

taking one of two alternatives, involving the South Perth council in a quarrel with the golf club, or validating the lease which had been granted by the State.

Mr. Price: Did not the rifle club have it before?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, and the golf club had bought out the rifle club. The whole question now was whether members were prepared to ratify the agreement. He regretted that the one detail had not been included with the papers transmitted to Parliament. It was only a small area, and the golf club were already in possession of it.

Mr. LANDER: It was a pity the Minister could not see his way clear to postpone the question until he had the necessary information. He (Mr. Lander) knew of a number of reserves in respect to which the oracle had been worked on the Government.

Mr. NANSON: Although not necessarily opposed to the clause, he was opposed to legislating in the dark.

The Minister for Lands: I will give you an opportunity on the third reading.

Mr. NANSON: That assurance from the Minister was sufficient.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Portion of reserve A1720 vested in the Minister for Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage:

Mr. PRICE: Would the area included in the Bill be sufficient for the requirements of the department? We should not be continually encroaching on the park.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The area was sufficient because, as the hon. member was probably aware, the reservoir was actually under construction.

Mr. ALLEN: The Minister had made reference to a special arrangement between the department and the King's Park board as to free water. What was the nature of the concession?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There had been a special agreement in existence for a number of years, an agreement initiated by himself during the regime of the Dalglish Administration.

Mr. Allen: But the Minister for Lands said some further concession was about to be given.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, what he had pointed out was that the Park Board had raised no objection to the additional area being taken for the enlarged service reservoir, in view of the fact that they enjoyed a special arrangement with the department in connection with the supply of free water for park purposes.

Clause put and passed.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—LOAN, £5,600,000.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.50 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 6th December, 1912.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION NOT ALLOWED.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I would like to call your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that the question of which notice was given by the member for Kalgoorlie yesterday appeared in the *West Australian* this morning, but does not appear on the Notice Paper.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question asked by the member for Kalgoorlie yesterday was disallowed after it had been handed up to the Clerk, and the member for Kalgoorlie was informed that the question came within the rule of objection. I would like to point out that the Standing Order which permits an hon. member to ask a question of another hon. member is No. 107, and it gives a member the right to put a question to other members relating to any Bill, motion, or other public matter connected with the business of the House in which such member may be concerned. The rule governing the principle of questions seeking information is that nothing debatable or argumentative is permissible. The question should be confined to a simple request for information, and should be strictly relevant in the case of private members to business at that time before the House. Since the question was asked I have looked up the interpretation and I find that all argument, opinion, inference, imputation, irony, hypothetical questions, and references to past debates of the same session are irregular. Questions relating to matters outside the House and not bearing upon any matter before the House are equally within the rule of objection. It is against the whole spirit of the principle to introduce matter of a debatable character of anything in the nature of a comparison or challenge. I hope hon. members will bear these objections in mind when asking questions in the future, and will avoid questions of the character to which objection has been taken. It has been the practice to allow notice to be given and to reject inadmissible questions after they are handed to the clerk, and that course was followed in the case of the question asked by the member for Kalgoorlie yesterday. But if the forms of the House are abused action will be taken to prevent such notices being given.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: May I express the hope that publicity will be given to the fact that while it was possible for notice of the question to be given, it is not possible, under the Standing Orders, for the leader of the Opposition to make a reply. I am glad to hear your remarks this afternoon, sir, because I think it is shocking that a vile and cowardly attack should be made on another hon. member in the form of a question.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not discuss the matter.

QUESTION—VETERINARY BOARD REGISTRATIONS.

Mr. LANDER asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Why is it that the Veterinary Board are unable to deal with the different applications for registration now before them? 2, Is it because the board, as at present constituted, are unable to get a full meeting?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, The board has dealt with applications with reasonable expedition. Where delay has occurred it has been occasioned by the necessity for securing further information concerning applicants. 2, No. There has been no difficulty in securing quorums for each meeting.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) moved)—

That for the remainder of the session Government business shall take precedence of all motions and Orders of the Day.

This was the nearest approach to the close of the session without taking away private members' day that had occurred to his knowledge. The adoption of this course would not preclude the consideration of important private members' business. It would simply mean that Government business would take precedence unless some member desired that a particular matter should be discussed, in which case the Government would allow opposi-

tunity for that to be done. Unless this motion was passed, private members' business must take precedence on Wednesday next.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You expect to close up next week?

The Premier: I hope so.

Mr. CARPENTER: Speaking generally, private members had received every consideration during the session and it was perhaps unfortunate that a motion of his had experienced bad luck. It had been submitted as a formal motion, and the Minister whose department it concerned had assured him that there was no objection to the papers being placed on the Table. Unfortunately, when he moved the motion expecting to get the papers in accordance with the Minister's promise, the Minister was absent from the Chamber and the Premier moved the adjournment of the debate, stating that he wished to confer with the Minister for Works. On the next occasion on which the motion came forward the Minister for Lands was in charge of the business and he also desired further information, with the result that the motion was again adjourned. This was a matter of great importance to Fremantle, and the last hope of having the promise made by the Minister for Works redeemed would disappear unless the Premier was magnanimous enough to promise to make the motion a formal matter.

The Premier: I will make it a formal matter before the session closes.

Question put and passed.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

Close of Session.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) moved—

That for the remainder of the session the Standing Orders be suspended so far as to enable Bills to be passed through all their stages in one day, and Messages from the Legislative Council to be taken into consideration on the day on which they are received; also, so far as to admit of the reporting and adopting of the Resolutions of the Committee of Supply and of Ways

and Means on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees.

It was usual when submitting a motion of this kind to explain to members the business that was still on hand, but he only wished to say that the Notice Paper conveyed an idea of all the business the Government had to bring before the Chamber this session, with the exception, perhaps, of a Bill dealing with the Savings Bank. That had not been finally decided, and he could not say definitely whether it would be introduced. Apart from that he knew of no business which the Government desired to bring forward. There was a good deal on the Notice Paper in another place which, of course, would necessitate further consideration by the Assembly, but except so far as that bore on the Assembly Notice Paper two sittings he thought would easily dispose of the business. With the assistance of members in this Chamber, as well as in another place, we would be able to close the session at the end of next week.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): It was not desirable to unnecessarily rush through the business, and the Premier should see that members were provided with copies of Bills as early as possible, and at any rate twenty-four hours before they were submitted for consideration. The Savings Bank Bill was an important one, and members on his side desired to help the Premier and to safeguard the interests of the country to the fullest possible extent. This Bill should not be regarded as a party matter, but that would depend on the provisions. The Opposition, however, would assist the Premier to get through the business so long as he was reasonable and listened to reason from this side of the House. The Premier would recollect that the Loan Estimates would also have to be submitted next week.

The PREMIER (in reply): There was no intention on the part of the Government to introduce important matters, and insist that the Assembly should pass them at the same sitting without consideration, but the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) would appreciate the fact that

frequently a measure had to be delayed in the report stage owing to a slight amendment having been made, and another day was lost before the third reading could be passed. That was a formal matter which by the suspension of the Standing Orders could be dispensed with. If a matter was considered to be of sufficient importance, the Government would be reasonable enough to give members full opportunity to discuss it in such a way as the time at the disposal of the House permitted.

Question put and passed.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Esperance-Northwards Railway (introduced by the Hon. W. C. Angwin, Honorary Minister, for the Minister for Works).

2, Interpretation Act Amendment (introduced by the Attorney General).

BILL—ROADS ACT AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE (Katanning): When the Bill was in Committee the Minister for Works promised to give consideration to a certain clause regarding the closing of roads. Is it intended to have an amendment dealing with that particular clause made in another place.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Yes.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—DISTRICT FIRE BRIGADES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—ROAD CLOSURE.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—PERMANENT RESERVES.

Third Reading.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. T. H. Bath): In moving the third reading I have to point out that the area of the land included in connection with the South Perth reserve is 12 acres, and I may also point out that the information asked for as to whether it included the foreshore, is that about two chains between the boundary of this reserve and the sea is reserved and is not included in the reserve. I beg to move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—GOVERNMENT TRAMWAYS (No. 2).

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. P. Collier) in moving the second reading said: This Bill is almost identical with one which was passed by this Chamber some two or three weeks ago and was laid aside in another place because of an informality. It will be remembered that that Bill sought to amend the Government Railways Act, 1904, in a certain direction which it was held in another place could not be done under the Title of the Bill as passed by this House. There is no need for me to again cover the ground I traversed when moving the former Bill. It is purely a machinery measure which it will be necessary to pass this session to enable the Government to work the tramways before the next session of Parliament.

Mr. George: Does this overcome the objection?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes; it was sought to amend Section 68 of the Government Railways Act, and the amending clause has been omitted from this Bill. Therefore, the objection raised in another place no longer exists. I therefore move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

Mr. McDowall in the Chair; the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—General powers for the construction and maintenance of tramways:

Mr. GEORGE: The clause gave the Minister power to open and break up any streets and replace them, and there was also power to make, and vary an arrangement which might be made and agreed to by the local body with reference to the roads. The arrangement between the city council and the tramway company was that the company had to carry out certain conditions regarding the repair and upkeep of the roads. One of the conditions under which the concession was granted to the tramway company was that the company should pave certain lines with wood blocks and maintain the lines two feet beyond the rails. This was a matter of great importance to the municipal funds. The clause did not impose on the Minister that same obligation. The municipality should not be in a worse position with Government control of the trams.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member need have no fear that the City council would be at any disadvantage by the passage of the Bill. The Government would certainly continue to carry out the work the tramway company carried out. The power to extend or vary tramways was not intended to cover such a case as the hon. member referred to.

Mr. GEORGE: It was necessary in the interests of the City to raise the question and have the position clearly stated and recorded, otherwise it might later be said, should the municipality and the Government come into conflict, that the representatives of the City should have brought the matter forward when the Bill was before the House. We could be satisfied with the assurance of the Minister.

The Minister for Mines: Provision is made in the Tramways Purchase Bill.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 to 12—agreed to.

Clause 13—Notice of commencement of action:

Mr. GEORGE: The provision requiring an action to be commenced within six months was practically the same as in the Railways Act, but there were cases where it would be manifestly unfair to a person injured who was not in a position to institute an action within the six months, because of the impossibility of ascertaining the damages. We should amend the clause to provide that in such case notice of action must be given within a month of the accident taking place. That would be fair to both parties, because as soon as notice was given the Commissioner's officers could commence their inquiries. It would also overcome a great deal of the malingering that took place.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The clause was very reasonable. Though a person was ill, he would not be prevented from taking action. Medical evidence could be brought as to the likelihood of recovery or the length of illness. There was no reason why the provision would work any greater hardship in connection with tramways than in connection with the railways.

Mr. GEORGE: It would be an advantage to both parties if such an amendment were made providing for notice to be given within a month of the injury taking place. It would protect the department. There was bound to be a number of fictitious claims, and the officers of the department would be able to get on the spot at once. The amendment would help the department rather than injure it. At the same time it would give the *bona fide* person who was injured an opportunity of sustaining a claim.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The amendment suggested would be an advantage to the department, but it might operate harshly against an individual by making it obligatory to give notice within a month. The injury might not sufficiently develop within a month to justify a claim for damages. As to the cases in which the department were defrauded, we must trust to the good sense of our courts.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 14 to 23—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending the Bill.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. P. Collier) in moving the second reading said: The Bill which I have to submit for the favourable consideration of the House is in many respects a very important one. It is important because its provisions, if carried into law, will very materially affect the safety and health of thousands of men employed on the goldfields of this State. I contend that a measure such as this, which deals solely with the regulation and conditions of employment in the mining industry, is one which Parliament should endeavour to make as perfect as possible, that is so far as that can be done by Act of Parliament, to safeguard the health and the lives of those following the occupation of mining. The Act of 1906 is in many respects an excellent one, but I held at the time it was going through the House, and I still hold, that it did not go far enough, and if that was the case six years ago the argument is much stronger in that direction to-day. In the intervening period our mines, particularly in the large centres, have been deepened very considerably and the working conditions have become much more unhealthy, and indeed more dangerous, than when the Act was passed through Parliament. Therefore, it is with the object of improving different parts of that Act that the present measure is being introduced. I think I may claim that it is an entirely non-party Bill, and I am looking for support from hon. members on both sides of the House. I intend only to deal with the more important provisions of the Bill

because, although there are many amendments of minor importance, they can best be dealt with, and explained, in Committee. The first important amendment is that which deals with inspections and the appointment of inspectors. It will be seen by reference to the Bill that it is intended to divide our inspectors into three classes, namely, district inspectors, special inspectors, and workmen's inspectors. The duties of the district inspector will be identical with those performed by inspectors at the present time. They will be appointed under the Public Service Act, of course subject to the regulations under the present Act. The special inspectors will be an innovation; they will be intended to overcome difficulties which have been experienced in years past. The Minister will be enabled to at any time appoint special inspectors who are possessed of special or technical knowledge, to inspect or make investigations as may be desirable from time to time. I may instance a case which occurred a few years ago, when Mr. Mann the Government Analyst, made an extensive investigation of the gases in our mines, but he was only able to do so by permission of the mine owners. They could have prevented him carrying out that investigation because there was nothing in the Act to permit the Government Analyst or any other person outside a duly appointed inspector making that investigation. It is provided in the Bill that special inspectors may be appointed; they may be medical men or experts of any description, and they will be given power to investigate and report at any time. The third form of inspector is the inspector who may be appointed by the workers. It has long been contended by those employed in the mines that the men themselves should have the opportunity of appointing what they have termed in the past a check inspector. The Bill provides that the registered unions of mine employees may appoint any one of their number who has had five years' practical underground experience to be a workmen's inspector. I think this is an excellent provision; it will lighten the work in many respects of the district inspectors and at the same time a check will be kept

upon the dangers and the risks that men undergo in underground occupations. The workmen's inspector will be under the control of the district inspector, and the conditions of employment will be subject to the regulations as may be passed from time to time by the Minister. Another important amendment is that which permits the State mining engineer or the Government Geologist, or the assistant geologist, or any other person who may be appointed by the Minister, to inspect, examine and to sample any mine. In the present Act there is power for the appointment of those persons I have mentioned to inspect any mine, but there is no power given them to sample a mine. Hon. members will remember the revelations of a few years ago, and I need only refer to the case of the Deep Levels mine which should go to show that it is absolutely essential that the Minister of the day should have the power, if necessary in the interests of mining generally, to not only send an expert officer to inspect a mine, but also to sample it. I believe this will tend towards establishing greater confidence so far as the investor is concerned, as well as others interested in the industry. This must be the undoubted result, if it is known that such a power exists and can be exercised so as to prevent practices which are certainly not to the advantage of the mining industry. Therefore, the amendment is sought to be made so that not only shall those officers have the power to inspect a mine but also to sample it, for the information, of course, of the department and the Minister, and not necessarily that it should be made public. It is also provided in the Bill that stopes shall be limited to a height of 10ft. but in exceptional cases the inspector may, in writing, give permission for them to be carried to a height of 15ft. but no more. The records of the department go to show that the great majority of accidents that have taken place in our mines have been the result of falls of earth. If the stopes are carried to a height which it is impossible for the men to inspect or to enable them to take precautions so as to bar down any stone that may be loose or dangerous, there is a greater liability of accidents

happening than if the stopes were merely of a reasonable height. I have had a report from an inspector of the department recently which stated that in one mine he had inspected the stope was 60ft. wide and 30ft. high. That might be likened almost to this Chamber.

Mr. Foley: You can put a dozen Chambers like this one in some of the stopes.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It has been the practice of the inspectors in most of the mines to keep the stopes to 14 or 15 feet but in other directions the mine owners have been allowed to go as high as they like; the consequence is that there is a greater liability of accidents happening to the men employed there. The Bill will limit those operations to a height of 10ft. but as I have stated, in exceptional cases, where it may be found necessary in the opinion of the inspector to exceed that height, permission will be given to go to 15ft., but in no circumstances will a greater height than that be allowed. It may be contended that this will increase the cost of mining operations, but after all I hold the view that so far as this provision is concerned, even if it does have that effect, the first consideration is the health and the safety of the men employed in the mines. Profits should not be made and dividends should not be paid at the expense of the lives or safety of the men who are responsible for those dividends and profits. Therefore I say this is a very necessary amendment and one to which the House should agree. It is also intended to limit the height to which rises may be carried to the extent of 20ft. Rises, I suppose, are about the most unpleasant parts of a mine that anybody could be employed in. There is not a man employed underground who will voluntarily work in a rise. Moreover, I hold that much of the rising going on to-day could be avoided if the management so desired. It is therefore intended to limit the height to which rises may be taken to 20ft. but provision is made that permission may be given to go to a greater height if it is not practicable to accomplish the same result by winzing. I feel sure there will be very few cases in which it is not possible to accomplish the

same result by winzing. Therefore I say that, in the interests of the men concerned rising should be prohibited as far as possible. This is what this provision seeks to do. The arbitration sections in the Act are to be repealed, and a Mines Regulation board substituted. The board will consist of any number up to seven, who may be appointed by the Minister, and it will be their duty to investigate and finally determine all questions of differences or appeals relating to any of the provisions of this measure. At the present time if the owner, agent, or manager of a mine disagrees with any instruction issued by the inspector power is given to take the matter to arbitration. A board may be appointed consisting of three, one a representative of the employer, one representing the inspector, and an umpire, who must be a Supreme Court judge, a warden, or a resident magistrate. It is proposed to repeal those provisions and to substitute a board. This will be a more satisfactory system, because it will be possible to get men of better practical knowledge than we get under existing circumstances. Many questions arise from time to time as to the interpretation of different sections of the Mines Regulation Act. One section which has been a prolific source of disagreement is that which provides that the regulations must be carried out so far as is reasonably practicable. Never yet has it been definitely determined what is reasonably practicable. This will be finally settled by the board, and their decision will have to be accepted. It is a considerable improvement on the existing method, and one which I feel sure will give greater satisfaction to the mine owners, to the department, and to the men concerned. What may be termed a revolutionary amendment is that which provides for the abolition of the night shift. It is provided in the Bill that after the 1st January, 1914, the night shift underground shall be entirely abolished. I fail to see why men who follow the occupation of mining, above all other occupations, should be singled out for the eternal grind, year after year, of the night shift. I believe provision can be

made by the mining companies for the continuous working of their plants, without any reduction in their output, by working the two shifts if they so desire. The time has been fixed as the 1st January, 1914, in order to enable those companies to make provision for increased storage, so that they will be able to carry on and maintain their output as at present. This provision will have another effect. It will, I believe, to a greater extent than anything else conceivable, improve the ventilation in our deep mines. If the workings are allowed to rest for eight hours in 24, and the fumes are thus given an opportunity of disappearing from the mines, those working in the other two shifts will have healthier conditions than at present. I have experienced what it is to work night shift, and of my own knowledge I can say that this provision will, to a greater extent than anything else I know of, improve the conditions of mining. Therefore, although no doubt it will be objected by the mine owners that this provision will limit their output, I say that if they so desire, and if they are given the full twelve months' notice in which to meet the altered conditions, they can maintain their output and, therefore, the provision will inflict no hardship whatever. Another matter which has been very extensively discussed on the goldfields is the employment of aliens. It is intended in the Bill to limit the number of aliens which may be employed in any mine to one in ten. That is to say, for every nine Britishers, either by birth or nationalisation, only one alien may be employed. I regret the necessity for legislating in this direction. We frequently hear of men who are very loud in their protestations of loyalty to the British Empire, who on every possible occasion parade their loyalty, nevertheless refusing to employ British subjects. In some of our mines as high as 70 or 80 per cent. of the men employed are foreigners and aliens to the British race. It is a reflection on the management of those mines that it should be necessary to legislate in this direction, but the situation has become so serious in recent years that it is essential that something should

be done to limit the number of foreigners employed in our mines. In some of the mines on the Golden Mile these foreigners have been increasing very rapidly of recent years. I do not know what the object of the managers may be, but it seems to me it is because these aliens are more docile, more amenable to the whims of the managers, than is the Britisher; but whatever the object, I say it is in the interests, not only of those concerned, but of the State itself, that we should limit the number of foreigners employed. We do not desire to encourage the immigration of a race of men who do not bring their families here, who do not settle down, and who are practically of no value whatever to the State. Many of these men remain for a few years, make a little money, and then return to their own country. Preference to the Britisher should be given voluntarily, but seeing that this is not done it is necessary to make it compulsory by Act of Parliament, and that is what the Bill seeks to do by limiting the number of aliens employed in the mines to one in ten. It is also provided that the contract system is to be abolished. In practically the whole of the Murchison field at the present time contract has been abolished by the action of the men in refusing to take contracts, but on the Eastern and Northern gold-fields the system still prevails. There would not be so much objection to contract if it were a contract in the ordinary sense of the term; but the contract system which prevails in our mines is the most pernicious it is possible to imagine. The men who take the contracts have no say whatever in the fixing of the price. They are simply told that they may work in a certain place at a certain rate per foot, and if it is found at the end of a fortnight that they have made £1 or 25s. per shift the company can come along and reduce the price. That has been going on until it is to-day a fine art in the way of getting the maximum amount of work for the minimum amount of pay. There is a large number of men engaged at contract work who do not make the ordinary standard wage paid in the district. I admit, of course, that there is

quite a number who make over the ruling rate; but that does not compensate for the others who make less, nor for the fact that the men are unduly rushed, are worked at too great a speed on contract, and under more unhealthy conditions than they would be if engaged on day labour. So it is provided in the Bill that contracts shall be entirely abolished, and that work underground shall only be taken on ordinary wages. The Bill also provides that the maximum number of hours which may be worked shall be reduced from 48 to 44. I believe that is not asking too much. Forty-four hours per week now prevails in some trades in different States of the Commonwealth, and if there is any calling to which these hours ought to apply, it is surely the dangerous and unhealthy one of mining. An innovation is also to be made in that it is provided that regulations shall be framed governing the issue of certificates to mine managers, foremen, and mining surveyors. This is a principle which obtains in many countries, in fact, I think in all the States of the Commonwealth except South Australia and Western Australia, and to my mind there is no reason why those who hold such responsible positions as mine managers, who have practically the lives of hundreds of men in their hands, should not have to obtain certificates of competency such as are required in other walks of life. These are the main principles of the Bill, the principles which are likely to be the most contentious. I sincerely hope we shall succeed in making the Bill law, notwithstanding the fact that we are near the end of the session. I believe, as I stated in my opening remarks, that men engaged in one of the most, if not the most dangerous occupation in the State, should have every possible consideration from Parliament, and therefore I have pleasure in submitting the Bill to the House. As I have already mentioned, there are many minor amendments, but these can best be dealt with in Committee. When that stage is reached I shall have pleasure in affording any explanation that may be desired. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. George debate adjourned.

BILL.—WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) in moving the second reading said: It has been found necessary to make the few amendments contained in this Bill by the experience gained in the working of the Act passed in 1911. We have to appreciate the fact that until the measure was passed only last year, we had no opportunity of knowing how many of its provisions would operate in practice, but had to accept largely the experience of other places, and embody provisions in the Act which at the time we thought would meet the position of Western Australia. It has now been discovered that there are one or two matters in the measure which require amendment in order to allow the Act to work as smoothly and beneficially as we desire. There are not really any points of principle contained in this amending measure, but in order to allow hon. members to understand it I will explain as briefly as possible the provisions of the Bill. The main point is that contained in Clause 5 which is to amend Part III. of the Act, and members will know that in Part III. we provide for the establishment of workers' dwellings on the leasehold system, that is on land that has been dedicated for the purpose of workers' homes and where the Government provide the land as well as the dwelling. Under Part IV. we provide for loans for the purpose of purchasing an existing dwelling, or for the erection of a dwelling on freehold land, or land held in some other form by the applicant for the loan. But in Part III. the land is dedicated for the purpose of workers' homes and leased to the applicant, and we provide in this Clause 5 that we may declare such land open for selection by any person who is desirous

of having a dwelling erected upon it. Under the existing provisions it is necessary first of all to erect the dwelling on the land and then call for applications from persons who desire to obtain that dwelling. That procedure would cause many persons to obtain homes which are not to their liking. For instance, we may build a number of homes varying in size from three to six rooms, call for applications for them, and then discover that there are quite a number of people who desire homes with one room less or one room more, and that would cause a considerable amount of dissatisfaction and would not give the amount of benefit that we are desirous of giving under the Act. We are, therefore, providing that land may be declared open for selection for workers' dwellings before or after the erection of dwelling houses, so that the applicant may have an opportunity of deciding the class of home that he will have according to his own liking, and not one that may be foisted on him under the provisions of the present Act. We are also reducing the deposit from £10 to £5, and the payment of it is postponed until the application is approved. Under the provisions of the present Act it is necessary that when an application is lodged there shall be lodged with it an application fee of £10. It is true that when the application is approved that fee is deducted from the amount to be paid for the dwelling, but if there are a number of applicants for one dwelling and each has to pay an application fee of £10, many of them might have to borrow the money and give a promissory note for £12, although the £10 will be repaid to them. To avoid that we propose only to obtain the deposit from the successful applicant. Thus we call for applications from those who desire a dwelling erected on that particular lot, and then the applicant is asked to complete his application by depositing £5 and we proceed at once to erect a dwelling according to his own choice. In regard to Clause 6, as the Act stands at present, workers' dwellings must necessarily be erected on an area of land set

apart as a workers' dwellings estate. The object of this clause is to give the applicant a free choice of a site for his dwelling and to allow the board to acquire such site and dedicate it to the purposes of the Act. That will do away with some of the objections raised that under Part III. we would have a compound, and that we could not obtain a piece of land and erect a dwelling except in an estate where everybody would know that these people were the owners of workers' dwellings. Under this clause we may purchase a single block in any part and erect a workers' dwelling, which can be dedicated for the purposes of the Act and lease it to the applicant just as we can do under Part III. Clause 7 is an amendment of Section 23 of the principal Act which was intended to enable the holders of freehold land to surrender that land to the board and obtain in exchange a holding under Part III. and the erection of a dwelling upon it. The section, however, restricts the power of the board to the granting of the holding under Part III. to the person by whom the land is actually surrendered. If a person defaulted after his application to surrender had been approved the board could not deal further with that piece of land, and the only difference we are making by this Clause 7 is to give the board power to dispose of the land to any other person, in the event of the first applicant for the surrender of the land for the purpose of a worker's dwelling defaulting. This provision is absolutely essential, otherwise we might have land left on the hands of the board without them being able to dispose of it. Of course the board will have to take precautions so as not to allow a person to surrender land ostensibly for the purpose of getting a worker's dwelling, and then merely walk off with the cash, but members can rest assured that the board are taking sufficient interest in the operation of the Act to prevent that sort of thing occurring. But should anything occur to prevent a home being erected on that land for the person who has surrendered it, the board

will be able to further deal with the land.

Mr. George: Does he get anything for the land he surrenders?

The PREMIER: Certainly. No actual cash transaction would occur, but the applicant would get a set-off against the building which the board would erect. The members of the board do not desire that this matter should be held up indefinitely, and we therefore give the applicant a month in which to complete his surrender, and then a dwelling will be erected in accordance with his design. If he defaults then the board may deal with the land as they desire, but only for the purposes of this Act. Those are the only amendments of any consequence. There are a number of minor amendments; amongst them Clause 2 is intended to remedy a doubt as to whether the erection of a shop in connection with a worker's dwelling under either Part III. or Part IV. is not a bar to the application being entertained. We have already had an application, which has been held in abeyance owing to this point not being clear, where a widow was desirous of erecting a house for herself with the front part so arranged that it could be utilised as a shop, but according to the wording of the Act the board, acting on the advice of the Crown Law authorities, hold that they are not able to make a loan for such a purpose. In order not to prevent that sort of transaction, I am asking the authority of the House to allow advances for a dwelling house, to which may be attached a shop, but of course the board will have to take a precaution that the funds are not being utilised merely for the erection of shops as such. The use of one room or any part of a dwelling as a shop should not be a bar to a person coming under the benefits of the Act. In fact the Imperial Parliament has made such a provision in a Bill now before it, and has even provided that the board may erect small shops, not taking into account whether the main reason is to provide a dwelling, to enable people to earn a livelihood as well as have a place to live in. After all, it is of no use having a home unless the person can obtain clothing and food for himself and his

family. Clauses 4 and 8 are to enable part of the repayment of the capital cost of a dwelling or the amount of a loan to be made at any time by an instalment of £10 or upwards and not necessarily £10 or a multiple thereof. Under Part III. we have no power to permit an applicant to pay off all the purchase money until the whole time has expired, unless he pays off the whole of it. If he was still owing £100 on his house he might be desirous of paying off £10, but under the existing law we could not accept that £10; he must either pay the whole £100 or continue paying the ordinary instalments. That is undesirable, and in order to meet that difficulty we are making provision whereby he may pay off £10 or upwards during any period of the currency of the loan, and if he can pay off the loan after 10 years instead of 20 years, as he originally contracted to do, we are willing to allow him to do so, because that will make more money available for the benefit of other applicants. Clause 9 proposes to substitute a fine of one penny per pound per month in lieu of 5 per cent. per annum for delayed payments.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What is the difference?

The PREMIER: There is really no difference except this, that under Part IV. where loans are made, we provide that they shall pay, say, 6 per cent. and for prompt payments it will be reducible to 5½ per cent., but the courts have held that we cannot on a mortgage charge 5 per cent. interest and then through the mortgagor not making prompt payments fine him to the extent of a quarter or half per cent. We can do it, however, by making the charge 6 per cent., and making a reduction to 5 per cent. for prompt payments, which is just the same thing; but in order to avoid a lot of calculations, which are not necessary in operations such as these, we make an arrangement which is clearer to the applicant and easier to operate by the board, that the applicant shall pay one penny per pound for each month he is in arrears. This is a more simple method of doing it and

it has exactly the same effect because it is really five per cent. as is provided in the Act at present. Clause 10 is to extend Section 43 for the protection of securities generally of lessees under the Crown. Clause 11 is to enable forms and fees to be prescribed by regulations. At present we have no power to prescribe any fees and we want to have this power to permit the board to do legally what they are doing at present without legal authority. These are the provisions of the Bill and members will appreciate that there is no vital principle involved in any of them. They are amendments which we have found to be necessary as a result of the operations of the Act during the last six months. Quite a number of blocks are already available under Part III. in several towns, Geraldton in particular, and also in the metropolitan area, but we cannot utilise them effectively in the direction desired until this Bill becomes law. I therefore move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): Members of the Opposition are very glad to agree to any amending Bill which will make it easier for people to get homes for themselves. I do not know the amount which has been advanced, but I believe a considerable sum has been advanced. I would have liked the Premier to have told the House how many houses have been built and how many applications have been approved. It might be risky to allow this money to be used for the purpose of building shops. I realise that the intention of the Premier is that one room might be used by the occupant for a dressmaking, confectionery or cool drink shop, but I do not know that the clause makes it clear.

The Premier: You will see by the clause that we cannot erect a shop in itself.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Our object is to erect dwellings. I understand the Premier does not wish to erect in the main a shop, but to make it possible for a room in a dwelling to be used as a shop. There are too many shops now, and I do not think there is any need to provide more, but I have no objection to a suggestion to allow

a widow or some such person to use portion of the house for the purpose of a small business. I doubt, however, whether this clause will restrict the lending of money to the extent the Premier apparently desires. However, in Committee we will be able to get further information, and amend the clause if necessary. The Premier is seeking the power to raise funds by ordinary loan and to cut out a provision enabling him to issue debentures. The limit of £200,000 is also dropped. I realise that we do not need a limit if all the money used for this purpose is raised after Parliamentary authorisation has been obtained. When a man is having a home built, he should see the plans before it is erected. It is a good thing to allow people to surrender their blocks in order to have homes erected, but it would be a pity if we had compounds into which these people were obliged to go. It would be better to let them have their homes scattered wherever they please. The Premier has practically said that he wishes the applicant to see the plans in order to determine the nature of the accommodation and the arrangement of the rooms. That is right, and it is strange that a similar provision was not made in the original Bill. As regards the surrender of the land, the Premier said the value of the block surrendered would be taken as an off-set as against the cost of the building. The Act does not provide for that. The section to which he referred does not make that provision. I do not know that it would be fair to make the whole value of the block a set-off against the cost of the building. It would place at a disadvantage the man who saved sufficient money and bought a block for the erection of a dwelling. The section in the Act makes it clear that the man who surrenders a block must be the man who secures the dwelling. An accident, however, might arise which might make it impossible to enforce that. I hope this clause will not be used by people merely to sell their land to the Government. That is not likely to happen because the amount which could be made out of it would be small.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: The option is only for one month.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The interjection answers my objection. If the man who surrenders his block is only to have the option for a month it would not be right to deprive him of the value of the block if he did not make use of his option. I think the Premier has made a wise arrangement whereby a deposit will not have to be paid when application is made for an advance. Under this measure a deposit will be required from the successful applicant only after the application is approved. That is reasonable. When it comes to paying off a loan the owner of the house should be allowed to pay off any amount he pleases so long as it is in pounds. It would be a little more trouble to calculate the interest but £10 is a fairly large amount for a worker to accumulate out of 9s. or 10s. a day. The money would probably burn a hole in his pocket before it amounted to £10, and I would like to see the amount of repayments reduced considerably below the £10 stated in the Bill. Provision is made for regular repayments but we provide that whenever a man has £10 he may reduce his liability to that extent. If he was allowed to pay off £1 it would be a great advantage, and he should be allowed to pay whenever convenient a sum as small as £1. The amendment seems to be fairly satisfactory except in regard to the provision which permits money to be used for shop or business premises. The provision might be abused, because a dwelling might represent an infinitesimal portion of the whole expenditure, and the desire of Parliament is to encourage men to make comfortable and reasonable homes for themselves. We want to stick to the main principle of the Act. I do not see how the expenditure of any part of the limited sum granted for the erection of a house for the purpose of building a shop will achieve the object of the Premier. I presume the Premier will tell us in Committee what led to the introduction of this amendment.

Mr. DWYER (Perth): It seems to me that this is an amending Bill which every member should welcome. We have already

endorsed the principle of workers' homes. In fact members on both sides of the House are at one in regard to the principle of workers' homes, and a measure which is intended to simplify and oil the machinery, so to speak, and make money more easily obtainable for this purpose, and the Act more effective, should be welcomed by everyone. The Premier said there is no new principle; in fact, the principles have already been laid down in the Act. The exception which has been taken by the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) to that portion of the Bill dealing with shops is almost in the nature of carping criticism.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I do not take exception if it only goes to the extent the Premier says it does.

Mr. DWYER: If the hon. member reads the clause he will see that it cannot mean anything else. It does not provide for a dwelling house attached to a shop, but it speaks of a shop attached to a dwelling house, and there is a world of difference in the way these two phrases are put. If a shop is the principal portion as the hon. member feared, it would be a dwelling house attached to a shop. On the other hand, the clause can bear only this construction that it is a shop wanted as part of an ordinary dwelling house. The hon. member should see that where premises are used principally for a dwelling any small premises in the way of a shop and annexed to the dwelling cannot be of any great importance and cannot change the essential nature of the whole premises from being that of a dwelling. If that is the only objection, the hon. member may very well ease his mind. Besides he ought to remember that the administration of the Act is in the hands of a very capable board and they will see that the intentions of Parliament and the intentions expressed by the Premier are fully observed. I congratulate the Premier on introducing this short Bill. It is only a machinery Bill but it enables the workers to get their homes in a manner more effective than that provided in the principal Act because it eases and simplifies the machinery of the Act and will render the new department more effective in its working.

Mr. LANDER (East Perth): I wish to support this little amending Bill. Since the workers' homes scheme has been in force, working men have spoken to me on numerous occasions in reference to their deposits. Members know that a working man with a family finds it hard to deposit £10 and to leave it with the board until his application is dealt with. It is like the system of contractors' deposits with tenders which have been kept back in some cases for months. The proposal in the Bill is a most reasonable one. I do not agree with the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) with reference to shops. Take a small saddler or a small bootmaker, why should we not advance to a small man to erect a shop? It is just the same as advancing for a worker's home. These small men are working men in every sense; we need not worry about whether the house is attached to the shop. Let us make it clear that money will be advanced for shops. I am also pleased to see that the Ministry are going to amend the Bill so that men can select land anywhere in the metropolitan area. There are numerous blocks of land that will be taken up immediately this Bill becomes law.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE (Toodyay): I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill, but it is about time a little more consideration was given by the Workers' Homes Board to country propositions in inland towns. The attention of the board has been almost centred on the metropolitan area, but there are many deserving applicants in country towns, and I hope special effort will be made to give them some assistance, and not to give the sole attention to metropolitan applicants.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

Mr. McDowall in the Chair, the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2 agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 6. Funds:

Mr. GEORGE: Why was the Act to be amended by striking out the issue of debentures?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The reason was the same as promoted the amendment moved within the past few days in regard to the Agricultural Bank Act. The Workers' Homes Board operated on capital provided in a similar way to that provided for the Agricultural Bank, with the result that there was a fictitious increase in the capital, because repayments and profits had to be repaid to the Savings Bank and fresh capital had to be authorised by Parliament. To give more freedom in connection with the provision of capital it was found necessary to provide for the raising of money for the Agricultural Bank direct, either by loan or, if circumstances were favourable, by the old method through the Savings Bank. The effect of that amendment would be that ultimately the Agricultural Bank would have its own capital. The amount upon which it would operate would be the exact amount of capital at its disposal. So far the Agricultural Bank had loaned about a million pounds, whereas the last Bill put through stated the capital as three million pounds. The same position would be created under the Workers' Homes Act, but this amendment would overcome that, and we would provide the board with capital just the same as we appropriated money for our public works policy. As money was repaid to the board it would go into the capital fund of the board and be used again for the operation of the Act.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 11:

Mr. LANDER: This clause provided that a borrower from the Workers' Homes Board could pay additional instalments of not less than £10. It was very hard on the workman to have to raise £10 to pay off his house more rapidly. If instalments of £1 were allowed in this way, at the end of the year hundreds of pounds would be received more than would be received by fixing it at £10.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The object of making the minimum £10 was to avoid a very high cost of administration. Under existing circumstances the board had not a large margin to work on in regard to administration. If we converted

the board into something in the nature of a savings bank the administrative expenses would be considerably increased, with no corresponding increase in the margin available for administrative purposes.

Mr LANDER: That old yarn could not be accepted for a moment. With a gun plenty of deadheads in the Workers' Homes Department would be found in five minutes. If we could not accept sums of £1 we should give up administering the department. He moved an amendment—

That "ten pounds" be struck out and "one pound" inserted in lieu.

Mr. GEORGE: While sympathising with the Minister in his desire to keep down expenses, one must also sympathise with the man of small wages and small savings in whom we should encourage the habit of thrift. It would be doing that man a good turn to give him the opportunity of paying the money back in small instalments.

The PREMIER: To fully explain the position it would be necessary to bring down to the Committee a huge book showing the amounts worked out by actuaries. To alter the scales and give the opportunity to pay an additional £1 per month, would make it exceedingly difficult to fix what amount could be paid by way of reduction in the following month. The whole table of interest and capital would be affected and a staff of actuaries would be required, adding considerably to the expenses of the board. There was no difficulty with regard to the £10 because the effect of an additional payment of £10 had already been worked out by the actuaries. The hon. member's desire could be obtained by borrowers from the Workers' Homes Board paying £1 a month into the Savings Bank, and drawing £10 at the end of 10 months and paying it into the Workers' Homes Board.

Mr. Lander: What about the man who draws it out and goes to the races?

The PREMIER: The Minister controlling the Workers' Homes Act was not called on to exercise control over those people who would do improper things with their money on race days.

Mr. WISDOM: The Premier stated that it might require considerable labour

and actuarial assistance to work out these sums, but the Premier should be reminded that the calculation would only be made once. He was not inclined to think that the difficulty stated by the Premier was insurmountable. It was all very well to say that the worker might pay his pound into the Savings Bank, but the man who was only be able to pay £1 a month would have to wait ten months before he paid this amount off his dwelling. It would mean more work to use the Savings Bank because this money would have to be paid into the Savings Bank and there would be more bookkeeping to be done, interest would have to be calculated on the deposits, and then the withdrawal would have to be made, and after all it would be paid into the workers' homes fund, thus making three transactions instead of one. It would save a lot of labour to make the payment direct into the workers' homes fund, but the important point was that the worker would save two per cent.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): One phase of this question had been overlooked. A person building a home under Part 3 had the option of paying off in ten years if he desired, or he could extend it to twenty years. That was a very big margin. If a person felt he could pay so much a week he could make the payments according to the reduction of the number of years.

Mr. GEORGE: It was clear that a man could determine on what instalments he would pay, but that was all right for a man who had a stated income. If the member for East Perth was going in for one of these houses he would not be likely to burden himself with large instalments, but if his employment was continuous and he found he could pay off another £1 or £2 his desire was to be able to do that. If at the start he elected to pay large instalments and then found himself out of work he would be in a fix. The hon. member wanted to give some incentive to thrift at the start.

Mr. THOMAS: The member for Claremont stated that one set of calculations would be sufficient to settle all cases, but in providing for these small payments a special set of actuarial calculations would have to be made for each individual. One

could imagine the mass of correspondence that would arise in explaining to everyone why such and such allowances were being made. This would have the effect of multiplying the work of the department two or three times. If it could be done, well and good, but he was satisfied that it would only harm rather than benefit those we were seeking to serve.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5, 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Amendment of Section 23:

Mr. GEORGE: The section it was proposed to amend provided that any person being the holder of land in fee simple could surrender such land at a price to be agreed upon between himself and the board. What we had understood from the Premier was that a person might surrender the land and the price would have to be agreed upon, but that the price would not be paid to the person surrendering, it would be taken as a set-off against the cost of the building.

Mr. Dwyer: It is only Subsection 2 that is being altered.

The Premier: And even that is only a slight alteration.

Mr. GEORGE: What was understood from the Premier was that the land surrendered would be valued and the amount of that value would be set off against the building. When a price was agreed upon that price ought to be paid.

The Premier: It does not say that the price shall be paid. The person is given credit for it.

Mr. GEORGE: Where was that?

The Premier: In that section.

Mr. GEORGE: The section it was proposed to amend provided for the surrender of land and the fixing of the price. Subsection 2 was practically the same as the proposed subsection under discussion. It provided that the Minister could erect a dwelling house and dispose of it as a worker's dwelling. Suppose the Minister did not erect it, the price of the land that the Minister accepted the surrender of would have to be paid to the individual. There was nothing in the clause making it obligatory that the price should be taken as a set-off against the building.

The Premier: There is nothing to the contrary either.

Mr. DWYER: Section 23 of the existing Act provided that any person, the holder of freehold, might surrender it at a price to be agreed upon, but made no provision as to the payment of the money. It was provided that after the surrender the Minister might erect a dwelling for the man who had surrendered the land. But it was possible that in exceptional circumstances that man might demand his money, and there was no power in the Act providing that the money should be placed to the credit of the dwelling to be erected. If the man who surrendered the land did not desire to go on with the proposed dwelling he could have his money, and some other man could apply for the dwelling.

Mr. George: Then how can the money be set off against the building?

The Premier: It will go as a set off against a building only if the man who surrenders the land takes the building.

Mr. DWYER: It was plain that if the man who surrendered the land had a dwelling erected the price agreed upon for the surrendered land would go as a set off against the cost of the building. On the other hand, if, after all, that man did not require the dwelling, he would take his money for the land and go.

Mr. GEORGE: The hon. member had interpreted the position as being just what he (Mr. George) had understood it to be. If a man surrendered freehold land he obtained the money for it.

The Premier: Not necessarily; not if he requires a dwelling to be erected.

Mr. GEORGE: Suppose the man who surrendered the land did not want the dwelling, but took his money and went, where then was the set off against the building? If "A" surrendered land and did not desire to build on it, "B" could apply to have a building erected on it, in which case, of course, the price of "A's" land would not be set off against the building.

The PREMIER: For a month after "A" had surrendered freehold to the

Workers' Homes Board he would have the exclusive right to apply to the board to erect a dwelling on the land. If a dwelling was erected in the interests of "A," the price agreed upon as the value of the land would be dedicated as a set off against the dwelling. Under the existing Act if "A" were not prepared to go on with the house, and the board paid him the money for the surrendered land, the land would remain in the hands of the board, who were not empowered to put it to any other use. The amendment provided that in such a case the board could pay "A" the price agreed upon, after which "B" could come in and make a separate agreement with the board for the erection of a dwelling on land purchased from "A." It had never been claimed that the amount paid for the land would be set off against the dwelling if "A" did not have such dwelling erected. Only in the event of "A" requiring the dwelling would the price of the land surrendered be set off against the dwelling.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The clause provided one thing, and the Premier had talked about another. It was distinctly provided that a man might surrender land to the Crown and obtain payment for that land.

The Premier: No.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The clause was all right, but the Premier was wrong in his interpretation of the clause. The object of the clause was to encourage men to build on leasehold blocks; but what advantage would it be to the holder of freehold to surrender it to the Crown if for all time he had to pay three per cent. when he could only get the advantage of five per cent. for a very short term? Unless such a man got cash for his land there was no inducement for him to change from freehold to leasehold.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 8 to 13—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—GOVERNMENT TRADING CONCERNS.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending the Bill.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill to give effect to a desire expressed by Parliament to my knowledge ever since I have been a member, and that is that where the Government are carrying on any trading undertaking they shall compel that undertaking to keep proper books account, and present them to Parliament duly certified to by the Auditor General in order to give Parliament, and through Parliament, the people, a proper account as complete as possible, of its operations during the year, and to show whether such trading concern is operated at a loss or a profit. I may explain that under the provisions of the Constitution Act it is necessary that all moneys received in behalf of the Crown for any operations of any description shall be paid into Consolidated Revenue Fund, or into the public account, and all moneys drawn upon the public account shall be from time to time appropriated by Parliament. Then we have the Audit Act, which provides for an Auditor General responsible to Parliament. His responsibilities are to ascertain that all revenue is brought to account under the proper headings in the Treasury and that all expenditure is in order and correctly expended in accordance with Parliamentary appropriation. His duty really ends there, and he is not called upon to make any report to Parliament, or to satisfy himself with regard to the accounts of any particular concern or branch of a Government department. For instance, I believe he was asked on one occasion to audit the accounts of the State batteries separately; each battery's accounts were to be kept separate and examined by the Auditor General who would give his opinion to the Minister with regard to the operations of that particular battery. But the Auditor General pointed

out that it was not part of his duty, nor had he power to do what was asked, and he further explained that if the Government desired him to do this, the proper course would be to give him the requisite power by an amendment of the Audit Act or by a special Act; I think he preferred the special Act. In fact, he expressed an opinion which has been frequently expressed in this House that the law should be framed so that proper accounts of all trading undertakings should be kept and submitted to Parliament. That is the desire we have and a desire expressed at some time by nearly every member of Parliament, but for some reason no Government have previously taken the opportunity, perhaps through pressure of other business, of presenting to Parliament a Bill which would compel that desire to be given effect to. The measure I have the pleasure of introducing to-night is for that purpose. We may differ in regard to some of the details, but personally I do not think there is much room for difference, the whole principle of the Bill being that each trading undertaking brought under the operation of this measure shall keep proper books of account. Clause 2 shows how undertakings will be brought under the operation of the measure; we do not apply the Bill to any particular trading concern, but leave its application to the Governor in Council to decide.

Mr. George: Does it take in the railways?

The PREMIER: The railways are operating under a Railways Act, the provisions of which are such that it may not be necessary to bring them under this measure. In fact, I do not think it would make much difference, but I have not yet given consideration to the question as to what concerns should be brought under the operation of the Act.

Mr. George: Every trading concern should be brought under its operation.

The PREMIER: I have no objection to that. In fact I think the Railway Department is operating to-day under provisions similar to those of the Bill I am introducing.

Mr. Wisdom: Well, they do not show the true position.

The PREMIER: They do show the true position. Members will see that in Clause 2—

This Act shall apply to such Government undertakings and to such works and services temporarily financed from public funds, hereinafter referred to as trading concerns, as the Governor may, by order in Council, declare to be under and subject to this Act.

Then Clause 3 provides that the Government may issue debentures for the purpose of the Act "or such other moneys as may from time to time be appropriated by Parliament for the purpose."

Hon. J. Mitchell: What do you borrow for?

The PREMIER: For any trading concern that the Government may by consent of Parliament consider to be necessary. The hon. member will appreciate the fact, as I have previously explained, that the authority to borrow does not give authority to spend.

Hon. J. Mitchell: But I thought this was a Bill to provide for the keeping of accounts.

The PREMIER: So it is, and as I have said, it empowers the Government to borrow money for the purposes of trading concerns, but limits the amount that may be borrowed for such purposes to £500,000. I do not wish to argue that point with the hon. member, however, because I have taken that provision from the Bill he had drafted. The aggregate amount that may be borrowed is £500,000, and provision is also made for the control of such other moneys as may from time to time be appropriated by Parliament for the purpose. Having provided this money, either by appropriation or by the issue of these debentures, it is paid into an account at the Treasury, and hon. members will find, by reference to the provisions of the Bill, that such fund is to be operated on in the usual manner, namely by impress on that account, and all moneys received from trading concerns are also paid into Consolidated Revenue, and the money necessary to operate the trading concerns is appro-

priated annually in the Estimates of expenditure from Consolidated Revenue Fund. That is in accordance with the Constitution Act; indeed it is doubtful if we had any power to do otherwise, although such a desire was expressed in some quarters. It will be noticed that in Clause 5, Subclause 2—

When funds for the capital expenditure of a trading concern are appropriated by Parliament pursuant to any Loan Act, the interest on the inscribed stock, debentures, or Treasury bills chargeable to special Acts on the Estimates of the Consolidated Revenue Fund shall be shown in the accounts of the trading concerns as a debit against working expenses.

Hon. members will understand that today the interest and sinking fund charges on any money borrowed under any Loan Act are charged to Consolidated Revenue Fund. Unless we amend our General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act we could not, even if we so desired, make that charge against a trading concern. We must make it a charge against Consolidated Revenue Fund, but it is not a fair charge on that fund; it is a proper charge on the trading concern for which the money was borrowed, and thus we make it a charge in the books of the trading concern that such concern shall pay to Consolidated Revenue the interest and sinking-fund charges on the capital money that has been expended.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You provide that the whole lot goes in.

The PREMIER: This is a Bill to compel trading concerns to keep proper accounts. We are not altering the system in the Treasury in the slightest.

Mr. George: It is only a book-keeping payment.

The PREMIER: Of course it is. The member for Murray-Wellington will appreciate the position, because he knows that the railways pay all their revenue into Consolidated Revenue Fund and draw out all moneys required for operating the system. But this would compel the railways, if brought under the operations of this Act, to debit in their books interest and sinking fund charges on the capital expenditure.

Mr. George: They do that now and have done so for years.

The PREMIER: I have already said that we have in existence an Act so far as the railways are concerned which would make it unnecessary for them to come under this measure, but in connection with other trading concerns this method is not in operation. We are compelling each trading concern brought under the operation of the Act—and Parliament would direct the Government to bring a certain trading concern under the Act if they omitted to do so—to keep proper books of account and debit these interest and sinking fund charges in order that Parliament may know the position of that concern each year. Having done that, the interest and sinking fund charges are made a debit in the books of that trading concern as a charge against working expenses just as much as the payment of salaries to the manager and workmen. But Clause 5. Subclause 2, goes further and says—

as well as expenditure against the appropriation, as may be directed by the Colonial Treasurer, and a charge against the appropriation shall also be made for the contribution to the sinking fund provided under the General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act, 1910, as well as any further contributions to a special sinking fund which may, in the opinion of the Colonial Treasurer, be necessary to produce the principal at such earlier date as may be prescribed by the Governor.

The reason for that is this: We have been raising money at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; if any portion of that money was used for capital expenditure in any trading concerns they would be charged that $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the amount. But under the General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act they would be required to pay interest, and a sinking fund of half per cent. for the redemption of the loan at maturity. That half per cent. payment under the General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act is not sufficient to redeem the loan in its entirety, with the result that we have to draw from some other loan or some other source to make up the difference.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The PREMIER: Before the tea adjournment I was explaining that while we are compelling the departments which are controlling trading concerns to show a debit against their working expenses account of interest and ordinary sinking fund charges, as provided in our General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act, we are also providing that they shall debit a further contribution to a special sinking fund which may, in the opinion of the Colonial Treasurer, be necessary to produce the principal at as early a date as may be prescribed by the Governor. The object of that is to provide that the trading concerns shall produce sufficient during the term of the loan to redeem that loan in full when it reaches maturity. That, as I have stated, is not what occurs to the sinking fund as provided under our General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act. The half per cent. takes about 60 years to redeem a loan, whereas the loans are mostly redeemable in 40 to 50 years.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I think you have left out of this Bill sinking fund on debentures.

The PREMIER: I might explain that this Bill does not change the conditions so far as the finances are concerned in the slightest degree. It does not in any way alter the condition of the finances at the Treasury; it only compels the department which is controlling any trading concern to keep books showing these accounts in order that at the end of the year a proper profit and loss account might be produced to Parliament, just as if it was a concern operated by a company or a private individual. This will place it on exactly the same basis, but it will not affect the Treasury in the slightest degree. This will be in the books of the trading concern itself. The Bill goes on to say that if at the end of the year any balance is standing to the credit of the account at the Treasury provided for the capital expenditure, through the issue of debentures, or by money appropriated by Parliament, it shall be applied as the Governor may direct and, in the absence of any such direction, shall be carried for-

ward to the next year's account. That, of course, would mean that the Governor may direct, in view of there not being any need for that money to be utilised at an early date, that it should be invested on behalf of the trading concern, it being a capital charge against the concern on which interest and sinking fund are being paid, or he may find it necessary to have the money ready at hand in order to use it in connection with further capital expenditure in behalf of the trading concern, and thus the department will be allowed to carry forward the balance to the next year's account. Clause 11 is, I contend, the principal clause of the measure, insofar as it provides that Parliament shall have control of the expenditure. It states—

Annual Estimates of the expenditure of each trading concern shall be prepared under such heads and in such manner as the Colonial Treasurer may direct and submitted to Parliament as part of the Consolidated Revenue Fund Estimates.

I might explain that this year I had intended to show in the Estimates the amount of our interest and sinking fund charges that would be appropriated by the various undertakings in which the money has been expended, but I found it impossible at the last moment to include it. If members turn to pages 17, 18, and 19 of the Estimates of revenue and expenditure for the year, they will see the amount we have to find this year by way of interest and sinking fund charges on the various loans now in operation, and that, of course, is the first charge on the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and always appears in the Estimates being an amount provided by special Acts. On page 18 it will be seen that the amount we estimate expending by way of interest and sinking fund charges on loan expenditure for this year is £1,184,449, but from that the country cannot discover just how the capital money is being expended and in which direction we should look for the recovery of that interest, which is a first charge on all moneys paid into the Treasury notwithstanding that money might be paid into

the Treasury to be paid out again in some other direction. What I propose to do, and what I would have done had I been able to obtain further particulars before the Estimates were presented, is to show immediately under that the manner in which the loan money was expended and the interest and sinking fund charges against each item, so that we would know just how much interest and sinking fund charges had to be provided by way of taxation in order to meet the interest and sinking fund bill, or on the other hand how trading concerns, such as the railways, are providing interest and sinking fund charges, and carrying a profit, to the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and by that way lessening taxation.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That is in the monthly *Abstract*.

The PREMIER: I want to see it presented to Parliament so that Parliament can see how the money is expended and how we are providing to meet the expenditure. This will enable us to do that, only in another way. If the Bill is passed we will have on the Estimates a trading account division, and that division will show the amount that has to be found above working expenses for the purpose of meeting interest and sinking fund charges as provided in this measure, and Parliament will be able to see at once whether a particular trading concern is operating at a profit or a loss, and the Minister controlling the particular concern will have the same particulars available to him for his guidance. This is really the proper method to adopt. If we are going to undertake these trading concerns we ought to be in a position to show to the country exactly how they stand at the end of the year, just as if a company or a firm were operating them. We are placing these concerns exactly on the same basis as if they were run by a private firm. I am also providing that where money is found from the Consolidated Revenue Fund to provide capital for trading concerns, such as the Gwalia State hotel, the department shall in their books debit interest as if the concern was utilising loan money. We are, therefore, putting it on the same footing as a private individual

would do. A private individual would have had to find the money to invest in the Gwalia hotel, and would have had either to pay interest to the bank on the money borrowed, or lose interest at current rates if he was able to put up the money. This will also indicate how a Government trading concern compares with similar concerns operated by a private company or an individual. It is true the opinion is held by some people that the proper course is to give the Treasurer power to issue these debentures and to recoup the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the amount expended by way of capital, but I hold it would be absolutely wrong. Take the case of the Gwalia State hotel, it would be a handy thing for a Treasurer with a deficit but it would not be honest. If such a provision appeared in this measure authorising the issue of debentures in connection with the Gwalia hotel, and recouping the Consolidated Revenue Fund this year with money issued many years ago, something like 10 or 11 years ago, it would not be right. If that were done it would not only inflate my revenue returns but it would also increase our indebtedness; and as the Gwalia hotel, as a trading concern, has really, so far as its own books are concerned, paid into the Treasury sufficient to recoup the whole of the capital outlay, and shown a profit of £5,000 or £6,000, it will be seen that that hotel has proved a profitable concern, and a bargain to the country. It would be unfair to recoup the Consolidated Revenue Fund with that money when the amount has already been repaid. Clause 14 states—

There shall be entered in each year in the books of the trading concern such amounts as shall be fixed by the Colonial Treasurer as the interest and sinking fund contributions payable by the Treasury for the year in respect of such portion of the General Loan Fund as shall have been raised or applied to the purposes of the undertaking, and also the corresponding portion of interest accretions within the year to the sinking fund.

These, of course, are only shown in the books of the concern. I do not wish members to mix up the books of the trading concerns with the books of the Treasury.

The books of the Treasury show the cash receipts and expenditure but have nothing to do with the making up of the profit and loss account. The Treasury has only to do with certain withdrawals from the Public Account, and it keeps books dealing simply with cash transactions. Clause 15 provides—

(1.) The Minister may, in each year, determine the amount of the depreciation of the assets of any trading concern within the year. (2) Whenever the total amount of depreciation so determined shall exceed the amount provided for the payment of loan moneys raised or used for purposes of capital expenditure on a trading concern, the amount of such excess shall be charged against the profits of the trading concern, and may be appropriated by the Colonial Treasurer to the sinking fund.

That is really a renewal fund. Take, for instance, our ships. They of course will not exist so long as our loan from which we are expending the money exists, with the result that by charging them merely with $3\frac{1}{2}$ or 4 per cent. interest on the capital outlay, plus a half per cent., we would not be making a fair charge against that concern such as would be made by a private company or firm. Therefore we are providing that we shall pay a certain amount to the sinking fund for the purpose of recouping the loan expenditure by the time the asset has been lost to us, and thus, once having provided the capital expenditure, unless there is an increase in the business, we shall never require to go to loan funds again to replace them. We would provide sufficient by way of sinking fund that when the ships have gone or have been put on the scrap heap, we would have sufficient money to provide others in their places, and members of the Opposition will be in a position, if they come back into office, to replace the steamers without any difficulty.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I do not know about that.

The PREMIER: I do not anticipate that the hon. member will have to do that, as he will not get back into office in time. However, I think this is the proper method, if we are going to put our trading concerns on the same

basis as if they were operated by a company or a private firm. Then we also make a charge against the trading concerns of an amount which in the opinion of the Treasurer represents the equivalent of the use of Government buildings or other property, or of part services of any Government officers not wholly employed upon the trading concerns, or of other services rendered by any Government department. If a private firm were running steamers and using buildings, or if they were using their capital, they would have to pay interest on the capital, and they would need to keep their premises in repair. We have to do the same. The steamships will be debited with this expenditure to show their true position. They will be debited with a fair amount by way of rent for Government buildings and will be charged a fair amount to cover the expenses the Government have been put to for the use of officers who may not be permanently employed by them. These items will be shown as a debit against their working expenses. Clause 18 provides—

If the income of any trading concern is insufficient to meet, during the financial year, the cost of administration, the deficiency may be provided for under the appropriation "Advance to Treasurer," and subsequently confirmed by Parliament.

That of course is the only method that can be adopted legally to make up any deficiency on the amount that may be appropriated by Parliament.

Mr. George: Why not carry it to a suspense account?

The PREMIER: The hon. member will appreciate the fact that we cannot carry nothing to something, the deficiency being nothing. If Parliament votes £1,000 and this is expended by the end of May, we have nothing to carry to a suspense account, and the proper method, and the only method adopted, is to find the balance from the Treasurer's Advance provided by Parliament for the purpose. Then of course it is recouped at the end of the year.

Mr. George: That is what I meant. It is some suspense account when all is said and done.

The PREMIER: There is no need to carry it to any suspense account when that is already provided by Parliament. Those are the contents of the measure. Other clauses provide that the Auditor General or any person authorised by him may inspect the books and make copies or extracts therefrom, that the accounts of each trading concern shall be balanced every year on the 30th June or such other date as the Governor may prescribe, and that the accounts shall be audited. The Minister shall in every year cause a full and true balance-sheet of the assets and liabilities of each trading concern, together with a profit and loss account and such other statements as may be necessary, to be compiled from the books and submitted to the Auditor General for audit; and the Auditor General shall certify that he has found the accounts in order or otherwise as the case may be; and whether in his opinion the accounts are properly drawn up so as to present a true and correct view of the transactions for the period under review, as shown by the books, and all items of receipts and payments and all known liabilities and assets have been brought into account and the value of all assets fairly stated. The Auditor General shall have all the powers conferred on him by the Audit Act, 1904. Clause 22 provides that copies of such accounts, together with the Auditor General's report thereon, shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament annually.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member will not refer unnecessarily to the clauses.

The PREMIER: It is really a Bill that explains itself, and unless I can refer to the clauses I can hardly refer to the measure. I want the Bill discussed to-night, and I am only attempting to assist hon. members so that they will know where to look for the information when discussing the second reading. I could have made a general statement embodying the principle of the Bill if I had intended to allow the adjournment of the

debate, because then hon. members could have looked through the Bill themselves to be satisfied that the principles are provided therein. I have nothing more to say except that the only concern of the Government is to comply with the wish expressed, not only in this House but in another place and also by many public men, that when the Government undertake trading concerns they should present a statement and a profit and loss account each year showing the position of these trading concerns, just as though they were controlled by private persons or companies. That has been our endeavour, and I think the provisions of this Bill will meet the case exactly, except perhaps that we charge up things that ought not, in the opinion of hon. members, to be charged against trading concerns. I know nothing that ought to be charged up against them that has not been charged up. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) : I confess that this measure is one of considerable importance, and had it come down earlier in the session we should have asked the Premier to allow the debate to be adjourned; but we are anxious to get through our work, and it does happen that the drafting of the Bill is so simple that it can be understood without spending much time on it. There are two underlying principles in it. The Premier will say there are three, but I say there are two. I want to congratulate the Premier upon his cleverness. There is no shadow of a doubt the Bill is very cleverly drafted, and its provisions are very far-reaching. On the face of it, it might be believed that we are merely discussing the method of bookkeeping to be followed in Government trading concerns. Incidentally, I admit the method of bookkeeping does come in for consideration, because it is provided for in the Bill to a certain extent, but here the astute Premier has made it clear in the Bill that he is going to control the methods of bookkeeping; it is to rest with him just how the books are to be kept.

The Premier : I do not say anything about the double-entry system.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : It would be very strange if the Premier did, because I suppose that if I asked him to explain it he would find himself in a difficulty. The double-entry system is the only system that will produce a satisfactory result. However, I want to congratulate the Premier upon the two underlying principles governing this measure. The first is that the Government may establish any trading concern they please under this measure; they may bring whatever trading concerns they please under the Bill; only the trading concerns they elect to bring under the measure will come under it. Of course it says, "Governor-in-Council," but that means the Treasurer. The Treasurer may bring under the operation of the measure any concern he pleases, and he may leave out any concern he pleases.

The Premier : Parliament eventually controls them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : But we are asked to pass a Bill which will make the control perfect and obviate the necessity for coming to Parliament. Listening to the Premier's speech, in which he did not wish to describe very clearly some of the provisions, one would think all trading concerns were referred to, and that all trading concerns of necessity are to be brought under the Bill. Of course I agree with the Premier that Parliament will eventually control, but I think it would be better if Parliament could control now; that is to say, if the Premier had made it an obligation on the part of the Government to apply this system of accountancy, vaguely referred to I admit, to every concern outside the ordinary work of government.

The Premier : That is probably what will happen.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : I am much obliged to the Premier, but I want to make it necessary that it should happen.

The Premier : You could not name them all in the Bill.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : In Committee I think we will find a means, if the Premier will allow it, of making the

clause more definite. It must be admitted that the clause is a very clever one. It stands to the credit of the astuteness of the Premier that it has occurred to him to word it in such a way. But there is another clever clause, and that is the one that provides for the raising of debentures. The Minister for Lands will realise, because he administers the Agricultural Bank Act, that the Bill authorises the raising of money by debentures, that whatever amount is mentioned in the Bill the Treasurer has sole control of. Parliament has no hold over it, because the Bill itself gives special authority to spend certain money.

The Premier: To raise, but not to spend.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: To raise, and to spend. It would be ridiculous to ask Parliament to give power to the Premier to raise money if he will have no power to spend it, and it comes back to us. I would like to know from the Premier if in another Bill he is going to take power this session to spend the money authorised to be raised under this Act?

The Premier: The Estimates are my authority.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This Bill gives the Premier power to raise money to the extent of £500,000 for trading concerns, and gives absolute power and control to him to spend it as he pleases.

The Premier: No.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That is the effect of the clause.

The Premier: Not at all. There is provision in the Bill compelling me to get an appropriation of Parliament. That is in Clause 3.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Then I must withdraw my words of congratulation and praise in connection with this suggestion. But the provision is as I say, and to make it clearer I will refer hon. members to Clause 5, which sets the debenture capital on a different footing to the capital raised by a general loan Act. There are two methods of raising money, one by debentures to the extent of £500,000, and another under a general Loan Act. Both these methods are referred to, and it is important the

House should realise this. Of course so far as general Loan Funds are concerned we shall have control, because Parliament will have to be asked to vote the money.

The Premier: Clause 7 is definite on the question of appropriation by Parliament. While giving power to raise, it does not give power to spend without an appropriation by Parliament.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am not quite as simple as the Premier thinks. The Premier raises money by two means, first by the issue of debentures to the extent of £500,000, and he has control of that, and secondly under a general Loan Act. These two methods of raising money are referred to in Clause 7, which is distinct from Clause 5. If Parliament is willing to give the Premier the right to raise £500,000 for trading concerns apart from the General Loan Act of £5,600,000 we passed yesterday, of course the Premier will naturally go on with his trading ventures he is so fond of entering on; but I question whether Parliament, even members sitting on the Government side, will be willing to allow it, whether they will not say that we have gone far enough this session in agreeing to a Loan Act of £5,600,000. Any hon. member who reads the Bill will see that I am absolutely correct.

The Premier: You are absolutely wrong.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: These are the two main principles in the measure, first the Premier's right to do as he pleases about bringing trading concerns under the Act, and secondly his right to raise £500,000 without consulting Parliament and investing it in trading concerns. There is also a provision which says that all revenue is to be paid to Consolidated Revenue, and of course all expenditure on these works will be debited to Consolidated Revenue. Under the Railways Act, which I think works very satisfactorily, we have in our general statement of revenue and expenditure shown in the monthly *Abstract*, the amount earned by the railways and the amount spent by the railways, and if hon. members will turn to page 27 of the *Abstract* for October, they will see a very clear statement of

the operations of the railways even to the extent of showing the percentage of cost of construction and equipment after paying interest. The statement is absolutely clear; everything is there; it shows just the profit made and what is owed towards sinking fund. That system seems to be perfect because the public month by month are able to get the *Abstract* and they then know whether these trading concerns are prospering or not. I doubt whether there could be a better system. Under the Agricultural Bank Act the raising of capital by debentures is specially provided for and it is possible from the annual statement of the bank to know the profit or loss which has been made. It would be well in connection with all our trading concerns if such a system were followed. The system is a good one, and I commend it to the Premier. Mention has been made by the Premier of the ships he has purchased, and he has told us that when they have to be scrapped the sinking fund which he will provide for will cover the outlay. That will be all right if he insures them well in the meantime. I have referred to the steamers because the Premier alluded to them. I think it is a wise provision to set aside enough to cover the cost of the steamers. It is necessary that interest at half per cent. shall be set aside, and that after that the Treasurer should have control. The Treasurer is to say just how much more than that half per cent. is to be set aside as a sinking fund; Parliament is not to decide. I daresay it would be difficult for Parliament to decide because the trading concerns will have a varying life. The steamers might last less time than the sawmills, and the sawmills might last a shorter time than the machinery in the State butchers' shops. I think year by year Parliament should be given the opportunity of discussing the amounts determined upon by the Treasurer. It should also be specially provided that the regulations should be Tabled. The Water Supply Act regulations are Tabled, but if Parliament wishes to object members have to take a vote and all the trouble that the tabling of a motion entails. I hope

the Premier will year by year give Parliament the opportunity of discussing every action in connection with his trading concerns, and that if regulations are made he will provide that they may be dealt with by Parliament and rejected or accepted by either House. It is true that the Premier can do as he likes in connection with the bookkeeping, and this is important. I am willing to assist the Premier to make the Bill a better one, and I will endeavour to effect some alterations in Committee.

The Premier: I want to be satisfied that your amendments will be better.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If not, when the Auditor General's report comes along next year I will promise him a lively time if the results are as obscure as the results of most of the Government accounts. If the books are to be kept under the Treasury we shall never know what is happening. I am glad to hear that each of the trading concerns will stand alone. We are going to have an enormous expenditure on timber mills. We have had a big expenditure on steamers, and we are going to have big expenditure on the State manufacture of machinery.

Mr. Gill: They will all pay for themselves.

The Premier: Do you object to the State manufacture of machinery?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Not if it is to be manufactured at Northam. Why does not the Premier tell us how far this work has progressed? I hear that the engineer has gone east. Has he gone permanently, or is he to return?

The Premier: He is coming back all right.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I hear that the brick works have gone up the spout. There are other trading ventures contemplated and we shall certainly want to know what the result of each of these undertakings will be. The Bill is not the Bill I expected. I thought we would be able to apply the bookkeeping to every trade, to the Goldfields Water Scheme and to other water supplies, and that every department having anything to do with sales to the public would be brought under it. The Premier will have managed

very cleverly if he gets this Bill through. We have passed a Loan Act authorising the raising of five and a half millions of money, and on top of that we are giving the Premier power to raise another £500,000. I fancy the Premier's intentions are good enough in connection with the bookkeeping, but the only fault is that he has not given effect to the ideas expressed in the measure.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. T. H. Bath): I would like to point out that the member for Northam in his hurried examination of this Bill has failed to appreciate the very definite provisions contained within it, which obviate the possibility of the Treasurer raising capital and embarking upon trading concerns without an appropriation of Parliament as stated by him. I would like to point out for the hon. member's information that it is true as stated by him, that the measure makes provision for funds to be raised in two separate ways, one by the issue of debentures, as is done in the case of the Agricultural Bank, and the other by direct appropriation, either from Consolidated Revenue or from general loan funds, and if he will carefully study the Bill he will find that in Clause 5 provision is made for the due appropriation of the capital of a concern which is provided from Consolidated Revenue or from general loan funds. Clause 7 specifically provides for the appropriation of capital which is raised by means of debentures.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Oh no.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The clause states that all moneys raised by the issue of debentures shall be paid to the credit of an account to be kept in the Treasury to be called by such a name as is chosen, and when the moneys are appropriated by Parliament for such purpose the money so provided shall when directed by the Treasurer be transferred to the same account.

Mr. George: But there are other moneys.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have just pointed out that a distinction is made, and the funds which the hon. member mentions are provided for in the preceding clause. Then, if the hon. member will

read the Bill further he will see that under another clause all moneys placed to the credit of an account in the books of the Treasury for the capital expenditure of a trading concern shall be withdrawn by imprest as provided in the Treasury regulations, and the votes for maintenance and upkeep expenditure shall be dealt with in a similar manner. The hon. member will know before funds can be withdrawn they must be in conformity with the Constitution Act, otherwise the moneys will not be issued, and a further safeguard is provided in that the control is placed under the Auditor General who has to assure himself that all these steps have been carried out in connection with the particular undertaking. So that under the provisions of this measure, specifically stated as they are, it would be impossible for the Treasurer, even though he might raise money by debentures for the capital of any concern, to actually expend the money and launch the undertaking unless he had an appropriation by Parliament.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You buy steamers and run them without saying a word to Parliament.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We had the authority of Parliament for the expenditure of £250,000.

Mr. Allen: For the purchase of steamers?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes; the hon. member might not have known exactly what he was doing when that appropriation was placed in the hands of the Ministry, but the fact remains that that money was appropriated by Parliament.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You will not do it again.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That question is not pertinent to the point I am making, and that is that that money was expended under appropriation by Parliament, an appropriation made differently from the appropriation usually made in the Estimates under the heading of "Advance to Treasurer," in that it was not an appropriation for money expended in the preceding year to cover excess expenditure.

but in that it was an appropriation for expenditure for the current financial year, and therefore, of course, was perfectly legal and constitutional, although, as evidenced by the interjection of the member for West Perth (Mr. Allen), in passing that appropriation they may not have known that they were giving, as it were, a clean Bill, or discretionary power over a sum of money which could be devoted to that and other purposes. However, that is apart from the question. I merely wish to point out that the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) is wrong in that this Bill contains express provisions in regard not only to the furnishing of capital but to the control, through the proper official and constitutional channels, over the appropriation of money for any specific trading concern. I wish to point out also to hon. members that we have not waited for the passage of this Bill to inaugurate a system of proper bookkeeping methods for the control of the trading concerns already in existence, in order that the public may be made fully aware of the result of their operations. Take for instance, the trading concern in connection with the meat supply. That is being conducted on a proper business basis. The operations are charged with the rent of the stall in the market—and incidentally I may say that to be on the safe side we are charging ourselves a little more than is charged for other stalls—with a due proportion of the salaries of the controller of abattoirs and of the clerk in charge of cold storage works and markets, the full cost of one bookkeeper in the Department of Agriculture, and a proportion of the wages paid to the caretakers at the sale yards and at the markets. The same course is being pursued in connection with the steamers, and also with the milk supply for the hospitals. In my opinion this is absolutely necessary, and, as I said before, we have not waited for the authority of this measure to put that system into operation; but it will be placed on a more satisfactory basis if the public and Parliament know that this provision, which we are making without being required to do so by an Act of Parliament, is rendered obligatory

in future by the passage of this measure. As pointed out by the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) the measure is simple, clear, specific and direct, and I think it ought to commend itself to every hon. member.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): There is not the slightest doubt that the Bill, so far as it relates to the keeping of accounts, will be received with approbation throughout the State, not only by traders, but by the general public, who are watching with considerable interest the progress of the trading concerns in which the Government have embarked. It should be clearly understood that any criticism which I may make is made with the desire of moulding the Bill to what it should be, namely one which will provide for accounts being kept in such a manner that a true and clear statement of the trading concerns can be presented to Parliament and the people. The member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) is quite right in drawing attention to the two principles contained in the Bill, the one dealing with bookkeeping and the other with the establishing of trading concerns. The State was partially prepared for the establishment of trading concerns by the Government in view of the programme put forward by the Labour party at the last elections, but I am not at all sure that the State is prepared to give carte-blanche to this or any other Government in regard to extending the operations of government into further trading concerns. The clause in the Bill which allows the Governor by Order-in-Council to declare what other trading concerns may be entered into is wrong in principle and directly against the principles underlying democratic rule. As the representatives of the people, Parliament should direct the trend of public enterprise. The extension of these trading concerns should be discussed by Parliament and should not be placed at the arbitrary decision of the Governor-in-Council. Although members on the Ministerial side may have in their private meetings an opportunity of knowing the directions in which the Government intend to go, still they form only

a part of the Parliament. Opposition members, whether Labour or Liberal, have a right to be taken into the counsels with regard to embarking on these trading concerns. Any Government which enters upon a new course like this without fully consulting Parliament are absolutely wrong and are not rising to the ideal conception of what their Parliamentary duties should be. I hope that portion of the Bill which provides that the Governor-in-Council may declare other trading concerns for the State to enter into will be altered when in Committee, and the matter thoroughly threshed out. With regard to the question raised by the member for Northam and touched upon by the Minister for Lands, the Minister must realise by this time that it is possible to have two opinions on a matter such as this. By reason of his long experience in connection with banking concerns, the member for Northam can speak with authority on a question of this sort, and therefore his opinion is of value. The clause referred to will, perhaps, be better debated in Committee, but the particular clause dealing with the issue of debentures is not at all clear. It says "when moneys are apportioned." But "moneys" may be any moneys, even moneys from Loan Appropriation, and although I am fully aware that loan moneys are dealt with in a previous clause, still this particular clause is too wide altogether, and requires attention. The position so far as the State accounts are concerned is this: We have a Treasury, and the Treasurer stands in the position of a banker, concerning himself with the amount of money paid in and the amount paid out. Take the Railways as an instance. There have been years when the Railways have made a really good profit on their undertakings, notwithstanding which the Treasury accounts showed only a very little excess of receipts over expenditure because the money paid out so closely approximated the amount paid in. But when a proper balance sheet was made out, as would be required in connection with a trading concern, then the country was enabled to judge exactly how the department was carrying on.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Some of the railway accounts are not very clear.

Mr. GEORGE: If they still carry on the system which was inaugurated in my time, the railway accounts will stand inspection by any chartered accountant in Australia.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): They could not find out how the stores went, even in your time.

Mr. GEORGE: Yes they could. Perhaps every Tom, Dick, and Harry could not, but any qualified accountant could. As for the Auditor General, he does not assist any department in the carrying on of its business. If, when in a difficulty, you ask the Auditor General for his advice, it is not his function to tell you how to get out of it. He knows that the intention of the department is honest, but it is not within his province to instruct the department. He is the exact exponent of what shall be and shall not be, and under the Audit Act he is not compelled to give his reasons.

The Premier: But in the last resort he can only report to Parliament.

Mr. GEORGE: I know that. He has reported me often enough. He is a gentleman for whom I have considerable regard, but if the Premier is to get the books of his trading concerns into a shape which will be satisfactory to the public, he will have to institute an office of accountant general, an officer whose business it will be, not merely to lay out a set of books, but to pursue the carrying out of those books and to see that they are carried out correctly, and who, if he finds that the methods are not being properly followed, will have the power to make necessary alterations. Unless this is done the State will not get a statement of accounts which they can at once understand and thoroughly rely upon. It is not a question about their officers. As I pointed out, the Treasury acts simply as a banker; it receives money and pays out money, and that is all its concern. The business of the Auditor General is to interpret the Audit Act, which does not provide for the inauguration, explanation, and carrying out of these accounts. The desire of

all members is that those accounts shall give to us a true statement of how affairs stand. If they are prosperous let us know it; if they are not prosperous it is more than ever necessary that we should know exactly where we are, so that a finger can be placed on the spot and the matter made right. I do not think this can be done without an Accountant-General, whose business it will be to see that the accounts are kept straight.

Mr. McDowall: How do they manage it on the goldfields water scheme?

Mr. GEORGE: I am satisfied in my own mind—and perhaps this may answer the interjection of the hon. member—that if this State could lay itself out to abolish all the different accountancy systems which each department has, and concentrate them in one building, under one chief, the State would save an immense amount of money, and the working officers, such as the engineers and others, who have to carry on these undertakings, would be spared a great deal of worry. During my term of office as Commissioner of Railways I was absolutely staggered to find the number of accountants there were in that department. The Traffic Department, the Existing Lines, Locomotive, Electrical, Interlocking—each had a full accounting staff, and the consequence was that as soon as I had an opportunity of placing Mr. Triggs in charge of the whole of the departmental accounts, we set to work to amalgamate them all into one accounting system. Of course it could not be done, it would interfere with the work, and so on. But it did not interfere with the work, and when this new system was in proper operation the whole of the work was being performed with 30 per cent. less officers and 50 per cent. more efficiency.

The Premier: That is all right: that is what I believe in.

Mr. GEORGE: I am glad to have the support of the Premier, for it shows that I am on the right track. I mentioned the matter of having an Accountant-General, because the Auditor General, probably with the best intentions in the world, is of no assistance in car-

rying out all the details of the accounts. He finds out the errors, but he does not provide the remedies.

The Premier: It is not his duty.

Mr. GEORGE: I am not attacking him even on that, but I say it is necessary, as we are going in for trading accounts, that we should have some man whose knowledge and experience is such that he can not only lay down a complete system of accounts, but can see that that system is carried out. If the Government will do that, they will do an immense amount of good to the State and also to the people who are called upon to work these trading concerns. I am sure that if the engineers and others in the department could be relieved of the drudgery and worries in reference to accounts, it would make a tremendous difference in the amount of work they could get through. I notice that the Treasurer has power to raise debentures and that those debentures shall pay interest at a rate per annum to be therein stated. To my mind, the rate of interest is a matter that should come within the purview of Parliament. I do not think it should be in the power of any Colonial Treasurer to issue debentures at any rate of interest he may choose to fix, whether it be 4 per cent., 4½ per cent., 5 per cent., or 6 per cent; that is a matter which Parliament itself should deal with, and if that power is taken away from Parliament, the reputation which we have enjoyed for so many years, of being able to raise money on an equality with the bigger States, will vanish immediately.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): What about the state of the money market?

Mr. GEORGE: That has to be considered, of course, but the Premier of the State can never be so pushed but that he can obtain money for his immediate necessities without, as it were, putting the State in pawn, and borrowing money at a high rate of interest.

The Premier: Do you not know that I am limited under the General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act?

Mr. GEORGE: I do not think that any stock Act, inscribed or otherwise, could limit the hon. gentleman. I must

say that I believe the intention of the Bill, so far as the bookkeeping is concerned, cannot be regarded otherwise than as satisfactory. It is an attempt to deal with a question that requires to be dealt with. In Committee we may have some suggestions to offer, and I hope they will be received by the Government in the spirit in which they are offered. I notice it is said that there shall be entered in the books such amounts as may be fixed by the Colonial Treasurer as interest and sinking fund contributions. This is a matter of too much responsibility to be thrown entirely on the Colonial Treasurer. So far as the sinking fund is concerned, it is very easy to ascertain what amount it is necessary to place on any one concern. Of course there are some concerns on which the rate will have to be very much higher than on others, because the plant may depreciate more quickly than that of others, and the object of a sinking fund is to provide that when the plant is absolutely done for, the sinking fund will re-establish it. That is a matter on which Parliament should have some say.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): See what a difference there would be in some portions of the tramways plant.

Mr. GEORGE: That is exactly what I say. There is no doubt that some portions of the plant may work out in a year or less, but the sinking fund would have to be fixed according to what experience showed to be the proper rate. The point is not so much what the rate should be, but that the rate itself should be threshed out in Parliament.

Mr. Dwyer: It is a matter of actuarial calculation.

Mr. GEORGE: These things are all matters of experience. If this is not left to Parliament, consider what might happen: A Minister would be laid open to a charge of reducing the sinking fund in order to make the trading concern appear to pay. The assertion might be altogether unwarranted, but it is the sort of thing that would be said whether it be a Labour Government or a Liberal Government in power. Then there is another matter in

reference to depreciation. Of course, depreciation is the basis upon which the sinking fund must be fixed. The Bill says that the Minister may each year determine the amount of depreciation of the assets. The Minister has to decide that point, yet previous to that decision being made, the Colonial Treasurer, another Minister, has decided what the sinking fund shall be. Then, curiously enough, we are told a little further on that whenever the total amount of the depreciation exceeds the amount provided for the repayment of the loan, the amount of such excess shall be charged against the profits of the trading concern and may be appropriated by the Colonial Treasurer to the sinking fund. We want a little explanation of that.

The Premier: It is quite clear.

Mr. GEORGE: It is not quite clear to me, and therefore it must be wrong in the drafting.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think it would be a good suggestion to discuss that in Committee.

Mr. GEORGE: We are told afterwards, in dealing with money provided out of revenue, that the Minister may decide as to what shall be the contributions for interest and sinking fund on that amount of money. That again is a matter that should be laid down by Parliament. It is a question of principle and should be laid down by Parliament, and should not be for the individual decision of any particular Minister. I do not think it is necessary for me to say very much more on the matter, except that, so far as I and other members of the Opposition are concerned, we desire that the Bill shall be one with which the country will feel satisfaction. When the country is embarking, as it is, in an entirely new way upon these various trading concerns, we desire that there shall be no false step on the way, and with that desire there will be amendments moved on the various clauses which I hope the Government will accept, and let us feel that on this measure both sides have risen to a sense of their duty to the country and of the importance of the position.

The PREMIER (in reply): I am exceedingly pleased with the manner in which this measure has been received by the House, and can only hope that as we proceed hon. members opposite will obtain further knowledge of the provisions of the Bill in order to permit it to be passed without any amendments. It is evident from some of the remarks of hon. members opposite that they are not entirely in accord with some of the provisions, but a remarkable feature is that the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) was, as Minister for Agriculture in the previous Administration, one of the prime movers in getting a Bill of this description drafted.

Hon. J. Mitchell: No, not trading concerns.

The PREMIER: And the most remarkable feature of all is that the provisions he is complaining about in this measure are taken with hardly any change at all from his own draft. In his Trading Accounts Bill the hon. member did not mention any particular trading concerns; he had exactly the same words as are contained in this measure. Now, when I have accepted his advice, as contained in that draft, he comes along and complains that we should mention specifically in the Bill the particular trading concerns we propose to bring under the operations of this measure.

Mr. George: Did he bring that Bill to Parliament?

The PREMIER: No, of course he did not.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): He had not the opportunity.

The PREMIER: Had not the opportunity? Why, he and his fellow-Ministers were dealing with this trading concerns Bill for four years, and their delay showed that they were not desirous of having the Bill placed on the statute-book. They were nervous that some of its provisions would be discovered by Parliament and summarily rejected. It is evident that the hon. member has not forgotten some of the provisions of that Bill, because he is nervous about this amount of £500,000; he thinks I will be able to spend it at my own free will, which was

the provision in his own Bill, but which I have altered.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Oh, no.

The PREMIER: The hon. member does not realise that the measure does not permit me as Treasurer to spend a single penny of that £500,000 that may be raised for trading concerns, unless the money is first of all appropriated by Parliament. But his measure gave him full power to spend that £500,000 just as he desired.

Mr. George: But two blacks do not make a white.

The PREMIER: Certainly not, but there are not two blacks here; I destroyed the black which the hon. member for Northam prepared. The hon. member had specially given himself that power of expenditure, and he ran away with the impression that he was sure to find the same provision in this Bill. He took full power to himself to establish trading concerns, and he got it into his head that I had taken similar power, and with that £500,000 would establish trading concerns here, there, and all over the place. Their trading accounts Bill provided for a similar amount.

Hon. J. Mitchell: May I say—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member can make an explanation if the Premier does not object to giving way.

The PREMIER: I do not object.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The Bill referred to by the Premier never came before Parliament and never would have come before Parliament in the shape in which the Premier found it. Every Bill is revised time and again before it comes to the House, and the Premier should not think for one moment that I would ever have introduced a Bill drafted as that one is.

Mr. SPEAKER: I want to point out that that is not an explanation but a statement. If that sort of thing were allowed it would make the proceedings most irregular.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The Premier did not understand me before.

Mr. SPEAKER: Every member complains that others misunderstand him.

The PREMIER: I am not asserting that the hon. member would eventually

have brought down a measure with those provisions in it, but it is rather remarkable that that Bill had been drafted and redrafted by different Administrations. Since 1905 it had been before each Administration, and it had been put off time after time because there was not time to deal with it. It had been redrafted and considered by each Cabinet and they had gone through it and had not struck that provision out. It is strange that the Minister who was largely responsible for urging the Government to introduce it and who had the drafts before him on two or three occasions did not notice this clause and have it altered. When a Minister the hon. member was so imbued with the idea of being a freelance to spend £500,000 that he now runs away with the impression that I wish to do the same thing. The hon. member will not accept my word that this clause is provided to prevent that sort of thing.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Have you bought your steamers?

The PREMIER: I will not be led away on side issues by the hon. member. We cannot introduce anything without the hon. member bringing in the matter of steamers.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You introduced the matter of steamers to-night.

The PREMIER: While we had authority for the expenditure of the money, the hon. member had no authority to purchase the cattle station or the Crawley or Dalkeith estates. I could give a string of instances. Last year was the first year in which Parliament really appropriated £250,000 for the Treasurer's Advance.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Parliament would not give it again.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is not in control, but no doubt when he gets into office again he will want to increase the amount to £350,000. In this Bill, while I provide that the Colonial Treasurer may issue these debentures aggregating £500,000, another clause distinctly provides that the moneys raised by the issue of debentures—these words are distinctly mentioned—shall be paid into an account in the Treasury to be named by

the Governor, but it also provides that when moneys are appropriated by Parliament for such purpose, the moneys so provided shall, when directed by the Colonial Treasurer, be transferred to the same account. That is clear enough. Another clause sets forth that all moneys placed to the credit of this account in the books of the Treasury for the capital expenditure of a trading concern—and it is the moneys raised by the issue of debentures and raised to provide the capital for trading concerns; it is all capital moneys raised by the issue of debentures—shall be withdrawn by imprest as provided in the Treasury regulations, and the votes for maintenance and upkeep expenditure shall be dealt with in a similar manner. The hon. member knows that the imprest drawing on accounts is governed by provisions in the Audit Act, and if I do not comply with those provisions the Auditor General is empowered and instructed to report me to Parliament.

Hon. J. Mitchell: This Bill is the authority.

The PREMIER: This Bill is not the authority. The following words are used in the Bill—

The Auditor General shall, in respect to such accounts, have all the powers conferred on him by the Audit Act, 1904.

The provisions of the Audit Act are thus embodied in this Bill. Surely that is plain enough. Let me now point out the difference I have deliberately made. I went into the matter closely with the Under Treasurer and the Solicitor General and I said to them, "I am a strict believer in Parliament controlling the finances of this country and I do not want to take away any of the powers of Parliament but to give Parliament more."

Hon. J. Mitchell: We doubt that sometimes.

The PREMIER: The hon. member may doubt it, but the Under Treasurer or the Solicitor General will endorse what I have said. The draft of the Bill which came to me contained no provision that this money should be appropriated by Parliament. As a matter of fact it

merely stated that the moneys raised by the issue of debentures should be paid into an account in the Treasury and appropriated by the Treasurer for such purpose as was necessary for the operation of these trading concerns. That would have given me power to raise £500,000, and to establish brickworks or anything else I liked. We have no desire to do anything of the kind, and in the circumstances I have made provision to prevent any such thing occurring. I do not think it is necessary to make any further reference to the provisions of the measure. Generally speaking, I realise that members regard it as a step in the right direction. When in Committee we can, if necessary, amend the measure, but from the remarks of members of the Opposition, I am not able to see any way in which we can amend the measure to improve it and bring it into line with what we desire, namely, that a Government trading concern shall, for the purpose of allowing the public to know how it has operated, be placed on the same footing as if it were controlled by a private company or individual. If we have done this under the Bill we shall have done what has been desired by members for years past and I believe what has been desired by a majority of the people. At any rate I have endeavoured to do so by this measure, but if it is not done as completely as members desire, I will accept any reasonable amendment to bring about that result. That was my desire and intention when I introduced the measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—PERTH STREETS DEDICATION.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. T. H. Bath) in moving the second reading said: This is one more of the drag-net measures which are necessitated during each session, and it provides for the dedication of certain streets within the city of Perth. Members will be aware of the

fact that under the Municipalities Act, 1906, before a municipal council can dedicate streets for the use of the public, these streets must measure at right angles a distance of not less than 66 feet, and the Act goes on further to prohibit municipalities from declaring any street of lesser width, but in that particular direction an exemption had to be made in connection with streets upon which money had been expended and which had been built upon prior to the passing of the Municipalities Act, 1906. As a matter of fact, we had to provide for the bad old days when in the cutting up of areas of land, the greed of landowners led them to sub-divide areas and leave those narrow streets which in some instances cannot even be dignified by the name of lanes, and survey blocks on either side of these streets and make them either available for the public. Later on as houses were erected and the conveniences of civilisation were needed, the municipal council had perforce to spend money in making these streets and, while it is a regrettable thing that at the present day we should have to pass a measure of this kind in order to validate the declaration of those streets, it would be impossible for us to allow the municipal council to expend money to provide conveniences without having the proper control which is secured by dedication. That being the case it is necessary for us to introduce this Bill. As a matter of fact a communication passed between the municipality of Perth and the Lands Department as to the whole of the streets in Perth and as to those which were not dedicated. There were a number which were under 66 feet but which exceeded 25 feet in width, and it was possible for these to be dedicated under Section 224 of the Municipalities Act, but for those streets which were under 25 feet the opinion of the Solicitor-General was that the dedication could only be secured by enactment by Parliament. The Bill as originally submitted to the House included a small by-way known as Tryphena-terrace, and this was included in the first instance at the request of the city council. Since then, however, they have decided that it would not be desir-

able for this to be dedicated as a public street, in view of the fact that after dedication there might be a possibility of the council being mulcted in damages through an accident in this particular thoroughfare. I think representations have also been made by landowners in the vicinity, and as a result we have received a request from the council that Tryphena-terrace should be omitted from the Bill. These amendments will be found on the Notice Paper. I hardly think that any further introduction of the measure is necessary, and I therefore move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. ALLEN (West Perth) : The Minister has made perfectly clear the object of the Bill, and I have much pleasure in supporting it. As he has stated, in their desire to make as much as they could out of their land, unfortunately land owners have cut up their land with too narrow streets. At the present time the municipalities are collecting rates from the people residing on one of these streets, and the people have not even the convenience of a footpath because the council refused to spend money on the street until it is brought under their control. I refer to the eastern portion of May street which is included in the schedule of the Bill. I understand the other streets are all made. It is certainly unfair that the city council should collect rates from these people and give them no services in return, not even a footpath. This Bill will overcome that, and the city council will be able to make the roads and give the ratepayers and property owners along the streets the conveniences required. With regard to the Tryphena-terrace I had a conversation this evening with the Perth town clerk on the telephone, and he was surprised to hear that Tryphena-terrace was in the Bill. It is the municipality's wish to have it eliminated for the reason stated by the Minister.

Mr. LANDER (East Perth) : I support the Bill, but I certainly think the City council are to blame in the past. It is only the result of the weakness of the city council in not having the cour-

age to enforce their by-laws, or they would not have allowed any persons to build on this ground. They knew when they allowed them to build that they were disobeying the by-laws. Not many years ago some persons applied for a permit to build on a 10ft. way. The city council refused it, but later on others got hold of the block, and at a later date the council licensed the place for a boardinghouse. It is simply the result of weakness and municipal corruption.

Mr. Allen : What did the council get out of it ?

Mr. LANDER : What did the land sharks get? Have not city councillors said, "Where do I come in?" What about those who tried to have jarrah kerbing for the roads, and to have stones used to go outside the jarrah kerb, and those who got a few bob out of the tramway company when they got the concession?

Mr. SPEAKER : Order !

Mr. LANDER : I was merely replying to a remark of the hon. member; he asked for something and I gave it to him. But that is the reason for this Bill coming forward, it is municipal corruption and municipal weakness in not seeing that their by-laws were carried out, and allowing land sharks to cut up land. As the member for Greenough (Mr. Nanson) has said, in the old country where they cut up land they have to provide roads and footpaths, but in Western Australia they cut up bits of land into flower pot sizes, and put in lanes for streets, and they have the audacity to ask some member of Parliament to introduce a Bill. It is simply corruption. I support the Bill so as to give the unfortunate land owners who have the property now some remedy, and to give the council the opportunity of spending money on them. But it is only a job.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Holman in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Power to dedicate certain streets to the public use :

On motions by the MINISTER FOR LANDS clause amended by inserting "and" after "May-street," and by deleting "Tryphena-terrace," and as amended was agreed to.

Schedule:

On motion by the MINISTER FOR LANDS the paragraph commencing "Tryphena-terrace" was struck out and the schedule as amended was agreed to.

Title (consequentially amended) — agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, also an alteration to the Title, and the report adopted.

BILL — EMPLOYMENT BROKERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister) in moving the second reading said: This is purely a Bill of machinery clauses. The first object is to bring employment brokers' licenses under the present licensing magistrates. The Act now defines the licensing area as the magisterial district, but under the Licensing Act of 1911 licensing districts were considerably altered. Consequently it is proposed in this Bill to provide that the licensing districts under the Licensing Act, 1911, shall also be the licensing districts for employment brokers. For instance Claremont is a distinct licensing district from Perth under the Employment Brokers Act, but Claremont is under the control of the Perth magisterial district. Power is also given whereby the Governor-in-Council shall be able to say to what licensing court persons applying for employment brokers' licenses shall apply. The principal amendments in this regard are to the interpretation section of the Act, and the amendments are necessary owing to the passage of the Licensing Act. Another portion of the Bill provides that employment brokers shall be placed under inspectors of factories. It is necessary that inspectors of factories should

have the opportunity to look into the actions of employment brokers, and be able at times to peruse their books to see that the trade carried on is beneficial not only to employers but to employees. It is also necessary that a prescribed fee should be made for the purpose of fixing the rates to be paid by those applying for employment, or by employers applying for employees. Since notice has been given of the introduction of this Bill I have received a letter from a country district from a person I do not know, although his name is signed to the letter. It points out that from the 26th October to the 26th November no less than 18 persons were sent from a registry office to a certain hotel in a country district where he was employed, and that these 18 persons paid £13 10s. as fees to the employment broker. The letter points out that it is necessary something should be done whereby proper inspection of the system adopted by these persons in carrying out their business should be adopted, and it shows clearly to me the necessity for placing the Act under the supervision of factory inspectors. The letter goes on to say that almost a similar sum was paid in railway fares by the persons in going to and returning from this place to which they were sent by the registry office, showing that employees have to pay a very large amount of money to obtain satisfactory employment. I believe, and I think it is the opinion of the Minister controlling factories at the present time, that the only way to give proper satisfaction to the employer and employee is for the State to take full control of employment broking. Only a few weeks ago an officer holding a very responsible position in the Commonwealth was paying a visit of inspection on the south coast. In the conveyance that was taking him there was a young girl who was being sent to a place. This gentleman made inquiries and he found this young girl did not know the exact place that she was going to. There was a police constable in the same conveyance, and he interested himself with the result that through his action the girl did not go to the place she was sent from Perth to fill. This gentleman wrote a letter to the department complaining of the action of

the employment broker in sending young girls, new arrivals, to such places and I believe, according to the information received, the persons to whom this particular girl was going were foreigners who had a place there and that there were several men and no females on the premises. It will be seen therefore that it is necessary that sometimes there should be close inspection in connection with these employment brokers. It is unnecessary for me to take up any further time of the House and I beg to move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

Mr. Holman in the Chair; Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 3:

Mr. McDONALD: With reference to the new definition of the word "prescribed," in a later Clause it was provided that the fees to be paid should be equal in every case and should not exceed the prescribed amount. Would that amount be prescribed by regulation?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3, 4, 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Amendment of Section 15:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister might explain this clause which was an innovation and which provided for the payment of the fee by the two parties.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The employer and the employee were the parties interested in this matter and the clause would limit the fees. The prescribed amount would be fixed by regulation. If for instance it was 10s. the employer and the employees would pay it in equal proportions.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What is the charge now?

The Premier: Usually half the first week's wages.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There was a case recently where a broker sent a girl to a situation and after she had been there for a very short period the broker com-

municated with the mistress and pointed out that she had another girl whom she thought would be more suitable for the position. This was done in the hope of bringing about the first girl's dismissal and getting another fee from the second one. If an employer had to pay a small fee he would think twice before making a change in order to accommodate the broker.

Mr. LANDER: If we took the statement made by the Minister that £13 had been paid in fees by 18 persons, did not that point to the fact that there had been a conspiracy between some of the employers and the brokers. The poor beggars had been sent to the country after big fees had been taken from them, and when they arrived at their destination they found that the position had been filled and they had to get back the best way they could. This therefore was a necessary clause, for immediately the pocket of the employer was touched he would be more careful with his servants.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The clause was considered necessary more in the interests of the employer than the broker. On many occasions the brokers sent people who were not suitable to fill positions and if heavy fees were involved the clause would offer protection for both.

Mr. McDONALD: The clause provided that the scale should specify the maximum amount chargeable to the employer and the employee. The custom had been for a man or woman to pay the registration fee and generally half the first week's wages to the broker on account of getting the job. So far as the registration was concerned, it cost no more for office expenses to send a man to a £2 10s. job than it did to a 25s. job, and the broker had no right to charge more for one than for the other. The Minister might see his way clear to excise the word maximum, and just specify the amount chargeable. If we provided for a maximum the broker in every instance could charge the maximum. There should be no variation in the charges, which should be fixed so that on entering a broker's office a man would know what he had to pay.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): The word "maximum" was very necessary. Surely the hon. member would not expect that a young girl seeking a position at 15s. a week should pay the same fee as a man obtaining employment at £4 per week! There would be no deposit to pay. The charge prescribed would be the only fee payable, the maximum to be paid.

Mr. McDONALD: A young girl obtaining work at 15s. a week should be required to pay a proportionate fee, and that fee should suffice even in the case of a man securing a position at £4 a week. The clause allowed for a variation in charges, but in his opinion it should be a fixed amount.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 7, 8, 9—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—GAME (No. 2.)

Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker) in moving the second reading said: This measure has already been fully considered in another place and has virtually passed through this House; but it will be familiar to you, Sir, as well as to hon. members, that owing to a defect discovered in its passage through this House, the measure in its final stages in this Chamber was thrown out. In other words, the Bill being of the character of a Money Bill, it was held that it ought to have originated in this Chamber. I myself took that point at an early stage after the measure reached this Chamber from another place, and the view I took was upheld by you. As the measure commended itself, not only to me, but to others sitting upon the Treasury bench, as well as to members generally, it was held to be unwise to lose the whole measure because of a technical defect. It is well that we should observe the Standing

Orders bearing upon the introduction and furtherance of these measures, and it was held that the Bill, rightly declared out of order, should on account of its merits be re-introduced in the proper place and with proper attendance. Therefore, a Message has been obtained for the Bill, and I am now anxious that the measure should rapidly pass through all the stages it had traversed prior to being declared out of order. It is unnecessary to debate the merits or go over the principles or in any way to instance the particular purposes of the Bill; these were so recently debated and fully considered that I will be consulting the best interests of the Chamber and of the measure if I at once move, as I do—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore): Having been in charge of the Bill on a former occasion I would like to express to the Attorney General my appreciation of the course which the Government have been good enough to take in regard to the measure. It would have been a pity to lose the Bill because of the fact that its introduction was not in accordance with the Standing Orders. As the Bill has already been thoroughly discussed, not only on the second reading, but also in Committee, I do not intend to delay the House at this juncture, but will be pleased to assist the Attorney General in passing the Bill through all its stages as quickly as possible.

Mr. LANDER (East Perth): My intention is to give the Bill support, but in Clause 12 I would have thought the Minister would—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not discuss clauses on the second reading.

Mr. LANDER: In a certain portion of the Bill it is provided that any person who thinks another person has been destroying game, or who finds another person in possession of game, can demand that person's name and address, and even arrest that person if the demand be not complied with. I think that clause should be amended. This power, if it is necessary at all, should

be restricted to some responsible person or persons. Only a little while ago a similar provision in another Bill was strenuously objected to by those sitting opposite, and we had to fight hard for power to make arrests in cases of gross cruelty to animals.

Mr. McDONALD (Gascoyne): Everybody sympathises with the good intentions of the gentleman who brought this Bill forward in another place, and probably all were sorry when it was thrown out on a technical objection. I join with the member for Moore (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) in agreeing that we should put the Bill through. But some objections were raised to the Bill when it was previously before us, and the cause of those objections has not been removed. The measure is exactly the same as that which came before us on a former occasion.

Mr. Taylor: It passed through all its stages in this House.

Mr. McDONALD: But it was amended in certain details.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member can discuss the clauses in Committee. The debate on the second reading must be confined to the general principles of the Bill.

Mr. McDONALD: I did not intend to discuss the clause as a clause, but merely to mention the fact that when the Bill was before the Assembly on a previous occasion one clause was struck out. The objection I raised to the Bill was based on the practice of white men employing aborigines to shoot kangaroos for the purpose of selling their skins. The point is that whereas white men are compelled to take out licenses to hunt kangaroos the aborigines are permitted to kill kangaroos without a license, and in consequence of this they are being trafficked in by white men on the Murchison and Ashburton rivers. A complaint reached me this week from the South-West, a portion of the State supposed to be closed against kangaroo shooting. According to that complaint a settler down there is employing natives in this work, and charging them 75 per cent. commission for handling pelts and sending them to the market

or to agents. However, I have the promise of the Attorney General that when we reach this debatable clause in Committee he will report progress, in order that an amendment may be framed to meet my objection. With that single exception I am very glad that the Bill has been introduced, and will support it.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE (Toodyay): I deem this a fitting opportunity to give expression to my views in regard to this Bill. It is undoubtedly a good measure, and I sincerely hope that as soon as it becomes law it will not be allowed to remain a dead letter. I rose particularly to speak on behalf of the magpie. Now is the nesting time of that bird, and I wish to say that there is wholesale destruction committed yearly through people taking the young from their nests. In my own little town I have seen people year after year bring in these young birds and they are allowed to perish through want of proper attention. The magpie is a very valuable bird as a destroyer of insects, and I hope that when the Bill becomes law its provisions will be put into operation and not allowed to remain a dead letter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Reference has been made to the alleged fact that the Bill was thrown out on a previous occasion through a technicality. It was not thrown out through a technicality, but because if it had passed through this House and another place, it would have been unlawful and unconstitutional. The alleged technicality might have been overcome, but the fact that it was outside the Constitution Act could not be overcome.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Holman in the Chair, the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 9—agreed to.

Clause 10—License to sell game:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The member for Gascoyne desired to move an amendment, and to confer with a member of another place for the purpose of getting an amendment, proper to the clause,

which had been omitted in this Chamber when the Bill had been last discussed. A promise had been made to the hon. member that progress would be reported on this clause, but if the hon. member for Gascoyne and the hon. member for Moore could agree upon an amendment the Bill could be disposed of and transmitted to another place as soon as possible.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: The objection of the member for Gascoyne seemed to be that people employed a large number of natives to kill game, and those natives were not required to hold licenses. Perhaps the hon. member's objection could be met by amending the clause to read that no person should sell, or take, or kill for the purpose of selling any imported or native game, "nor shall he employ any person for the purpose of killing or selling such game without taking out a license for each person so employed."

Mr. McDONALD: It was desirable that the clause should read "aboriginal or other person." There was an idea that a native might kill kangaroos in season or out of season because he wanted them for tucker, but as a matter of fact he was shooting them in order that his employer might make a profit out of the skins.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: The word "person" would cover an aboriginal as well as anybody else. If the word "aboriginal" was inserted it might exempt other persons employed in killing game. In his opinion any person who employed men to kill game for him should be responsible for the payment of licenses for those employees. The Government might proclaim portions of the State in which the Act should operate, and they would have power to exempt certain portions of the State.

Mr. McDONALD: It was necessary to insist on the aboriginal being debarred, and he must be specifically mentioned so that the clause would be definite on the point.

Mr. DWYER: If "aboriginal or other" was inserted in this clause it would need to be inserted throughout the Bill wherever the word "person" occurred.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The fact that there might be consequential amendments should not prevent the Committee from doing what was right.

Mr. Dwyer: Is not an aboriginal a "person."

Mr. UNDERWOOD: No. In his opinion, in the north-west portion of the State where kangaroos were a pest and where many pastoralists required to spend money to destroy them, we should not have licenses at all. It was absurd to place a restriction on the destruction of a pest. The member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) when Minister for Agriculture, and the then Premier, Sir Newton Moore, gave a guarantee that they would proclaim areas, and that no licenses would be required in the North-West. On that understanding an amendment by Mr. T. L. Brown was withdrawn, but the license had been charged and even when charged it did not give the holder the power to enter pastoral country. A license should give the right to enter pastoral country to shoot kangaroos.

Mr. McDONALD: The member for Roebourne (Mr. Gardiner) recently mentioned that some aborigines were shooting on natural waters on a holding, and were charged by the pastoralist with trespass. The wise magistrate discharged them and warned them that if brought up again they would be fined £100 each. A white man, though holding a license, was at the mercy of the pastoralist. In the season before last on one station 10,000 kangaroos were shot in two months and the pastoralist congratulated himself that he had grass for 10,000 more sheep. If the holder of a license displeased the pastoralist he could be ordered off, and men had been driven to take out miners' rights under the cover of which they indulged in kangaroo shooting. It would be desirable to draw up a clause to suit all parties.

Mr. Dwyer: Put a paragraph in the definition clause stating that "person" includes "aboriginal."

Mr. FOLEY: The Minister should insist on reporting progress. There was scarcely a contentious clause in the Bill apart from this, and almost every speaker had a different idea.

Progress reported.

BILL—STATUTES COMPILATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker) in moving the second reading said: This is a measure which has already passed the other Chamber, and has been waiting for some time for consideration by this House. It is a simple measure, and I do not intend to occupy the time of the House for long in explaining it. The object is to remove certain anomalies and difficulties which have been found by experience to exist since the passing of the Compilation Bill of 1905. The object is to remove certain difficulties that stand in the way of making these compilations after motions have been carried by the Chamber. The measure consists of only a few clauses, and I assure members it is one that is urgently needed. Under the Compilation Act 1905 certain formalities had to be complied with which have been found almost impracticable when we have attempted to put them into operation. In consequence of that a compilation of the Criminal Code which is a very important measure, as members must admit, has been delayed. This measure desires to simplify and to make more practical the process of compilation. I therefore move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

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

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

Read a third time and *passed.*

House adjourned at 10.13 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 10th December, 1912.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

The PRESIDENT: I have to lay on the Table the twenty-second report of the Auditor General.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: 1, Papers relating to the removal of the Dinninup school buildings (ordered on motion by Hon. R. D. McKenzie). 2, Report of the Inspector General for the Insane for the year ending 30th June, 1912.

RIGHTS IN WATER AND IRRIGATION BILL SELECT COMMITTEE.

Report Presented.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH (East) brought up the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into this Bill.

Ordered to be printed.