. What for? To allow motor speedsters to travel on top gear. It is ridiculous to insist upon such a grade. Can we not get away from the hard and fast rule of a grade of one in 20? There is a grade of one in eight between Bridgetown and Bunbury. Why should we allow officials to say that we must get a grade of one in 20? This country can never stand it.

Mr. Griffiths: A lot of that sort of thing has emanated from Victoria.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Well, we shall have to do something to check it. What we should be principally concerned about is our railways. The Main Roads Board, beginning at the Causeway, have gone through Victoria Park and are building a road parallel with our railways right across the country. Originally we were led to believe that the Main Roads Board would take control and do only the worst part of the work. It is a fallacy to build these roads alongside existing railways. They are being built simply for joy riders. I advocate leaving the local authorities alone to do their own road making. Our problem in future will be to build our feeder roads. The local authorities cannot do it because they have to provide their portion of interest on the cost of main roads. It would be better if the Minister reconsidered the whole position. We have a select committee of another place taking evidence about the workings of the Main Roads Board. I am not hopeful that that committee will do very much good. Possibly they will gain some information, but that will be about all. The only thing we can do is to appeal to the administrative head to call a round table

conference and see whether we cannot do something to improve our road policy. The Minister knows that a grade of one in 20 is an impossibility, especially on the hills between Manjimup and Bridgetown. It would cost £50,000 a mile on Padbury's Hill, where there is a grade of one in eight for $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles.

Mr. North: What is the grade in Harvest-terrace?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: About one in 12.

The CHAIRMAN: Harvest-terrace is no longer a new road.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There are many such steep hills in Bridgetown district. Could we not amend the Act to get away from this grade of one in 20? The Minister for Works has laid it down that a road must be cleared 22 feet wide and formed 18 feet or 20 feet. Could we not construct miles and miles more road if we cleared 16 feet wide and formed 14 feet? Some would say that motor cars could not then pass.

Mr. Griffiths: Those narrow roads do not last.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The hon. member has not been in the wet areas. There it is necessary to get a crown on the roads. Otherwise they will not give the service. It is the narrow road that counts.

Mr. Latham: You use broken metal down there?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We use a sort of rubble. The trouble is the land of the South-West is so good that we are at a considerable disadvantage to get material for road work. It has to be carted a considerable distance. The Main Roads Board lay down that we must maintain a standard road, which is a foolish idea. What is good for the Canning-road, where such an enormous amount per mile can be paid, is not good further afield.

Mr. Davy: Canning is not paying for it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: What may be good in the wheat or sandplain areas is not good in the wet South-West. In many instances it is inadvisable to break the surface. I have had a fair experience of roads and I contend that in jarrah and scrub country all that is necessary is to clear the timber and the road will make itself.

Hon. G. Taylor: There is a natural surface.

Hon. J. H. SMITH: Under the Main Roads Board system in the group areas a mile of road is constructed here and two miles there, and three or four miles some-

where else, and the intervening parts are impassable. It appears to me that the Main Roads Board are in a state of absolute chaos. They do not know whether they are on their heads or their heels. The Premier told us that the man responsible for the Canning-road was no longer in the service.

The CHAIRMAN: I direct the hon. member's attention to the fact that he is not speaking from his own place.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I was waxing so warm on the subject that I am afraid I wandered in that sense also.

Mr. Latham: Are any bridges wanted down your way?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: As regards bridges, the Government have done good work throughout the State.

Mr. Latham: The Blackwood River bridge was pretty bad when I was there.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I believe a new bridge is to be erected at sometime in the misty future. The Blackwood bridge was built 40 years ago. The people of the South-West generally help themselves. They do not cry stinking fish. I believe the Government contemplate building a new bridge and that is why the survey is being made. I want the Minister to reconsider the whole question of road construction.

The Minister for Works: I shall promise to do it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Hard and fast conditions should not be laid down because what applies to one part of the State does not apply to other parts.

Mr. Griffiths: Have not they done very good work in the group settlement areas?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: They have constructed many miles of good roads, but they are useless because the settlements have been abandoned. That is unfortunate. Considerable misunderstanding seems to exist between the local governing bodies, the Minister and the Main Roads Board. They all seem to be at sixes and sevens. The Main Roads Board do not appear to take any notice of the local authorities who do know their job. When the Minister introduced the measure we were led to believe that the work of road building was to be a national work, and every member welcomed the Bill. We were prepared to commit our districts to the payment of their proportionate amounts. We expected that the engineers of the Main Roads Board would pick out the worst portions of a road—I have in mind particularly the Perth-Pemberton-

road—and construct them immediately. Instead of that they went straight on with the construction of a few miles of road from the Causeway to Armadale. The next thing the local authorities knew was that they got an allocation of their liability for a road called the Perth-Pemberton-road.

Mr. Latham: How much a mile did it cost?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The hon. member has recently been elevated to the Deputy Leadership of the Country Party and should have that information at his finger tips.

Mr. Latham: Hurray!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: An account was sent to every intermediate local authority for so much per annum towards the cost of constructing that section of road. That is so, is it not?

The Minister for Works: No.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We have to pay £89 12s. every year.

The Minister for Works: Did you not make a row about men being sent down between Bunbury and Bridgetown?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not know that I did.

The Minister for Works: Was not a big stretch of road done at Waroona and between Bunbury and Bridgetown?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Minister is wrong.

The Minister for Works: I have been over it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: A few men were put in between Bunbury and Capel. The Capel, the Busselton and the Augusta road boards were debited up for the men who were working between Bunbury and Capel.

The Minister for Works: I am not talking about that stretch, but the road between Pemberton and Bridgetown.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No work was done there.

Mr. Griffiths: Have a bet on it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Minister is wrong.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must deal with new roads and bridges. I have given him a lot of latitude.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I appreciate that. The Minister should not insist on a grade of one in 20 in the South-West. A one in 10 or one in 12 grade would be quite sufficient.

Mr. LATHAM: I am concerned about the upkeep of these roads on which so much money has been spent. I should like to know what provision is being made for the maintenance of these roads, including developmental roads.

The Minister for Works: The maintenance of developmental roads is the responsibility of the local authorities.

Mr. LATHAM: Surely the department has some control after the money has been spent.

The Minister for Works: No.

Mr. LATHAM: We have no right to spend the money without ensuring that the roads are kept in proper state of efficiency.

The Minister for Works: How can you make the local authorities pay?

Mr. LATHAM: The Minister might charge the work up to them.

The Minister for Works: How will you get the money?

Mr. LATHAM: Through the grants that are made from time to time. Very frequently the roads after being made have become impassable through lack of maintenance. What provision is made for surveying and connecting up the new area east of the Kondinin-Merredin railway? There are surveyed areas 55 miles from existing lines without any connection with the settled areas. If we are going to throw the responsibility upon the local authorities to clear the roads we must make surveys.

The Minister for Works: We have always cleared the roads.

Mr. LATHAM: There are between 12 and 15 blocks situated in the small group inside the No. 1 fence, and 55 miles from an existing railway. There is no connecting road with the settled areas. The only means of reaching them is over the surveyors' tracks. The Lands Department are insisting upon the settlers going on their holdings and threatening forfeiture if they do not go. The Minister should help them by clearing the roads. It will cost a lot of money to open these new areas with roads from the existing settlement. The task is too big for the local authority. From time to time they are told to clear roads, but the only money available to them is their own revenue and any Public Works Department grant. There will be considerable demands, especially this year, for clearing roads in new districts. The land, instead of being surveyed as formerly in

square blocks, is now cut up into blocks of irregular shape, rendering access difficult. To-day it costs applicants about five times as much as it should to locate their blocks. So far the Minister has been reasonable in furnishing funds when available.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I support what has been said by the member for Nelson. A survey camp was stationed at Doodlakine from last April onward for several months, and that camp, like the one at Bridgetown, created quite a timber industry. The chairman of the local road board inquired of Perth timber merchants why the surveyors were buying so much timber. They were engaged in putting surveys along roads absolutely level—one south of Doodlakine, for instance. Survey pegs were dotted all over that road. Through some mistake in surveying, a road was actually put into a man's property. Mr. Tindale, when attending a conference at Kellerberrin, admitted that something was wrong and promised that it would be remedied. A month or two went by, however, without a remedy being applied. As to the comments of the Minister for Works on the remarks of the member for Toodyay, I have no doubt a reasonable explanation will be forthcoming when that hon. member has read the Minister's statements. I have said here over and over again that the plans and specifications for the roads now being constructed were manufactured in Victoria to suit Victorian conditions.

The Minister for Mines: We tried to get them altered, but the Commonwealth Government adhere to them.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: They are quite inapplicable to the wheat areas and the South-West.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: How do you propose to remedy the matter?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: By the application of common sense. Then roads suitable for Western Australian conditions will be constructed, and their upkeep will cost only 1s. 6d. per chain per annum. Kellerberrin is justly proud of its roads, which do not even cost £1,000 per mile, to say nothing of the £16,000 odd per mile a road in this neighbourhood cost.

The CHAIRMAN: The discussion is on new roads and bridges, not on roads in country districts.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Government should pay attention to what was brought to Mr. Tindale's notice at the Kellerberrin conference. The local authority should be permitted to build, in place of super-excellent narrow roads, earthen formations 33 feet wide, the upkeep of which would not exceed 1s. 6d. per chain yearly. Mr. Tindale was at the conference and he was satisfied it was right.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: I am afraid I cannot follow your reasoning.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I cannot supply the Minister with brains.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: You are quite right there!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I will draw the attention of the member for Avon to the fact that we are discussing the vote relating to new roads and bridges. He is not going to stonewall by talking of the old road at Kellerberrin, because that will not come off here! The hon. member must stick to the item.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I do not know what will come off! I am not stonewalling.

The CHAIRMAN: I have taken the hon. member off the Kellerberrin road three times and I do not propose to do so any more!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: A gang was put to work on the Baandee road without the local authorities being informed, and it was only through the vigilance of the road board secretary that it was discovered work was being undertaken there.

[*Mr. Angelo took the Chair.*]

Mr. Latham: The local authorities should be notified by the Main Roads Board.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: That is the point.

Mr. Latham called attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung, and a quorum formed.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I realise that the Main Roads Board have had a hard row to hoe, as they had to start off with no organisation at all, and sent their chairman round the world at the start.

Hon. G. Taylor: They appointed him first, and then sent him away to learn his job!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: And the members of the board who were left had to carry a heavy responsibility.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! What new road is the hon. member dealing with?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I shall have more to say on subsequent items.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: A footnote shows that of the vote of £300,000, a portion amounting to £54,107, represents sales credits. Does that mean that the £54,107 will come from the Sale of Government Property Trust Account?

The Minister for Works: Yes. There may be some from loan.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: A portion of a loan for certain works will be used in the purchase of plant, which, at the conclusion of the job, may be sold through the Government Property Trust Account. Is that money regarded as revenue or as a recoup to loan funds? I want to know whether you recoup the Loan Fund out of the Sale of Government Property Trust Account. That is what I desire to find out.

Item—Public Buildings (including sewerage and equipment new buildings), £101,252:

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I notice here public buildings, including furniture, equipment and new buildings. Police stations and various other classes of buildings are mentioned. It is a pity the Minister controlling the Police Department is not in his place just now. He knows there has been before him for some years past a request for police quarters at Tammin. I should like to know from him whether the Tammin police station is amongst the proposed new buildings.

Mr. Latham: There is here a sales credit of £100,000. What does that mean?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Generally speaking, the question of what buildings will go up is not considered until the Estimates are passed. Whether the police station at Tammin is to be one of them has not yet been decided. The system adopted is that under that heading the Commissioner of Police will make recommendations to the Public Works Department as to which police stations he thinks most urgent, and then we take them in that order of preference. So, too, in respect of schools and other buildings.

Mr. THOMSON: Can the Minister inform me whether any provision has been

made in these Estimates for the erection of a savings bank at Katanning, as promised by the Premier?

The Minister for Works: That comes under the explanation I have just given.

Item—Loans and Grants to local authorities for erection of country hospitals or discharging existing liabilities thereon, and to trustees of agricultural halls and mechanics' institutes, also to institutions for erection of homes, etc., £100,000:

Mr. SLEEMAN: I notice the Fremantle hospital is mentioned. Can the Minister give us any indication as to what is to be done there?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That just clears up the accounts for the building we have completed in Fremantle. As far as I know, there is no further work suggested there for this year. There are several country hospitals to be undertaken.

Item—Fremantle road and railway bridge, £20:

Mr. J. H. SMITH: This is a very small sum to appear on the Estimates. Is that due to the wide divergence of opinion as to the extension of the harbour?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, it is for the removal of the test cylinder from the river at Rocky Bay.

Item — Reconstruction, Canning-road, £51,400:

Mr. THOMSON: At the swearing-in of the mayor of Perth the Minister for Works made a statement that was subsequently published in the Press.

The Minister for Works: Yes, it contained a mistake. I have since corrected it.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister, in the course of his correction, said the country people were not contributing to the cost of the Canning-road, although the people of the metropolitan area had to contribute to the cost of country roads. I hope the Minister will elucidate that. It would be interesting to know how country people are to escape their share of the burden of the Canning-road. Of course the traffic fees in the metropolitan area are allocated to the local authorities. This, however, appears to be something new. How can the Minister arrive at the conclusion that the metropolitan area contributes to country roads and that we in the country do not contribute our propor-

tion to metropolitan roads. It is a remarkable statement. I do not know whether the Minister was misrepresented.

2 o'clock a.m.

The Minister for Works: It is quite true.

Mr. THOMSON: Then I shall be interested to hear how the Minister arrives at that conclusion. The enormous expenditure on the Canning-road is something that most of us would like to forget, and probably the Minister amongst the number. From long experience I am convinced—and doubtless the Minister in his inmost heart would admit—that if the Canning-road work had been let by contract, only gravel lumps would have been used, granite would not have been substituted and the specified width would have been observed. No doubt the Minister is just as angry about the work as we are.

Mr. Teesdale called attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung, and a quorum formed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The explanation of the figures in this morning's paper is simple. On roads constructed in the country under the Main Roads Act, local authorities benefiting are charged interest sinking fund and cost of maintenance on 50 per cent. of the State's contribution to the work; that is, on 7s. 6d. out of every 15s. spent. The people of the metropolis have to contribute more than half of it because there are more than half the people of the State in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Thomson: Have you gone into it from a tax-paying point of view?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member infers that heavier taxes are paid in the country than in the city, he is undertaking a difficult task.

Mr. Thomson: I should like you to prove your statement.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is no question that the people of the metropolis pay on the 7s. 6d. out of each 15s. contributed by the State, which amount the Commonwealth subsidises to the extent of £1. As regards the Canning-road and the widening of the road to Midland Junction, the charges are met out of the traffic pool up to 9 per cent., which covers all charges. That is paid by the people of the metropolitan area. Consequently, the people in

the country contribute nothing to the charges on the Canning-road.

Mr. Thomson: I cannot admit that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I should not expect the hon. member to admit it. Our loan money is costing 5¼d. or 5½d. per cent. and the sinking fund is about one-half per cent. We are allowed to take 9 per cent. out of the traffic pool. That money is provided by the owners of motor cars and vehicles within the pool district.

Hon. G. Taylor: What is the pool district?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It extends from the foot of the hills to Fremantle and Armadale. The people in that area, and not the people in the country, pay those charges.

Hon. G. Taylor: The people of Mount Margaret will be very pleased to know that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The statement cannot be challenged. While the people in the metropolis are contributing to the cost of work in the country, the people in the country are not contributing at all to the charges on those two roads.

Mr. Thomson: It is a remarkable statement for a Minister to make.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I do not wish to say too much about the sorry subject of the Canning-road. A little while ago I asked certain questions about the road. I asked the length of road re-constructed and was told it was eight miles. I asked the cost and was given an evasive answer. I asked whether it was correct that the work had cost something like £16,000 a mile and the reply was "No. 3 answered by No. 1." That is the type of answer members often get when they seek information. The Minister says the road has cost £121,000. According to the figures the cost is £130,000.

The Minister for Works: Some of that has to come back to be re-voted.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: There is an unexpended sum of £49, which leaves the total at £129,502. This works out at £16,188 per mile.

The Minister for Works: The road when finished will cost £121,000. Do you not believe me?

Hon. G. Taylor: And that will be the end of it?

The Minister for Works: Yes. Is the hon. member accusing me of making a false statement?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: No, but I cannot help it if the Minister takes my remarks in that way. The figures that are given to us are often exceeded.

Mr. Davy: We have really voted £130,000.

The Minister for Works: If there is any balance over it has to be re-voted.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Leader of the Opposition said the road would cost in interest £900 per mile per annum. On the basis of a capital cost of £120,000 I work out the annual interest at £7,800.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister said that country people did not contribute towards the cost of the roads in the metropolis, whereas the latter did contribute towards the cost of roads in the country. From that it might be assumed that the metropolitan people used only the metropolitan roads.

The Minister for Works: I did not suggest that.

Mr. THOMSON: As a fact a considerable proportion of the users of country roads come from the metropolitan area. If the same type of road that is built for country people had been adopted for the Canning-road the people of the metropolitan area would have been better able to assist the country people. It does not seem necessary to have spent £16,000 per mile on the Canning-road, when the country roads have cost so much less. It is essential to open up and develop the whole State by the construction of roads and railways. The highest estimate ever submitted by the Government for a railway fully equipped is £4,600 per mile. Yet we find that a road has cost £16,000 per mile.

The Minister for Works: I am not standing up to that cost. I say it is outrageous. But a road of that type could not be built anywhere for the cost of a railway.

Mr. THOMSON: What does the Minister say is the reasonable cost of a road to stand wear and tear in the metropolitan area? I admit that good roads are essential for heavy traffic. But the difficulties of the settler should be realised. He frequently has to cart his produce to the railway over shocking roads. Then why is so much money spent on a short stretch of road in the metropolitan area? I am glad the Minister does not stand up to that cost. I hope the hon. gentleman will lay down a policy to prevent the recurrence of so unfortunate an experience. We all pay our fair share of taxation, and I support the retention of traffic fees by local authorities in the coun-

try. If the Government expended the traffic fees purely on main roads, it would not be in the interests of the country districts. That opinion is shared by every road board and, I believe, by every municipality in Western Australia.

Mr. North called attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung, and a quorum formed.

Mr. THOMSON: As regards the Canning-road blunder, I have heard Ministers say in this Chamber, on other subjects, that they accepted responsibility. But their acceptance of responsibility does not relieve the State of the necessity of paying for blunders committed.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am glad the Canning-road question is being cleaned up. Last year I was instrumental in discovering the business. I was making inquiries as to all roads constructed out of Federal grants, and I inquired of the Minister what the Canning-road had cost. His reply was, "Nil." He was right in that answer, but he should have told me that the "Nil" referred to the Federal aid roads grant.

The Minister for Works: You gave a wrong designation to the road.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: No. I have disproved that assertion beyond all doubt. The Minister for Works was then absent.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: You named the wrong road; you spoke of the Cannington-road.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: No.

The Minister for Works: I think you did.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I produced in this Chamber to the Premier the very question I had handed in typed. It was initialled by the Premier. It spoke of the Canning-road. There is no Cannington-road in this country; that is the Albany-road. The Premier said to me, "I initialled the paper, in which you asked about the Cannington-road." Thereupon I produced the original question, which said "Canning-road."

Mr. Sleeman: You are wrong.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! That has nothing to do with the item.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Minister for Works now takes up a different attitude. Previously the Government bluffed this side when the business was discussed. To ease the matter we were told by the Premier that the engineer responsible had been sacked. The subject has been discussed so often that the Government have become used to it, and do not ruffle up so much. Some of their

supporters have put up statements that are not true. It is time we cleared up the whole matter. The cost of this length of road is appalling, and a discussion in the House may in future prevent a Government, apparently inexperienced in the administration of such a department from allowing engineers to waste so much money and to get away with it until the trouble is discovered by a private member.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: That is not so.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Government tried to hide it and keep the facts from the public, who now know all about it. I think the Minister for Works is a bit ashamed of the job.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is interesting to note that the interest bill per mile for the road is £960, which is actually more than the Leader of the Opposition suggested when he brought this matter before the House some time ago. I would stress the importance of tirdressing the roads. The Canning-road had a dressing with bitumen, and I think it will be necessary to treat other roads similarly so that they will stand up to the traffic. I can sympathise with the Minister for Works, for the Canning-road was a legacy that awaited him on his return from abroad.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: It was not a legacy; it was alive before he went away.

Mr. SAMPSON: It has had an abnormal appetite for funds provided by an indulgent Treasurer.

The Minister for Mines: And it has served those who have an appetite for talking.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SAMPSON: The attitude of Ministers seems to be that the less said about it, the better. It seems to have been a grave in which money has been sunk.

The Minister for Mines: There is a sovereign under every granite boulder!

Mr. DAVY: I propose to say something about the reconstruction of the Canning-road. I suggest that a different system of control by the Main Roads Board should apply in future. Section 12 of the Main Roads Act reads—

Every assistant engineer, inspector, and other officer shall, in the exercise and discharge of their respective powers and duties under this Act, in all things be subject to the direction and control of the board.

So far as I have been able to gather, the whole blame for the work on the Canning-road has been placed upon the shoulders of one man.

Mr. Latham: And he had no right to spend more than £1,000.

Mr. DAVY: That may be all right.

Mr. Sampson: You suggest he was the sacrificial scapegoat!

Mr. DAVY: I would not put it in that language. It may be that he was in control without supervision. If that is so, the Main Roads Board did not carry out their duties under the Act. Had it not been that attention was drawn to the extravagance, the officer referred to might still be with the Main Roads Board, but because there was a row, he was kicked out. I suggest that the Minister for Works had a substantial share in the dismissal of that man. If the Main Roads Board are to retain the confidence of Parliament and of the people, they should be made to understand that they cannot easily subordinate the responsibility vested in them under the Act. I do not want to say anything more about this piece of work. The Minister has not endeavoured to defend the thing. He never has done so. But I do say the Main Roads Board would have a very difficult job to defend the performance, and they won't do it by attempting to cast the blame on one of their subordinates.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The first I knew of it was when my attention was directed to the expenditure being ahead of the estimate. When the Loan Estimates for the succeeding year were being framed it was seen that the expenditure for that road was exceeding the estimate. The moment that was put up to me I called for a report and then discovered what had happened. I wanted to know why these alterations were made and how it was the engineer could take it on his shoulders to exceed the estimate and alter the method of construction without its coming to me. Because, really that job is not under the Main Roads Act. I should have been apprised of the alteration. There should have been no alteration in the design, nor in the estimate of £91,000.

Hon. G. Taylor: The board were merely carrying out the work for you.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so, and the work was being done out of State funds.

Mr. Davy: Still the responsibility lay with the Main Roads Board.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Oh, yes. Then I wanted to know how it was the position had gone so far without its being dis-

covered. I asked how it was that the accountant had not discovered it. In the Railways they have a fortnightly report, and so nothing can go far wrong before being discovered. That has been the practice in our department in respect to roads and bridges. But when the Main Roads Board were established it was felt that they were separate from the Works Department, and therefore not so strict an attention was given to their costs as was given to costs in other branches of the department. When the Bill was going through the House, I gave an assurance that we would not set up another department and that the Main Roads Board would have to work with the existing machinery. I tried to stick to that, but there was a feeling that the Main Roads Board was a branch apart, and so as I say not so much attention was given to their costs. I have now put an end to all that. But I found it hard to believe that all that money went on the road, and I began to suspect that there was a leakage. So I called in the Auditor-General and asked him to make a thorough inspection. He put on his chief inspector and with assistants that officer was on it for some weeks. I have just received his report in which he says there has been no leakage; that practically everything has been accounted for. All sorts of suggestions were put up to me, that the amount of metal brought down by rail did not correspond with the amount carted by trucks, and that that did not correspond with the quantity that went into the road. However, the Auditor-General, after a special audit has been unable to find anything wrong. I did all that was humanly possible to nail down the responsibility. There is no possibility of the same thing happening again. I am not going to support a man responsible for incurring such a heavy expenditure, but what can be done? We can only sack the man. We cannot make him refund the money.

Mr. Thomson: You might take such steps as would preclude a recurrence of the thing.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have done that. This man was recommended by the Commonwealth engineer. He had in Victoria the reputation of being a very capable man. When his services were offered to us the Commonwealth engineer told me that we were most fortunate in getting him. As soon as ever he arrived he set about altering everything.

Mr. Davy: What I cannot understand is that the members of the Main Roads Board should have allowed him to do these things.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mr. Tindale was away. Messrs. Anketell and Dibdin were in charge. This man claimed that as the executive engineer he had authority to come to those decisions. I entirely disagree with that.

Mr. Davy: He was in every way subordinate to the board.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, he was the Main Roads Board's engineer.

Mr. J. H. Smith: The Main Roads Board were responsible for it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Never again shall I be a party to passing legislation to set up a board away from the Minister. While the Minister has to carry the responsibility, he has no say whatever. The Main Roads Board have all the authority, but when anything like this goes wrong the criticism is all on the Minister, and the moment he interferes he is accused of using political influence. Yet in the final analysis the Minister has to carry the responsibility.

Mr. Davy: Did you say the members of the Main Roads Board ought to escape scot free.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, I did not say that. But I do not want to be forced into saying what I have in mind. I may have something to say before the session is over, when we are considering legislation dealing with the position. When the papers are examined it will be seen that on my attention and that of the Premier being drawn to the matter, we did all that was humanly possible. I do not think there is any chance of such a thing occurring again.

Mr. Thomson drew attention to the State of the Committee.

Bells rung, and a quorum formed.

[Mr Lutey took the Chair.]

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I listened with interest to the half-hearted explanation by the Minister regarding his responsibility. With an exalted opinion of himself he said, "This will be the last word regarding the Canning road." He also told the House that he had discovered the fact that the cost of the Canning-road had so greatly exceeded the estimate. If his claim were not so ridicu-

lous, it would be humorous. The Minister tried to bolster up his case, but he had a very poor case. I always endeavour to be fair to everybody, but we must be fair to the State first of all. When we find such a waste of money on the reconstruction of the road, I should like to know what the original construction cost.

The CHAIRMAN: We are not dealing with the original construction.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Minister said that in future he would protect himself and take good care that he was not made an Aunt Sally. He is going to have the name as well as the blame. A little while ago a wonderful gentleman came here, a land agent named T. M. Burke.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! That has nothing to do with the Canning-road.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I was merely going to point out that that gentleman bought up all the land abutting the Canning-road.

The CHAIRMAN: That has nothing to do with this item. I cannot allow the hon. member to discuss it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I felt that I might be a little wide of the mark, but that I might be permitted to refer to it. It is rather remarkable that the Premier glossed this matter over the other night by saying that the engineer responsible for the Canning-road work was not now in the service. What a weak and lame excuse for the Premier to offer! Are not the Government responsible for their servants? Are not they responsible for the officers appointed to such positions?

Hon. G. Taylor: Where are the front bench Ministers at present?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Do the Government realise that the men they employ to reconstruct roads at the rate of £16,000 per mile should be top-hole engineers? Apparently they do not, but when trouble occurs the Minister endeavours to gloss it over by telling members it will not occur again. When the Premier said the engineer responsible was not now in the service of the Government, did not that show weakness? Is not there something wrong? Is not there a leakage somewhere? Does it not create suspicion that there is something amiss? An engineer was dismissed! No inquiry about him was made. I presume that if the truth were known, he got a recommendation from the Main Roads Board that he was a capable

engineer, and then would go perhaps to Victoria or New South Wales and repeat the performance.

Mr. Sleeman: What do you suggest the Government should do?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: This is the greatest scandal ever perpetrated in Western Australia. The Minister said the money did not come out of the funds of the Main Roads Board, but he admitted that the Main Roads Board were responsible. He tried to gloss over the case by telling us the chairman of the Main Roads Board had been away purchasing machinery for road construction that he was not entitled to purchase.

Mr. Sleeman: I thought he went away to gain experience.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Main Roads Board had no authority either through the chairman or the Minister to purchase machinery for the construction of roads by day labour.

The CHAIRMAN: I think you are getting away from the item.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am not.

The CHAIRMAN: The question of the chairman going abroad to buy machinery has nothing to do with the item.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is all bound up with road construction, and nothing in the world can separate the different matters.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: The member for Mt. Margaret cleaned that up a few minutes ago.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: He thought he cleaned it up. Vanity comes with old age, and when the hon. member says, "This is the last word on the Canning-road," we can well afford to smile at him.

Mr. Sleeman: He discovered it and cleaned it up.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The work of reconstructing the Canning-road has been a blot on the history of the State. It is talked about through the length and breadth of Australia, and there is always a little suspicion that the engineer who was cast aside so quickly might have done something under the lap. I wonder what it would have cost to construct that road by contract.

Mr. Latham: It should have been done by contract.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Of course. The work cost £16,000 per mile, and it would be interesting to know the cost of the original construction.

3 o'clock a.m.

Hon. G. Taylor: That was done in the good old days.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Although the Minister says the work has been under the control of the Main Roads Board it is really under his jurisdiction. It is no use glossing over the trouble by saying that the engineer responsible is no longer in the service. The Canning-road will only be used by joy-riders. It will not convey any produce to market, or assist in the development of the State.

Mr. Sleeman: It will greatly relieve the Perth-Fremantle road.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We cannot afford to waste money like this when the South-West is awaiting development.

Mr. Withers: More cheers!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The member for Bunbury is supporting a Government that countenances such things. Many miles of road are wanted in the South-West, and yet we cannot get the money for them because of this waste. Members opposite have been quite silent on the question.

Mr. THOMSON: If tenders had been called for the construction of the Canning-road the Minister would not be in the humiliating position he is in to-day. He must accept the responsibility, although he could not possibly attend to the details of every job that is going on. We have been assured that a further opportunity will be afforded us to discuss this matter later in the session.

Item, Purchase of plant, suspense.
£31,000:

Mr. THOMSON: This amount is for the purchase of plant for hire to the Public Works Department and the Main Roads Board. Will the Minister explain the item?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have introduced an innovation in connection with the purchase of plant used generally in the service. I am sure the system will mean great economy. I was opposed in many quarters in the beginning, but the scheme is now working smoothly. In the past when some plant has been bought for one of the engineers, who might be engaged 300 miles in the bush, he came to look upon it as his own, and it was often with great difficulty that its whereabouts were traced if it was required elsewhere. That was go-

ing on continuously. There was no concerted control. Thus much plant was being purchased while plant actually in the department's possession would have done the work. Accordingly I appointed a plant engineer. The officer was selected by the Engineer-in-Chief after the position had been widely advertised. He is a young man from Queensland, and has proved highly capable. The whole of the plant is in his charge, and he has a depot at East Perth.

Mr. Latham: What number of staff has he?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Only three at the moment—two at the yard, and one in the office. There is now complete control of all plant. All plant purchased goes to the plant suspense account. Every job wanting a piece of machinery has to apply to the plant engineer—anything from a steam roller to a pick. If the plant engineer has it, he lets it out and charges the job hire, interest, and depreciation. So each job carries its proper charges for plant used on it. There is a little plant the engineer has not yet been able to track down. Eventually an immense saving will result. At one time the Main Roads Board plant was kept separate, but now it is under the charge of the plant engineer. The Main Roads Board are not restricted in obtaining up-to-date plant. Mr. Tindale while abroad saw several comparatively inexpensive but highly effective labour-saving devices. I regard the complete control of plant as one of the best moves I have made.

Mr. THOMSON: I am very pleased with the Minister's explanation. One wonders why such a move was not made sooner. If the Government supply the Main Roads Board with the most modern machinery and labour-saving appliances, the board should be able to construct roads much more cheaply than in the past. If contractors had the same continuity of work as the Main Roads Board have, they too would go to the expense of acquiring the most up-to-date road-making machinery.

Item, Purchase Avon Valley native station, £172:

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister is alive to the position of the natives in my district. There was formerly a native station at Tambellup, but a spirit of economy caused it to be closed. I know the Minister is sympathetically inclined towards the natives of

the Great Southern, and desires to supply them with the necessary facilities.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The next item deals with aborigines stations. The hon. member can deal only with the purchase of the Avon Valley station on the item under discussion.

Mr. THOMSON: No money has been provided for the natives in the Great Southern districts, and I hope the Minister will be able to secure some such provision.

Item—Aborigines Stations, Moola Bulla and Moore River, £2,500:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I wish to mention the position at Moore River.

Mr. Thomson drew attention to the state of the Committee.

Mr. Sleeman: What, again?

Mr. Thomson: I should think so. Government members have to keep the House. The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies interjected.

Mr. Thomson: No threats, Mr. Minister!

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: I made no threat, but you want to have a general discussion on each item!

Bells rung, and a quorum formed.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The vote will not go far, seeing that it has to be spread between two stations.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: The money is for general improvements and for the provision of stock with which to build up the stations. Portion of the money will be used for water conservation.

Item—Guildford-road, including section from East-street to Midland Junction, £9,500:

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Can the Minister tell the Committee what length of the Guildford-road this applies to?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It applies to the stretch from the city boundary to Midland Junction.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Other Undertakings, £124,585:

Item—State Hotels and Tourists' Resorts, £7,000:

Mr. LATHAM: As the charges at the State hotels have gone up, the Government might consider the provision of motor garages, septic tanks and mosquito nets for the

convenience of those who patronise the premises.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: We will put them in.

Mr. LATHAM: What about the installation of a sewerage system at the Bruce Rock hotel?

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: That will be taken into consideration.

Mr. LATHAM: We compel the proprietors of other hotels to make the necessary provisions I have referred to, and the State itself should set an example to other licensees by attending to these things at the various State hotels.

The Minister for Works: The licensing authorities insist upon it being done.

Mr. LATHAM: But the unfortunate part is that the State hotels do not come within the scope of the licensing court. These things are necessary.

The Minister for Works: I agree with you.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The accommodation at Cave House is inadequate, and an inspection of the place a little while ago showed that a scheme of improvements, involving the expenditure of £25,000, was necessary.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: We are carrying out improvements there.

The Minister for Works: There is a new dining room.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: But there is a lot to be done yet.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is essential that additional accommodation be provided at Cave House. Although the Wongan Hills hotel is splendidly conducted, I think we should give an indication to the Government that a single-storey building is not suitable for the requirements of the people there. The Wongan-Hills hotel is insufficient for the requirements of the district. We should indicate to the Government that the time has arrived when they ought to vacate the position of having a monopoly of hotels in that town. The Government would be well advised to call for tenders for the right to conduct an hotel, and the Licenses Reduction Board should then insist upon a modern two-storied building being erected.

Mr. Panton: Is there not enough ground to make a one-storied building big enough? Why go up in the air?

Mr. SAMPSON: I am advocating that the Government should go out of this business altogether and allow private enterprise to run it.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: Is the hon. member in order in discussing the general policy of State hotels?

The CHAIRMAN: He is in order as far as he has gone.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: He is dealing with the proposal that the Government should go out of the business of conducting State hotels.

Mr. SAMPSON: This item should be struck out. At any other time that suggestion might meet with the Minister's cordial approval. To indicate to the Government that the carrying on of State hotels has not the approval of the Committee, I will move an amendment.

The Minister for Works: We have already had that indication, and we may yet adopt it.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am glad to hear of it. I know it is the custom of the House to cast a doubt on any statement that appears to be candid and truthful, but I have not yet lost all faith in human nature. Consequently I am glad to have had that statement from the Minister for Works.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I suggest that State hotels should be brought under special legislation.

The CHAIRMAN: We are not discussing special legislation.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I want to deal with the extension of accommodation at State hotels. Where a monopoly is in existence, where accommodation for the general public is inadequate, where the State is not doing its duty to the people, that is where we should endeavour to effect some reform. I want to see this item increased. If we are to have State hotels all over the country—

The Minister for Works: But we are going to put them all up by auction.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I wish you would. The Government are not making an effort to cater for the public in their State hotels. It is now many years since State hotels have catered for the requirements of the people. Cannot we do something about it? The balance sheet shows that the profits from State hotels are not satisfactory. The running of these hotels costs very much more than it should do. Private licensees would

pay the State at least £25,000 per annum more.

The CHAIRMAN: That question is not before the Chair.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I want to impress upon the Government their responsibility regarding State hotels.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot discuss the liquor trade. The question is the item of £7,000. He may consider it too little or too much and deal with the question of improvements.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I consider it is too little. Caves House is inadequate to meet the requirements of tourists.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: Portion of the £7,000 will be devoted to improvements there.

Mr. Latham: What about the sewerage scheme?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If the Minister provided £17,000 it would not meet requirements.

Mr. Latham: Especially for the centenary year.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am speaking of past experience. That resort would be patronised by 3,000 or 4,000 additional people if only the Government would provide accommodation. Is it possible to persuade the Minister to provide septic tanks and baths at State hotels just as they have to be provided by ordinary licensees?

Mr. Panton: What is the good of a bath room without water?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If we have State hotels we should provide the best possible service and show how the hotel business should be run.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: Surely you are not speaking in opposition to the £7,000!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Compared with what is required that is only as a drop in the ocean. I believe the Minister would gladden the Treasurer's heart if he told him he would not spend the £7,000 and in addition would secure £20,000 from the State hotels for the 12 months. The man who took them over would make a profit even on that figure.

Hon. G. Taylor: Give them to Bertie Johnston!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: According to the balance sheet, however, State hotels are returning only £2,000 or £3,000.

Mr. Withers: But they are giving the service.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I would not mind so much if they could accommodate the public. I asked a question recently whether the Government intended to rebuild Caves House, and the answer was "No." Yet the Government will not permit competition. All the surrounding country is reserved. The Minister, in a fickle moment, said private enterprise could build another place.

The Minister for Mines: There is nothing to prevent it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It would be necessary to go outside the reserve area to build.

The Minister for Works: There is a freehold block of land between the hotel and the beach, advertised for sale.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There must be some stumbling block. I presume there is no road to it.

Mr. Teesdale: There is a road.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is encouraging to find the member for Roebourne supporting State enterprise.

The CHAIRMAN: We are not discussing State enterprise. The hon. member must stick to the item.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: This is one of our finest holiday resorts. The Jenolan Caves—

The CHAIRMAN: We are not discussing the Jenolan Caves.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Anyhow they do not compare with ours but our people cannot patronise this resort as they should because of the lack of accommodation. The Government have a monopoly at Cave House, but have been too stingy to develop it. State hotels generally enjoy a monopoly in various parts of the country.

Item, State Sawmills, £8,347:

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I congratulate the Government upon the fact that while privately owned mills have been working half time the State mills have kept on their full complement of men.

Item, State Brickworks, £1,200:

Mr. SAMPSON: The brick shortage has been brought about by the intrusion on the part of a previous Government into this form of enterprise.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot discuss the principle under this item.

Mr. SAMPSON: But for State enterprise in this matter private capital would have been able to supply the requirements of the community.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must deal with the item.

The Minister for Mines: The man who made his fortune out of bricks has retired.

Mr. SAMPSON: It was a mistake when the State works were originally equipped.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot proceed along those lines.

Mr. Latham called attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung, and a quorum formed.

[Mr. Panton took the Chair.]

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: It is not the intention of the Government to add to the plant at the State brickworks. I have already given that information to members.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow any tedious repetition.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: This was information I gave some weeks ago.

Mr. Sampson: Then private enterprise will be quite safe in extending their own plant.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: Yes, so far as I know.

Item, State Ferries, £8,000:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: What do the Government intend to do with this money?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: Buy another ferry steamer. Negotiations are in hand for the purchase of a vessel.

4 o'clock a.m.

Item, Metropolitan Market Trust, £90,000:

Mr. THOMSON: Is any refrigerating plant provided for under this heading? Does the amount include the cost of resuming the land for the new road?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The building is included in the money. The obligation of road construction, except for the internal roads, is cast upon the City Council. The matter of a refrigerating plant is in the hands of the Trust, from which no statement concerning it has yet been made.

Vote put and passed.

Resolutions reported, and the report adopted.

BILL—LAKE GRACE-KARLGARIN RAILWAY.

In Committee.

Mr. Panton in the chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Incorporation:

Mr. SAMPSON: This clause, I understand, relates to the powers contained in the Public Works Act, whereby land may be resumed for railway purposes, and whereby it is competent to sever land and do other things necessary to enable the line to be constructed. What are the powers the Act gives? To what extent will those people through whose land the line may pass be affected? I have in mind a case where a railway severed a certain person's property and where the amount of compensation offered was ridiculously small.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This clause appears in every railway Bill. A lot of property has been resumed in the hon. member's electorate under the Public Works Act. First there is a private negotiation between the Lands Resumption Officer and the owner. If a settlement is not effected, the department offer a price. Failing acceptance of this, notice of resumption is given. Thereupon the matter goes to arbitration, with a Supreme Court judge presiding and one assessor for the department and another for the owner. That board fixes the price. Various people have made a deal of money out of land resumed from then by the Government. I do not think the Government ever get the best of such a deal.

Mr. SAMPSON: I raised the matter for the purpose of obtaining information. I trust the Government will be reasonable in matters such as this, where statutory power is given to resume and where compensation is often a matter of long argument.

Clause put and passed.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 4.10 a.m. (Thursday.)

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 6th December, 1928.

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

PERSONAL EXPLANATION—CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER'S RETIREMENT.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.32]: I wish to make a brief personal explanation. Yesterday, when the Electoral Districts Act Amendment Bill was in Committee, I stated that the Chief Electoral Officer had tendered his resignation. To be strictly accurate, I should have said that the Chief Electoral Officer applied to the Public Service Commissioner for retirement under the provisions of Section 66 of the Public Service Act, 1904, under which section every officer who has reached 60 years of age is entitled so to do. I regret that the mistake should have been made.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Has any provision been made in the 1928-29 Loan Estimates for permanent water supplies in the following agricultural areas: (a) Bullfinch. (b) Wheatley. (c) Turkey Hill. (d) Moorine Rock? 2, If so will the Minister give an itemised summary showing the amounts appropriated for each area? If not, why has no provision been made for those necessary works?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1 and 2, The provision on the Loan Estimates covers liabilities for works now in hand, but it is impossible to provide for all new water