

In Committee, etc.

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

BILL—PERMANENT RESERVE A4566.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 9.17 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 14th October, 1925.

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

QUESTION—TIMBER LOADING DISPUTE.

Mr. WITHERS asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is he aware that a dispute occurred in Bunbury over the rate to be paid for the handling of powellised timber to be shipped by the s.s. "Kolonga" on 2nd September, 1925? 2, Is it a fact that this timber was re-railed to Manjimup on the 10th September, 1925? 3, If so, what was the cost of re-railing? 4, What was the total amount of the increase asked for? 5, Is it a fact that 10 trucks of this timber were then sent to Fremantle on the 9th October, 1925, to be loaded into the s.s. "Lowana," which is proceeding to Bunbury

for a full load of timber? 6, If so, what was the reason for sending the 10 trucks of timber to Fremantle? 7, Is he aware that 100 loads were sent to Busselton? 8, Why was this sent to Busselton, seeing that it was the last timber put into the hold, and the ship was going to Bunbury to complete loading? 9, Will he give this matter full consideration with a view to saving a repetition of what occurred?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, £250. 4, A board of reference, as provided under the award of the Federal Court, was called and awarded 7½d. per hour extra over the ordinary rate, but the Bunbury lumpers demanded 1s. per hour extra, and refused to abide by the board of reference decision or the instructions, telegraphed from Melbourne by their own union executive, to work the timber. 5 and 6, No. The 10 trucks of powellised timber sent to Fremantle came from Pemberton, and was not the same timber. 7, Some powellised timber has been loaded at Busselton. 8, To suit the convenience of the State Saw Mills Department. 9, The Minister has no control over the shipment of this timber, as the steamship companies are responsible for its loading. I invited the representatives of the Bunbury union to meet me and discuss the matter, but they did not accept the invitation.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, CEMENT TESTS.

Mr. MANN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it a fact that the Railway Department have made a series of practical tests with local cement and with several imported cements? 2, If so, what was the result of those tests?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Railways) replied: 1, Yes. 2, Although some of the local cement previously manufactured varied somewhat in quality, that now being produced is satisfactory, and recent tests compare favourably with those of imported cement.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

Mining—Comet Vale.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [4.34]: I promised to make a statement regarding the Sand

Queen mine in reply to a question asked, without notice, yesterday by the member for Menzies (Mr. Pantou). I understand from the report in the Press that a meeting was held at Comet Vale at which some indignation was expressed at the action of the Mines Department in allowing the Gladsome and Sand Queen mines to cease operations. I propose to give a brief review of the circumstances, as they were not apparently understood at the meeting. In April of last year, Mr. E. J. Wellsted, on behalf of the Bullfinch Proprietary, secured an option over the Sand Queen and Gladsome mines from the leaseholders, Messrs. Wright and Maher. Later the Mines Department was approached for assistance in the hope of reopening the mines which had produced a considerable quantity of gold and were understood to have great possibilities. The Gladsome mine produced 74,000 tons for 69,000 ozs. of gold and the Sand Queen had produced 116,000 tons for 101,000 ozs. In the hope of re-opening the mines, Mr. Wellsted approached the Mines Department on behalf of the company and asked for a subsidy of £4,000 on a pound for pound basis. The object of the assistance was for unwatering the mines and removing obstacles in the shaft, as well as to find out the values of the reefs. I was assured by Mr. Wellsted that if the mines could be unwatered and the values proved right, there would be no difficulty in securing capital in London for the development of the mines. I agreed to the subsidy of £4,000 on a pound for pound basis, the security being the plant and machinery on the Gladsome and Sand Queen mines. Operations began immediately and after spending £8,000 the company had exhausted its funds, and again came to the department for a further loan of £3,000. I was very loth to agree to the application. The proposition was that £3,000 should be advanced, the security being a mortgage over the Bullfinch Co's. plant at Bullfinch, near Southern Cross. Had I turned down the proposal then, the result would have been inconclusive, because the mines had not been unwatered and the expenditure for which the original loan had been approved had not been carried out. The obstacles in one of the shafts, had been removed and I did not want to have an inconclusive result. I therefore agreed to the further advance of £3,000, the security being the Bullfinch Company's plant at Bullfinch. In the course of time the

Gladsome mine was unwatered and sampled showing a shoot of ore under foot below the No. 4 level 360 feet in length and 51 inches in width, averaging 52s. 4d. per ton in value. These values were what might be regarded as fairly good. I do not know what value were expected by the board of directors, but apparently they desired something better because the department was informed that the prospective underwriters, after full consideration and in view of the sampling results and the shorter lengths of shoots and lower values than were expected, did not intend to go on with the proposition because they found it unattractive. They were therefore, reluctantly compelled to abandon the option. The speakers at the indignation meeting at Comet Vale seem to have been under the impression that the department could have prevented the Bullfinch Company from ceasing operations. It is a matter of regret that the Bullfinch Company did not continue the operations to the bottom of the Sand Queen shaft. Having exhausted their funds and being disinclined to exercise the option, however, the company did not go on with it. The department had no power over the company to prevent them from adopting that course. That is all there is to be said about it. Those at the meeting were apparently disappointed with the results and the department is equally disappointed. The help of the department was given for the purpose of reopening the mines. I was led to believe that if the mines were reopened and the values of the reefs established there would be no difficulty in getting the necessary capital for development. The company now state that the values are such that they were not warranted in going further with the work. Having no more funds the company abandoned the option and that was the end of it so far as they were concerned. The position regarding the lease is that it reverts to the holders, Messrs. Wright and Maher, and it will be for them to fulfil the conditions of the lease. There is no justification for indignation regarding the action of the department, which acted most generously.

Hon. G. Taylor: How much did the company get altogether?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They received £7,000, £4,000 on a pound for pound basis, the security for which was the plant and machinery on the mines referred to, and £3,000 the security for which was

the Bullfinch Company's plant at Bullfinch. The department dealt generously with the district and set out to give the company an opportunity to develop the mines. The fact that the company did not proceed with the option is no fault of the department. I am sorry that the people at Comet Vale have seen fit to raise objections to the attitude of the department. They are hurt, I suppose, because the mines have closed down, but their condemnation in face of the facts is utterly unjustified.

SELECT COMMITTEE, BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Mr. Stubbs, the time for bringing up the select committee's report was extended for a fortnight.

MOTION—ABATTOIRS ACT.

To disallow Regulations.

MR. MANN (Perth) [4.42]: I move—

That the regulations of the State abattoirs and saleyards (Metropolitan district), published in the "Government Gazette" of the 7th August, 1925, and laid on the Table of the House on Tuesday, the 8th September, 1925, be disallowed.

The motion is not a hostile one and is moved with a sincere desire to have the regulations reviewed and brought within reason. In order to make the position clear it will be necessary for me to trace the history of the abattoirs and the charges from time to time. Prior to 1915 butchers were permitted to kill at private abattoirs at their own places of business, or at convenient sites. In 1915 the Abattoirs Act was brought into operation with the opening of the Midland Junction abattoirs. All private abattoirs were closed. Butchers killing in the Fremantle district were instructed to kill at North Fremantle or South Fremantle, and those killing in the Perth district were instructed to kill at Midland Junction. In 1916 the butchers in the Fremantle district were instructed to kill at what was called the Union Abattoirs or Copley and Patterson's abattoirs, which were leased from that company. A scale of charges was then operating at Midland Junction and that scale was also brought into operation at Fremantle. Regulations were also framed governing the work of killing. The butchers handed over their

stock to the Government and received back the carcases and by-products. The charge for slaughtering and cleaning the bullock was 3s. Those charges and conditions continued for some time until the department decided to change its policy. They then ceased doing the killing, but provided floor space for the butchers to do their own killing. The charges then made were 3s. 6d. per bullock and 6d. per sheep. It was then found there was not sufficient space at the Union Abattoirs for all the butchers killing at Fremantle, and the Government rented from the Anchorage Meat Company their killing space for £300 a year. They instructed the Anchorage Meat Company that, if they so desired, they could then kill at their own slaughter yards, but would be charged the same rate as they would have to pay if they killed at the Government abattoirs—the Union Abattoirs—plus 6d. per body for the blood which the Anchorage Meat Company were allowed to retain. Thus they were paying 4s. per bullock and 6d. per sheep. Although the Anchorage Meat Company were receiving only £6 per week rent for the floor space, the Government were receiving from them an average of £52 a week in killing fees, so the Government did very well on that deal. Those conditions continued at both Fremantle and Midland Junction until some time last year when the Government, on account of improvements being made at Midland Junction, instructed the butchers killing there to transfer their operations to Fremantle, and provision was made for them to kill at the Fremantle freezing works.

The Minister for Lands: The freezing works were leased before last year.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: He said the Midland killing was done there.

The Minister for Works: Your Government made arrangements for the killing at Fremantle. You leased the works.

The Minister for Lands: He said provision was made last year. It was made previously.

Mr. MANN: That is so. Although the Government had leased the works, the Midland butchers were not instructed to do their killing at Fremantle until about a year ago. I am not complaining of that; I am merely tracing the history. The Government made provision for the butchers of Midland and Perth to kill at the Fremantle freezing works and provided chilling accommodation without charge. I think it was costing the Government something like £100 a week, but no

charge was made to the butchers who were instructed to do their killing at Fremantle.

The Minister for Agriculture: And the butchers are now showing their gratitude.

Mr. MANN: I am merely presenting the case for the butchers; the Minister should not be hostile to them. All the killing was then done at Fremantle until the additions at Midland Junction were completed, and then the butchers whose business compelled them to kill at Midland Junction transferred their operations from the Fremantle freezing works to Midland Junction. When they returned to Midland Junction they found that the Government had provided additional facilities. Apart from the ordinary killing facilities hitherto provided, the Government had installed chilling chambers in order that the meat might be properly kept after the animals were slaughtered. Then the Government issued a new scale of charges, and it is on this score that the butchers have reason to complain. They consider that the charges imposed to cover the cost of the increased facilities are more than they can pay, and unless the charges are reduced the butchers will be compelled to pass the extra cost on to the public. In the figures I shall submit, I think it will be concluded that the costs are excessive. The charges under the new scale were increased from 3s. 6d. to 12s. per bullock, from 6d. to 2s. per sheep, and from 1s. to 3s. per pig. During the week from the 14th to the 19th September the charges imposed amounted to £974 14s., whereas under the old scale they would have been only £258 5s. 6d. The increase was £716 8s. 6d.

The Minister for Agriculture: Where did you get those figures?

Mr. MANN: They are taken from the invoices submitted by the department to the butchers who operated during that week.

The Minister for Agriculture: We have not yet been paid for much of that work.

Mr. MANN: Perhaps not, but those are the charges that were made.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Is 12s. being charged for a bullock?

The Minister for Agriculture: Yes.

Mr. MANN: The butchers realise that they must pay an increased charge. They have considered the additional facilities provided and the increased cost of administration, and they are of opinion that an increase of 100 per cent. on the old scale would be sufficient to cover all the extra cost and leave the Government a reasonable margin of profit. The figures that I shall now quote have

been submitted to me by the butchers as the extra cost incurred by the department. It is said that the Government expended on increased facilities at Midland Junction £42,000, and the butchers suggest 12 per cent. to include interest and depreciation, which would return the Government £5,040 a year. Men who have run similar plants consider that £5,000 should cover interest and depreciation on the additional facilities at Midland Junction.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is only interest on the improvements. What about interest on the whole of the capital cost of the abattoirs?

Mr. MANN: That was covered by the previous charges. With the exception of last year when the Government incurred a loss of £5,000 through providing chilling accommodation at Fremantle free of charge, the abattoirs have always paid their way. So the butchers contend that the charges previously imposed covered the capital cost of the abattoirs prior to last year. We suggest that £5,000 will cover the increased cost of the additions at Midland Junction, making £10,040. The Government have leased the Fremantle freezing works for £7,000 a year. Those who have investigated the matter consider that the extra cost there would be covered by an amount of £2,500 a year. The company are providing the power and all the heavy costs, and the £2,500 would cover small incidental costs of operation and keeping the works clean, making a total of £19,540. On the charges that the Government are imposing under the new scale, their earnings will be £41,010 14s., showing a profit of £20,970 14s.

The Premier: That is good for the Treasury.

Mr. MANN: It might be good from the Treasurer's viewpoint, but it is not good from the viewpoint of the butchers and the public. I am sure the Treasurer will agree that if the figures I have quoted are correct, the charges being imposed are too high.

The Premier: Yes, I will agree to that.

Hon. G. Taylor: Then the Premier must be depending upon the figures being incorrect.

Mr. MANN: We have investigated the costs and have endeavoured to allow for every item of increased expenditure. The butchers suggest what they consider would be a reasonable scale. The approximate killing for a year at Midland Junction would be 12,844 bullocks, 169,000

sheep, and 4,524 pigs. We suggest that 12,844 bullocks at 8s., representing an increase of 4s. 6d. per bullock, would return an increased revenue of £2,889; 169,000 sheep at 1s. 1d., representing an increase of 7d. per sheep would return an additional revenue of £4,829; and 4,524 pigs at 1s. 7d., an increase of 7d. per pig, would give an extra £131. It will be seen that in those figures I have allowed for an increase of 4s. 6d. per bullock and 7d. per sheep and pig because the previous charges were absorbed in the cost of operating prior to the improvements being made. At Fremantle I have taken the same figures, 12,844 bullocks at 8s., a return of £5,137; 169,000 sheep at 1s. 1d., a return of £9,000; and 4,524 pigs at 1s. 7d., a return of £338, or a total return of £22,500 18s. 4d. Those figures are correct, and they show the Government a profit of £3,000 on their outlay and operations. Where the Government have a monopoly it is understood that they should impose charges only sufficient to cover working costs. It is not intended that the abattoirs should show a profit over and above reasonable working expenses, interest and sinking fund. It is not fair that the butchers should be penalised by being made to contribute a profit to general revenue for the benefit of the community at large.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do the butchers show a profit at all?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is beside the question.

Mr. MANN: Of course the interjection is wide of the question; the butchers make a profit in their business or they would not be able to carry on. The butchers are risking their money for their own benefit. It is intended that they should show a profit. In conversations I have had with the Minister he has told me it was his intention to review these charges, but the butchers feel that they are in such a position that they must take advantage of having a motion of this nature moved, because they cannot possibly pay the charges laid down at present.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Are they not prepared to take the word of the Minister that he will review them?

Mr. MANN: I do not know.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They have already conveyed to me the information that they were prepared to take his word. Why do they now go to you?

Mr. MANN: I do not know. I am sure they would be able to answer the hon. member themselves. I did not seek this position.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You have been hurled into an ugly position.

The Minister for Agriculture: It has been thrust upon you.

Mr. MANN: As the representative of the City of Perth I felt it my duty to move in the matter when I was asked to do so. The Minister might consider the suggestion of a flat charge on pound weight according to the size of the beast that is killed, rather than a flat rate per head. A poundage rate would mean that there would not be the same charge for a lamb of 26lbs. as there would be for a sheep of 50lbs., or the same charge for a bullock of 350lbs. as for a bullock of 900lbs. This poundage basis would work out as follows if a flat rate of about $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb. was imposed—a 600lb. bullock, 12s. 6d.; a 48lb. sheep, 1s.; a 30lb. lamb, $7\frac{1}{2}$ d.; and an 80lb. pig, 1s. 8d. These charges would work out more equitably than the present basis.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They would have to weigh the animals all the time.

Mr. MANN: That is so. The Minister will be in a better position than I to say whether or not this is practicable. I am not moving this motion in any hostile spirit, but merely with a desire to have the present position remedied as speedily as possible.

The Premier: Quite friendly! You are as mild a man as ever cut a throat.

Mr. MANN: I am sure the Premier will forego these profits if the figures I have put forward are correct.

The Premier: In the interests of justice, yes.

Mr. MANN: I think I have put forward a case that should appeal to the Minister.

The Premier: If you miss in this place you have another barrel in another place.

Mr. MANN: Surely the Premier would not take umbrage at that.

The Premier: You are evidently relying on the second barrel in this case.

Mr. MANN: No, I am relying on the good judgment and fair-mindedness of the Premier, the Minister, and members of the House.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And the members of the Prices Commission. They will be all right.

Hon. G. Taylor: As solid as rocks.

Mr. MANN: I hope the motion will be agreed to.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford) [5.5]: I regret that the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) has moved this motion. When the regulations were first distributed amongst the master butchers, a number of them got into touch with me, because they were concerned about the new charges in respect to the abattoirs at Midland Junction. I advised them to call a meeting representative of the master butchers in the metropolitan area, so that we could go into the question with a view to making proper representations to the Minister. Acting on this advice the master butchers from Fremantle to Midland Junction met and considered the situation. Following upon that meeting, I led a deputation to the Minister. After the first deputation we were not satisfied with the position that was represented to us by him. A further conference of the master butchers was held and I attended it. The case put up by the member for Perth was the case that was prepared at the time. The figures he has presented this afternoon have all been given to the Minister.

Mr. Mann: I do not think so.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: There may be one or two little variations, but the case seems to me to be word for word with the case I prepared and submitted to the Minister. I am of opinion that the kind of case the hon. member has made out is the kind of case I advised the master butchers to present. After representations had been made to the Minister on more than one occasion he agreed that the charges might be beyond what was required to give a reasonable return for the Government, but he stated he would have to wait for some time to ascertain whether the returns were what he anticipated, or were as great as the master butchers' representatives claimed they would be. We were not satisfied because the Minister wanted a term of six months as a trial. After some argument he agreed to reduce the period for the testing of the rates to one month. To make certain of the position I prepared a motion word for word with that submitted by the member for Perth. I presented it to the Minister and said, "We must have something definite, otherwise the regulation will go through and possibly there will be some misunderstanding afterwards." The Minister replied, "There is no need for you

to anticipate or expect misunderstandings. I have given you my word definitely, and I will repeat it, that after a month's experience of the new charges I will review them, and meet you and the representatives with whom we have been discussing the situation for the purpose of reconsidering it." I then tore up the motion. I went to the representative of the master butchers who came here to the House to discuss the matter with me and supply me with more figures. I told him what the position was. He said, "If the Minister has given you his word, we are satisfied." I said, "You are agreeable to let the matter stand over for a month, and at the end of the month to make representations to the Minister and obtain from him his decision in regard to his promise of reconsideration." That was agreed upon by the representative of the master butchers. Then the member for Perth spoke to me and told me he proposed to move this motion. I said, "I will not move it. The Minister has promised to reconsider the matter, and it would be bad tactics to do this." I then went on to say that if he proceeded to force the motion in this Chamber, it would be defeated, because no member on this side of the House would vote with people who distrusted the Minister they were supporting. I am prepared, and the representatives of the master butchers said they were prepared, to take the Minister's word. I am prepared to take it to the final moment. If the hon. member does proceed with the motion it will be defeated, and this House will be forced to endorse regulations which the Minister himself says he will reconsider. The hon. member may say that if we let them go the time will elapse during which we can take exception to them, and they will automatically come into operation. The regulations can be amended with great ease. There is no difficulty about altering them, if as a result of a month's experience the Minister feels it is necessary to do so. I have argued the details with the Minister privately, and we have had three deputations to him. I have discussed the matter with the master butchers at public meetings of the trade in Perth, and at private meetings at Midland Junction. We arrived at a definite understanding and we had a definite undertaking from the Minister. In view of these things it is bad taste on the part of the hon. member to move this motion. I do not blame him, but I blame those who gave their word that they would accept

the position. It is not altogether clean on their part to take steps for this motion to be moved, especially in view of their having gone to the other side of the House for the purpose. It is hurling business into the hurly-burly of politics, which is undesirable. I am prepared to accept the Minister's word that he will do a fair thing. He is only going to test the position for a month. In the meantime he is not, I understand, collecting the fees. If he finds they are excessive, as we have represented them to be, they will be reviewed. The Minister has had all the figures, and if the charges return the large amount that has been stated, it is obvious they will be in excess of what the Minister anticipated, and there is no doubt the matter will be reconsidered. It is certainly bad taste to distrust the Minister so far as to move a definite motion of this nature.

On motion by Minister for Agriculture, debate adjourned.

PAPERS—FREMANTLE RAILWAY BRIDGE.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [5.13]: I move—

That the file relating to the Fremantle railway bridge be laid upon the Table of the House.

I move this motion as a matter of duty to the district I represent. There is a feeling amongst people at the port that the bridge is unsafe. We were told last year that the annual upkeep of the bridge costs between £3,000 and £4,000. I believe the bridge is not as safe as it should be.

The Premier: Do you mean the railway bridge?

Mr. SLEEMAN: Yes. At present there is scarcely room in which to drive a new pile, and the repair gangs have to pull out one pile before they can put in another. I think there is reason to fear that trouble may occur there. If the bridge is safe no harm will be done by placing the file upon the Table, and if it is not safe, something ought to be done at once to effect the necessary alterations.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—AVON RIVER, POLLUTION.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [5.15]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House it is advisable that steps be taken to stop the polluting of the Avon River by overflow from the County Peak Lakes, and that the arresting of the contribution of alkaline matter be taken in hand by afforestation of suitable trees and shrubs along creeks running into the Avon River.

This is the fifth or sixth time I have moved a motion and spoken on this matter. It is generally agreed that certain improvements can be brought about in the Avon River. I lay no claim to originality in this connection, as nearly 30 years ago Lord Forrester had surveys and levels taken of the Avon, and certain examinations made, with the idea of utilising that river for his goldfields water supply scheme. However, that proposal fell through, the Helena site being adopted. At various times the subject of the present motion has been brought up, but without enthusiasm except in one instance, when the matter was advocated by an ex-mayor of Northam during the time the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) was Minister for Works. The ex-mayor in question thought that something could and should be done.

The Premier: Is that ex-mayor the only supporter of your scheme?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Nobody except that gentleman took the matter up.

The Premier: Is he an ex-mayor because he supported the scheme?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Premier may consider that funny; I do not. Mr. Barnard, the ex-mayor in question, was responsible for certain action being taken. He published a booklet outlining a scheme for the reclamation of the river.

Mr. Clydesdale: Are you talking about the foreshore?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The hon. member interjecting is more interested in trotting, or will be directly.

The Premier: Why anticipate trouble?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The scheme outlined by the ex-mayor of Northam proposes the reclamation, by afforestation, of the various creeks supplying saline matter to the Avon. I am asking the House merely to support an experiment, if that word can be used in connection with something that has been tried and proved, to prevent the Avon River from going into the County Peak Lakes during

flood time. When the river resumes its normal flow at the beginning of summer, the salty water which has been added to by the Avon itself trickles back into the river, and poisons the various pools right down to Northam, and in fact throughout the course of the river. I ask the Government to take up the proposal for the erection of flood gates at the entrance to the lakes, as this would prevent the inflow of salty water and also would check any overflow coming from the back country. The department have already gone into the matter and found that the proposal will cost between £30 and £40.

Mr. Lindsay: How much?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Between £30 and £40. There is only a passage of 8 feet.

Mr. Lindsay: You are extremely moderate.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: That proposal was turned down last year. When there is an overflow of the salt lakes, caused by their being filled from the Avon, the pools right down to Beverley are poisoned, and the water is rendered unfit for stock during the next season or two. During the past year or so, the rainfall having been slight, there has been little overflow, little enough to permit of its being dammed back with sandbags. As a result, the pools down to Beverley have been utilised for stock. In an ordinarily wet season those pools are so poisoned that no use can be made of the water. A Legislative Councillor who is keenly interested in this subject said to me recently that he could not understand why so inexpensive a matter had not been tested long since. Assume that the cost would be £50 or £60, surely that is not excessive for testing so important a question. If the pools only as far as Beverley were rendered fit for use, it would demonstrate clearly that the pollution of the river as far as Northam could be prevented. Old settlers tell me that 40 years ago they were accustomed to make tea with the water of pools that are now absolutely unfit for use. It goes to show that it is only man's own handiwork that has brought about the pollution of the river. The result of the cutting down of the timber in a country like Western Australia, having a light rainfall, is that the rapid evaporation, through capillary attraction, brings the salt to the surface, whence it is swept into the creeks. There is no removal of the salt by the leaching of forest growth or scrub. Around Beverley and York every scrap of timber has been cleared away from the creeks, and as a con-

sequence almost every creek is salty. I ask the House to carry the motion in order that something may be done by way of experiment, though, I repeat, it will not really be an experiment, since the success of the scheme has already been proved. It has been demonstrated time and again that water courses can be reclaimed by afforestation as I have suggested. Certain scrubs and certain bushes help to remove the salt. Inspector J. J. Houlahan, of Northam, once took me to a little paddock just outside the Police Station, and there showed me the surface all white with magnesia and salt. A couple of years later he took me to that paddock again, and there was no trace of magnesia or salt on its surface. Two large, old-man salt bushes were growing there. Those bushes removed all the alkaline matter from the surface of the land. At Moree, in New South Wales, it has been possible to utilise land formerly covered with alkaline deposits. Those deposits were encroached upon and gradually eaten away by scrub and bushes. The bore water at Moree was once considered unfit for use, but with the aid of certain vegetables and cereals, used alternately, it has been possible to render the water serviceable. There is no reason why something of the same sort should not be done here. Perhaps I am a little premature in bringing the matter forward; it was first mooted 30 or 40 years ago. However, some time the Avon will be running fresh, because certain means of reclamation, such as afforestation of the small creeks, will be adopted. The result will be the gradual reclamation of the river. Gates such as I have suggested will be erected—I hope soon—to keep the water from flowing into the creeks and so bringing down the salt which otherwise would remain there. If the gates were erected, the river would proceed on its course straight to the sea. As things are now, in wet years through that open passage millions of tons of water are poured into the lake and it becomes salty and later flows back into and pollutes the river throughout its course. I feel sure the Government and the House will consider the question on its merits, especially now that we have the agricultural college at Muresk, on the Avon. There, as at Hawkesbury, irrigation should be practised. If steps are taken in the direction I have indicated, to block the river from the lakes and thus prevent its pollution, and in a modest way to reforest the various creeks that now pour their salt contents into the river, the Avon

will in time be utilised for irrigation purposes.

Mr. Sampson: That would materially improve the position at Muresk, from the standpoint of showing what can be done through irrigation.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yes. Take York itself. I am informed that Mr. Craig of that town, has for seven or eight years successfully and profitably grown lucerne on the banks of a pool just outside York. At Burges' Siding, again, there is a fine pool, but it is clogged up with all kinds of growth—growth not on the banks, but in the body of the pool. When the river becomes low by evaporation during summer, the saline water sinks to the bottom. Then, owing to the blocking of the passage-way through the river, the sweet water rushes over the top of the salty water each winter, the bed of the river not being scoured. Mr. Mann, who was Government Analyst of this State some years ago, and who is now a member of the House of Representatives, once pointed out to a large meeting at Northam what he considered should be done regarding the Avon with reference to this very matter of an agricultural college at Muresk. He suggested that the river be cleared so that the flood waters would scour it of the saline matter. In his view a great deal could be done to clear the river. He also mentioned the planting of shrubs and trees along various watercourses, with a view to seeing whether the contributions of salt from the little creeks could not be stopped. I have instances from the Kellerberrin district. A man there had cleared and planted with wheat a paddock in which patches of moisture or soakage were evident. He cleared every scrap of scrub off the land, and when I went to view his crop there were amongst his wheat great patches of salt on which, of course, nothing was growing. He said he could not understand why the salt had appeared. Two years later I saw a crop on the same paddock, and among it patches of scrub were growing. The farmer informed me that he had permitted the native scrub to grow up again and that, in consequence, the salt had disappeared, allowing him to bring an increased area under wheat. One can see the same thing right through the country, more particularly in the older districts of Beverley and York, where man's own folly has created the salt nuisance. Every patch of vegetable matter has been stripped from along the creeks and, in consequence, the salt

trouble has become intensified. In many instances land has been reclaimed by allowing the natural scrub to grow up again. Mr. Willmott, a member of another place, on one occasion told me of his horse backing a cart into a big flooded gum, smashing the back of the vehicle. In a fit of temper Mr. Willmott took an axe and ringed that tree. As the tree died, a fine freshwater well in the vicinity became intensely salt. But Mr. Willmott had not properly completed his task of ringing the tree. He had left a patch of some 8 or 9 inches untouched by the axe and, as a result, the tree to a large extent, recovered; and as the tree recovered so did the well become fresh again. This is an instance of what has occurred at Bridgetown. I could cite scores of other cases. The trees and shrubs keep the salty matter from coming to the surface. By the removal of the trees, capillary attraction brings the salt to the surface, whence it is washed into the creeks. This is the fourth or fifth occasion on which I have submitted this motion, and I trust that this time the House will pass it and allow us to try an experiment that, in all probability, will lead to big things in the future.

Question put and passed.

BILL—PERMANENT RESERVE A4566.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—RACING RESTRICTION ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from 30th September. Mr. Lutey in the Chair; Mr. Sleeman in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on Clause 2, to which the Premier had moved the following amendment:—"That in lines 1 and 2 the words 'after the words "thirty-five" be struck out.'"

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am afraid I cannot accept the Premier's amendment. This programme of meetings was framed in 1917 as a war-time measure. Parliament then believed that 35 meetings was a fair schedule for the trotting association. At that time there was no mention of trotting at Fremantle, and Perth was the only

course on which the sport was practised. Acting on that, the West Australian Trotting Association entered into very heavy liabilities in respect of a new course. On that enterprise they have spent some £37,000 and propose spending another £62,000. Also they have obtained from America horses costing £3,000, with the idea of improving the breed in this State. It would be unfair for Parliament to take away a third of the association's revenue, and that without notice. The other night, when the Labour Exchanges Bill was before the House, the Minister for Works agreed that the employment brokers should get at least 12 months' notice. Here, however, there is to be no notice for the trotting association. Hon. members will agree that the Premier's amendment is loaded and that, if carried, it would practically kill the Bill.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Worse than that.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Yes, for it would deprive Perth of the sport in order that Fremantle might have it. The Fremantle interests do not want it at that cost. I hope the amendment will not be agreed to.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Premier pointed out that he was very anxious that the people of Fremantle should have some dates.

The Premier: No, I did not say I was anxious about it.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Premier said he was desirous that they should get 12 meetings.

The Premier: I did not say that I was anxious about it, nor that I was desirous.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Let me point out how far the Premier's desire was in that direction.

The Premier: I did not say I was desirous.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Premier voted against the second reading.

The Premier: On a point of order. The hon. member alleges that I said I was anxious and desirous that Fremantle should have these meetings. I did not make any such statement, and so I ask for a withdrawal.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I withdraw. The Premier wanted to give Fremantle 12 meetings.

The Premier: I did not want to give them 12 meetings.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: What is the amendment for? The Premier moved to strike out all words down to "thirty-five."

The Premier: I am moving to reduce the number of meetings at Perth. You have not read the amendment.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Premier feels the position in which he has placed himself by moving the amendment. He voted against the second reading and then, to kill the Bill, he moved the amendment.

The Premier: No.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I suppose other hon. members have been written to.

The Premier: Oh, no!

Hon. G. TAYLOR: We know that the Eastern Goldfields trotting people have passed resolutions condemning the amendment. They realise that if any of the meetings are taken from Perth the West Australian Trotting Association will not be able to assist the outlying districts to establish trotting. If there be in the State any association or body that deserves the support of this Committee, it is the West Australian Trotting Association, if only on the score of its liberality. It has done more for charities than any other organisation in the whole of the State, perhaps in Australia.

Mr. Stubbs: More than all the others put together.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I have always supported trotting from its inception; I supported it when it was most unpopular.

The Premier: You have always supported unpopular causes.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: To-day trotting is an established institution and if the Premier doubts me he can go down there and see the big crowds that attend the Saturday night meetings.

The Premier: I have not used their free pass as much as some members have done.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Since the inception of the sport in the State the Trotting Association has distributed in stakes, apart from those given on the goldfields and country meetings, an amount of £247,067.

The Premier: That would have cleared a lot of land in this country.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: No less a sum than £142,096 10s. 7d. has been paid by way of taxation through the totalisator.

The Premier: That is a different statement from the one I have.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: During the past three years the payments by way of totalisator taxation amounted to £59,207 19s. 11d.

The Premier: Real directors' figures, the 19s. 11d.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The outlay on and equipment of courses on the goldfields and in the country has amounted to £15,049 4s. 4d.

The Premier: They should have thrown in another 7d. to make up the 11d.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Donations to charities have amounted to date to £31,172 19s., and from five meetings held last season, charitable institutions benefited to the extent of £4,159. Is not that a very fine record? There are many other interesting figures that I could quote, but it is sufficient to state that just now a considerable sum of money is being spent on a new track. A good deal of money has also been invested in horseflesh.

The Premier: The utility horse.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: That is how the trotting horse is described. But I am afraid the Premier does not know much about the equine. Trotters are not sprinters and they are a fine type of animal.

Mr. Hughes: Have you ever seen one in a baker's cart?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: No, but I have seen the hon. member in one.

Mr. J. H. Smith: They do not compare with thoroughbreds.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: These are thoroughbreds. The Premier is taking the wrong view altogether. Where does the profit from the proprietary clubs go? It does not remain in this State.

Mr. Clydesdale: You do not know what you are talking about.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: We know what Wren has done, and we know why the proprietary clubs are opposing the Trotting Association.

Mr. Clydesdale: What has that to do with the Bill?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The hon. member spoke for an hour on the second reading of the Bill, and we know that he represents the proprietary clubs. Why does he get so angry because I am supporting trotting?

Mr. Clydesdale: It is you who are angry.

Mr. Hughes: Where are the shareholders in the totalisator company?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I have no idea. Anyhow, we are not discussing the totalisator. I hope the Premier's amendment will not be carried: I feel confident that the Fremantle people would not accept it.

Mr. HUGHES: If the previous speaker only took the trouble to make inquiries he would find that a considerable sum of money from trotting finds its way to the Eastern States.

Hon. G. Taylor: Only for the purchase of horses.

Mr. HUGHES: The totalisator profits find their way to the Eastern States and if it is wrong for money obtained from the proprietary clubs to be sent to the East, it must also be wrong to send the totalisator profits away. If trotting is established at Fremantle, there will also be a totalisator, and more money will be sent away. We know that racing, be it trotting or galloping, has developed into an industry, and we know that many owners see that the racing provides for the feed bill. If the horses do not pay the feed bill the owners get out of the business. There is an excess of racing in the State. I am not opposed to additional trotting meetings alone; I would vote to reduce all racing if I had the chance. Parliament recognised there should be a limitation and specified the number of meetings.

Hon. G. Taylor: That was a war time measure. There was no limit before that.

Mr. Clydesdale: Yes, there was. It was not a wartime measure; that was lifted long ago.

Mr. HUGHES: We are told that a trotting horse is a utility horse. In my opinion, a first class trotter on the tracks would not be any use in a baker's cart. If some of the trotters were used for that purpose, we would be without bread for breakfast.

Mr. Stubbs: Yes, if you were driving.

Mr. HUGHES: If the hon. member were backing it, we would be without bread. The days of the utility horse are numbered.

Lieut.-Colonel Denton: What do you know about horses?

Mr. HUGHES: The horse is being displaced by motor transport. To ask us to add 12 more racing fixtures is absurd. As to the shifting of trotting to Fremantle, the evidence that Fremantle cannot afford it is furnished by the fact that the people there cannot find the money necessary to establish a course at the port.

Mr. LAMBERT: On a point of order, is the hon. member in order in discussing whether Fremantle can have trotting or not? That was dealt with at the second reading stage.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for East Perth is in order. He is giving his reasons for his attitude regarding the amendment.

Mr. HUGHES: Trotting in Perth is supported not only by the people there but by a small section of people in Fremantle. If we transfer some of the dates to Fremantle it will merely mean that some of the people who now patronise trotting in Perth will not do so and there will not be the necessity for the same number of meetings there as at present. That will make it more difficult for owners to carry on and feed their horses. If there is trotting in Fremantle, however, the Perth horses will go there and compete and there will be no hardship to owners, because the same amount of prize money and the same number of races will be available. As regards trotting, the big man with a string of horses can beat the small man with a few horses.

Mr. Stubbs: Why?

Mr. HUGHES: Because he has money and can afford to hold horses back for 12 months.

Lieut.-Colonel Denton: On the course?

Mr. HUGHES: Yes, and the biggest owners are the worst offenders. I have known one owner hold a horse up for 12 months. I have known horses to tail the field week after week and then come out and win by a lap. Yet no inquiries were held! I can give the names of horses that would be a revelation to the hon. member. If we make it harder for the small owner, it will be easier for these devious tricks to be played on the track. Surely no member is so unsophisticated as to think that horses are allowed to try every time they compete. The owner has to get a suitable handicap before he will allow his horse to win.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Trotting is run as fairly as any other form of racing.

Mr. HUGHES: I do not think it is.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: And it is better supervised than some others.

Mr. HUGHES: That does not alter the fact that all these tricks are resorted to. While some members would not tolerate an extension of gambling under the Lotteries Bill, which was in aid of the hospitals, they are agreeable to unlimited gambling in connection with trotting. However, we have received our directions from Kalgoorlie as to how we are to vote on this Bill. I have received a letter from a gentleman in Kalgoorlie.

Members: We have all got one.

Mr. Griffiths: Take it as read.

Mr. HUGHES: It is too good to be taken as read. The letter starts off—

I have been instructed to direct your attention to a resolution carried at a meeting of our club—

The people at Kalgoorlie could not support a trotting club of their own and now they want to direct members how to vote on the Bill.

Mr. Davy: They do not say any such thing.

Mr. HUGHES: The letter has a most insolent tone and these people apparently expect members to crumple up when they read it.

The Premier: You can imagine what my position is; I am compelled to obey them.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is not direct action.

Mr. HUGHES: But they direct our attention.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know why we should show any feeling over this question.

The Premier: There is none.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Not on the part of the Premier.

The Premier: I have to be serious now and again because I am accused of always joking.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Although we have a restriction Act, there is more racing in the State than there was before the Act was passed.

The Premier: The title was a misnomer.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There is no reason why people should not be permitted to engage in the particular sport that appeals to them. Racing provides opportunities for gambling, though people can and do attend without gambling. The member for Canning says that racing is a business.

Mr. Clydesdale: So it is.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not agree with him.

Mr. Clydesdale: I have had 25 years' experience of it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Perhaps so; but I have been fond of racing for a longer period than that and am still fond of it, though I seldom go. The galloping races are very well controlled by the Turf Club. I suppose that no racing is better controlled than that in Western Australia,

and I refer to all racing that comes under the jurisdiction of the Turf Club and most of that to which the club send stipendiary stewards. I have occasionally attended the trotting meetings. Some time ago a celebrated New Zealand horse raced. There were about 12,000 people present that night, and so far as I could judge, 8,000 of them sat tight the whole evening and could not have had a bet. I do not know why we should always associate gambling with racing, because all people who attend the races do not gamble. If gambling is a thing we object to, there is much to object to in Perth, because every day, week in and week out, someone may be seen selling tickets for sweeps conducted either here or in one of the other States.

Mr. Lambert: Art unions seem to be the only industry in the city.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The suggestion is that we should add to the 35 days already granted, another 12 days in order that Fremantle may have trotting meetings. The Premier proposes that the 12 shall be deducted from the 35 meetings now allotted to the Trotting Association. I do not think members will agree to the amendment. If members consider that there should be no more trotting in the metropolitan area, it would have been better to reject the Bill on the second reading.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is not the Premier's fault. He tried to defeat it by voting against the second reading.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The 35 days allotted to Perth are being used by Perth. The association are spending a great deal of money on beautifying the ground at East Perth, and a great deal of help has been given to hospitals and to charities. Money has been given by the Turf Club for similar purposes, and occasionally in the country race meetings are held to raise funds for hospitals. The question is whether the people who wish to see trotting races are to have an opportunity to see them. Is it right that the association who have run the meetings at East Perth so long should be deprived of some of their dates? I do not think they should be, and I am sure the Premier in his own mind does not think so, either. I see no objection to a reasonable provision for sport, and there can be no objection to the number of dates set aside for the two great racing bodies. A few years ago there

was no restriction, and unregistered meetings were run at Bicton, South Perth and Kalgoorlie, while all sorts of race clubs were at work in the country. To-day every racecourse has to be registered, and racing is controlled by one or other of the two organisations. Fremantle is the only town of considerable size probably in the Commonwealth that has not the right to run race meetings, and if the people of Fremantle wish to have this form of amusement, I do not see why they should be denied it. It is for them to say whether they want this sport and are prepared to pay for it, and whether it will be good for the town or otherwise. I am going to vote against the Premier's amendment. It is not a question of trotting dates versus proprietary racing. It is a question whether we are going to give those people who desire this form of sport an opportunity to see it and take part in it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When the Act was passed there was a trotting course at Midland Junction, which was taken into consideration when the number of dates was granted. The member for Guildford was very interested as to how the Act would affect the municipal course at Midland Junction. Soon after the Act was passed the course went out of existence. I am surprised to find that various parts of the State are taking so much interest in Fremantle. As a rule when anything to do with Fremantle is brought up it is the subject of a gibe to the effect that Fremantle is always wanting something. People in the Great Southern districts and on the goldfields are now interested in seeing that Fremantle receives its just dues. I have to thank the people outback for having come to their senses, and realising that Fremantle has not had justice in the past. Great interest is being taken in this Bill, far more interest than was shown in a Bill that was dealt with last night, and which will very greatly affect the whole country.

The Premier: It is the influence of the Trotting Association.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Honour is due to the Premier, if he is of opinion that there is too much racing and gambling, for taking this opportunity of endeavouring to prevent these things and of expressing his opinion regarding them. He thinks it is in the best interests of the State that there should be a curtailment in

this direction. It is possible, if a race-course is established at Fremantle, that it will prevent the crowd from betting in the streets of the town, and setting a bad example to the children. If a course were established the betting would be transferred to it from the streets. As a member of the Tramway Board, I must admit that the establishment of a racecourse would lead to increased tramway fares and the increased use of electric light. I do not think there would be any interference with the district. The Premier might well consider the advisability of withdrawing his amendment. Fremantle, like other towns, should have the right to a racecourse, just as other parts of the State have. I do not like voting against the Premier, but I intend to do so on this occasion.

Mr. ANGELO: I have made further inquiries into this matter, and find that the trotting association has entered into contracts which involve a large expenditure on a new trotting ground for Perth. If the trotting dates are interfered with it will mean serious embarrassment for the association. It is a good thing that Perth should be provided with another up-to-date pleasure ground. We have all too few pleasure resorts, and people are constantly spending their holidays in the Eastern States, because they say there is a lack of attraction in the city. I understand that the new trotting ground will be one of the most up-to-date courses in Australia. It will certainly be the means of covering up some of the smelly parts of East Perth, and will prevent the residents from inhaling some of the obnoxious gases. The member for East Perth has opposed the Bill because he says there is too much betting. Everything depends on the individual as to whether he bets or not. We know that people will bet on anything and everything. I have known of betting even at elections. After the last election I was offered a thousand to one that the member for East Perth would be Colonial Secretary in the new Ministry. However, I thought the odds were not long enough.

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

Mr. ANGELO: The member for East Perth has said that to his personal knowledge there is an enormous amount of crooked racing at the trotting meetings. If a man always hangs around the stable, a little of the smell of it will cling to him.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: If Australians have an outstanding national fault, it is that they are too fond of horse racing. Trotting, however, seems to me a fair, clean, and well-conducted form of racing. Certainly it is growing in popularity in Western Australia, and there is no reason why Fremantle should not have its share of the sport. The Trotting Association set a very good example to other bodies with headquarters in Perth as regards the interest shown in the advancement of the sport of trotting in the country, and also as regards the help extended to agricultural shows, at which the trotting matches are a great attraction. The trotting at East Perth is something different from what can be seen in other parts of the Commonwealth, and Eastern States visitors are always glad to witness the sport. There is no more pleasant way of spending a summer evening than at the trotting grounds, and this without betting. I am sorry the Premier has moved the amendment, which is directly contrary to the objects of the Bill. The Trotting Association are committed to an expenditure of £100,000 on a track. I should like to see the amendment defeated and the Bill carried, but I would rather see the Bill defeated than carried subject to the amendment. I hope the Premier will adopt the suggestion of the Minister for Lands.

Mr. STUBBS: I appeal to the Premier to withdraw the amendment, though I know he is absolutely sincere in his statement that gambling has a very strong hold on the people. The member for East Perth said he could prove that the horses running in trotting matches are not utility horses. In the Great Southern district during the last four or five years the establishment of trotting clubs, assisted by the association in Perth, has resulted in the production of farm horses that can win on the track. One of them has won hundreds of pounds in stakes. He does his week's work in addition to his trotting on the track. Years ago there was not between Beverley and Albany a single trotting track, and now there are a dozen, with a total of 800 owners and members. People enjoy trotting even more than galloping, because trotting is conducted on cleaner lines. The carrying of the amendment will mean the defeat of the Bill. The committee of the Trotting Association, believing that their dates would not be interfered with by Parliament, have entered into contracts aggregating £30,000 or £40,000, with a further expenditure of £60,000 to follow. If they lose

12 meetings, they will not be able to meet their engagements. Thousands of people go to the trots every Saturday without investing a shilling. Many men connected with galloping say they object to trotting because it is run by electric light.

Hon. G. Taylor: Because it is too popular.

Mr. STUBBS: A prominent member of the W.A.T.C. recently told me that he objected to trotting because all kinds of crooked dealings could be carried on under the electric light. However, there is just as much crooked work done under the light of the sun as under the electric light. Scores of Eastern States visitors have expressed themselves in the highest terms regarding the conduct of racing by the Trotting Association, and have said that they never saw anything like it in their lives before.

Mr. HUGHES: I am surprised at the conversion of the member for Gascoyne. Last week, when the Premier moved the amendment, the member for Gascoyne made it his business to come over to this side of the Chamber and plead with the mover of the Bill to accept the amendment.

Mr. Angelo: I ask for a withdrawal. The statement is absolutely untrue.

Mr. Sampson: Was not that a private conversation?

Mr. HUGHES: Am I obliged to withdraw a statement if it is absolutely true?

The CHAIRMAN: I do not know whether it is true or not. The member for Gascoyne has said that it is not true.

Mr. Lambert: There seems to be a doubt.

Mr. HUGHES: I withdraw, and give the member for Gascoyne the benefit of the doubt.

Mr. Angelo: I am not satisfied with that. I want an absolute withdrawal. What I went over and said to the member for Fremantle was that he should ask that the debate be adjourned.

Mr. HUGHES: I withdraw, but I cannot agree with the last statement made by the member for Gascoyne. He asked the member for Fremantle to consult with the trotting people and to accept the Premier's amendment.

Mr. Davy: I suppose that was a private conversation.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! All this has nothing to do with the amendment before the Chair.

Mr. HUGHES: It shows what has been going on during the week, how the whips have cracked since last Wednesday.

Mr. Stubbs: They have not cracked at me.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Oh, you got a letter too.

Mr. Stubbs: Letter be hanged!

Mr. HUGHES: Members who last week were pleading with the sponsor of the Bill to accept the Premier's amendment now make plausible excuses for opposing that amendment. What has happened in the meantime to alter their views? The whips have cracked and members have had to fall into line.

Mr. Stubbs: What nonsense!

Mr. HUGHES: We are told that the W.A. Trotting Association will not be able to fulfil its commitments if it be not allowed to continue to enjoy its full number of dates. Then how has it money to lend to Fremantle to start an opposition course, which will necessarily mean a falling-off in attendance at the Perth course? The 12 nights to be given to Fremantle will have to be made up in Perth, probably by trotting on Wednesday nights; alternatively there will be a corresponding reduction in the Perth programme. The financial plea is only a red herring expedient to defeat the Premier's amendment. The people of East Perth are penalised because of the trotting being held in their district, since they are obliged to pay an increased tramway fare every trotting night, when a 2d. section is converted into a 3d. section. So, if we have a reduction in the number of trotting meetings at East Perth, there will be a corresponding benefit to the people of East Perth.

Mr. Stubbs: There are not enough people there to keep a tram car going!

Mr. HUGHES: Following on each trotting meeting some of them have not enough money to pay a tram fare. Certainly trotting is of no advantage to East Perth. The little bit of foreshore reclamation done by the W.A. Trotting Association is a mere bagatelle. It would be better for the State if the trotting association, instead of investing money on a new course at Fremantle were to complete the job they have in hand at East Perth. No member supporting the Bill will tell us where the additional 12 nights are to come from. Certainly, trotting meetings will not be held in Perth and in Fremantle on the same nights. The only solution is Wednesday night

trotting in Perth. Some members refused to allow the Government to run a lottery for the benefit of the hospitals, urging that it would encourage gambling. Surely there is a marked difference between the danger of a monthly or quarterly lottery, and the providing of scope for unlimited gambling such as is afforded by weekly trotting meetings! I hope the Premier's amendment will be carried.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not know that there is any difference between the conduct of the trotters and of the gallopers. Generally speaking we can be thankful that both sports are conducted extremely well in this State. The people connected with the industry can be commended on that. I voted against the second reading, and I am going to do all I can to defeat the Bill. It is a dangerous Bill, inasmuch as it sets up a certain number of race meetings for a particular district. By the passing of the second reading we conceded that the West Australian Trotting Association has the right to grant trotting dates. It has taken the whole of the available dates to itself. Now the member for Fremantle seeks to amend the parent Act of 1917, and to grant Fremantle 12 nights of trotting. What position shall we be in if, agreeing to this, we find that Guildford or Midland Junction or Osborne Park or all three, each want 12 nights for the same purpose? If the member for Fremantle had sought to amend the parent Act by first increasing the trotting nights in the metropolitan area and then directing the trotting association to allocate those nights, as the W.A. Turf Club allocate their meetings, his Bill would have been deserving of greater support than it is receiving. There is in this amendment to the parent Act of 1917 a serious departure. It is sought by the member for Fremantle to give that area within a radius of five miles of the Fremantle Post Office, 12 dates exclusively for that district. If we are to be consistent, if there is to be a semblance of fairness to any other district, we shall have to support the proposal. I am sorry that the Bill passed its second reading, and in speaking to the amendment submitted by the Premier I said that no district should have racing foisted upon it unless the people had been consulted. It is my intention, whether the Premier's amendment is carried or not, to move the following proviso to Clause 2—

Provided also that before such license is granted a referendum shall be taken of the

electors on the Legislative Assembly roll residing within a radius of five miles of the Fremantle Town Hall as to whether such license shall be granted, and the expenses of such referendum to be defrayed by the Fremantle Trotting Association.

I can see that there are difficulties in the Premier's amendment, but irrespective of its fate, it will not be with my vote that racecourses shall be dotted over any part of the metropolitan area until the people directly concerned have been consulted.

Mr. DAVY: The member for Coolgardie, Mr. Lambert, prefaced his remarks by saying that he could see no reason why one should get excited during the debate, because the matter was of small importance. We have, however, seen the hon. member in his best form. He was most emphatic.

Lieut.-Colonel Denton: Spectacular.

Mr. DAVY: And spectacular. I do not remember when he was more impressive in delivery, and less impressive in the matter he discussed.

Mr. Teesdale: And he forgot to insult anybody.

Mr. DAVY: There has been a lot of irrelevant talk on this question; nevertheless there is a principle involved which is of considerable importance and it is a question of just how far Parliament should interfere with the legitimate activities of the people. We have on the statute book a Racing Restriction Act which was introduced into this House and passed at a time when I was not here, and I cannot do more than guess the reason for the introduction of that measure. My guess is that it had nothing to do with the morals of the people; it was introduced after the war began and when the people felt that it would be an indecency to continue in an extreme form any pleasure which involved the expenditure of money, remembering that every shilling was necessary to prosecute the war to a successful issue.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And unregistered racing was increasing to an alarming extent.

Mr. DAVY: Economy also was in the minds of the legislature when that measure was passed. It is interesting to note that at that time there was no attempt to impose restrictions in regard to whippet racing or the manufacture and sale of silk stockings.

Mr. Mann: Is there any relation between whippet racing and silk stockings?

Mr. DAVY: None whatever, except that the owner of a successful whippet might have been able to buy silk stockings for his girl.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member might keep to the subject.

Mr. DAVY: Yes, I shall, but I was dragged off the line for the moment. Such matters as the gifts made by the Trotting Association to charity, or whether or not money from racing goes to the East or stays here, or whether horses are bred for utility purposes have nothing to do with the question. Galloping or trotting is a business of the people who provide it, and an amusement for the people who avail themselves of the opportunity to attend it. The vast majority who go to the races attend to get amusement in the same way as they go to the pictures or to the theatre. I can see no distinction between the amusement provided by the Trotting Association or the amusement provided by Sir Thomas Coombe in his chain of picture theatres. If we are too weak to enforce the prohibition of gambling, let us be honest about it; if it is our aim to restrict gambling, let us enforce the law as it is. Let us not get at it by devious ways through a sport which has not necessarily any connection with gambling. Most of us in this House go to the races and do not gamble at all. We are too wise. It is admitted that if Perth is entitled to have trots for the amusement of its people, then so is Fremantle, and the only question now is whether the trots that Fremantle wishes to have shall be taken from Perth or whether they shall be given in addition to the dates held by Perth. I have not heard any argument that leads me to believe that we are entitled to reduce the number of trotting nights in Perth. The trots draw very large crowds and if we reduce the number of meetings to be conducted in Perth, I suppose we shall increase the crowds, and if the people have sufficient money to go to the trots 35 or 40 times in the year in Perth, they will have a little more money to spend at the reduced number of meetings if we take away a dozen. If trots are bad for the people we should wipe them out altogether. I submit that no case has been made out, first of all as to why Fremantle should not have its trots, and secondly why, if Fremantle is to have trotting, a number of nights should not be taken away from the Trotting Association in Perth. I hope the amendment will be defeated, not that I regard the subject as being of national moment, but it has worked itself into a matter of some argument.

The PREMIER: I did not intend to pursue this matter any further, but seeing the intense interest that has developed over the question, and having regard for the attendance present this evening, and a fortnight ago, and also because nearly every member has deemed it an obligation to address himself twice to the subject—

Mr. Mann: Not every member.

The PREMIER: Nearly every member, I said. The hon. member is not listening. These reasons will be my excuse for saying another word or two. Included in some of the literature that has been broadcasted throughout the State during the past fortnight, one document sets out that there has been a State-wide protest against the proposal to reduce the number of trotting meetings in Perth. This reminds me of the Tooley-street tailors who declared "We, the people of England."

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The protest has extended from Gascoyne to Fremantle.

The PREMIER: Here we have—"We, the supporters of trotting, speak for the people of Western Australia and enter a State-wide protest." It is true that a very active campaign has been conducted during the past fortnight. Resolutions have been carried by supporters of trotting in Kalgoorlie and Boulder. They have even invaded my district and the war is to be carried into my camp I suppose at the next election. Resolutions of protest have also been carried in Katanning, Narrogin, Wagin, "Gobbelup," and "Wont-get-up." These resolutions have been forwarded to every member of the House. I suggest, however, that they had their origin in the same place because they are precisely similarly worded.

Mr. Sleeman: That is usual in industrial troubles as well as in sports.

The PREMIER: I am quite satisfied that some prominent industrialists have adopted the same tactics in this matter.

Mr. Davy: These people have been insolent enough to direct attention to their resolutions!

The PREMIER: They believe that this method of organising will influence members. I will have to risk the displeasure of my trotting friends at Boulder.

Mr. Stubbs: You will lose your seat.

The PREMIER: Perhaps so, but I will lose it in a good cause. After all, this question boils down to the desirability of increasing the number of racing meetings

in the metropolitan area. It has been stated recently that there are already 35 meetings in Perth. That is not correct. The number of meetings held annually is 40. To be precise it is 42, because trotting races are held at the Royal Show and at the Labour Day sports as well. I understand, although I am not sure about my facts, that those two meetings have been conducted without the permission of anyone and are therefore contrary to the Act.

Mr. Stubbs: You would not call those trotting meetings!

The PREMIER: But the Act refers to no trotting races being held in excess of 40 in a year. If these meetings I refer to are in contravention of the Act, it will perhaps be my duty to see that the Act is complied with in future.

Mr. Latham: I notice you said "perhaps."

Mr. Mann: Especially in regard to Labour Day sports.

The PREMIER: It is now proposed to increase the number of meetings from 40 to 52, or one for every week in the year. Although the member for Gascoyne says that the trotting course that is being constructed at East Perth is a national asset, and therefore, I take it, trotting is a national industry or a reproductive industry at any rate, I claim we can have too much of a good thing. Members have given varying statements regarding the expenditure involved in the construction of the course at East Perth. I have read and have heard it stated at amounts varying from £30,000 to £250,000. It was reported that the emissary of the Trotting Association had stated in Kalgoorlie and Boulder that the amount involved was £250,000.

Mr. Stubbs: No, about £100,000.

The PREMIER: And the area affected was stated to be about 400 acres. I do not know whether that was a printer's error--

Mr. Stubbs: Or too much fresh air at Kalgoorlie.

The PREMIER: —or whether the statement was correct. Members claim that it would be unfair to the association to deprive it of any number of meetings because that body has commitments in connection with that work. No member, however, has produced a scrap of evidence in support of his assertion. It would have been more convincing if some proof had been advanced regarding the expenditure.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The annual balance sheet shows the particulars.

The PREMIER: No member quoted from the balance sheets.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The statements were made from the balance sheets.

The PREMIER: As the member for East Perth pointed out, if the Trotting Association is in a position to finance all the clubs that are springing up about the State, to assist financially the agricultural shows and so on, in addition to equipping a course for Fremantle, they cannot be badly off financially.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The association could not do all that financing.

Hon. G. Taylor: All their money goes in that way.

The PREMIER: I understand, of course, that money is expended in other directions.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What do you mean by that?

The PREMIER: Hon. members are not altogether innocent.

Mr. Stubbs: I am, at all events.

The PREMIER: I will exclude the hon. member.

Mr. Stubbs: I hope the insinuation does not apply to any member of the House.

The PREMIER: I do not say the hon. member is the only one who is a conscientious supporter of this proposal, mistakenly, as I suggest.

Mr. Stubbs: I am one of the foundation members of the association.

The PREMIER: Therefore the hon. member has a fatherly interest in it and hopes to see it grow.

Mr. Stubbs: I have not benefited to the extent of a farthing by my support of it.

The PREMIER: I do not believe the hon. member has. I am prepared to agree that he has been associated with it purely because of his love of the sport. I am prepared to concede that to most other members associated with it. I have no objection to love of this form of sport any more than to love of other sports that may appeal to me and other hon. members. If there is a weakness in the Australian character it is an excessive love of sport, not for the sport itself, which is a good thing, but because of the gambling which seems to be so closely associated with it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You will never stop it by legislation.

The PREMIER: We can check it by legislation. The greater the facilities for indulging in an excessive amount of gambling, the greater will be the volume of gambling.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: All gambling is not confined to horse-racing.

The PREMIER: I know it is not, but that is the most widespread form of gambling.

Mr. Mann: And cards, too.

The PREMIER: Gambling on cards is infinitesimal compared with racing.

Mr. Hughes: The Stock Exchange is pretty bad.

The PREMIER: While it is true that a considerable number of people can attend a trotting meeting without betting at all, the large bulk of the people who go there do indulge in gambling.

Mr. Stubbs: So they do in mining.

Lieut.-Col. Denton: And farming, too.

The PREMIER: The member for West Perth asked why people should not be allowed to engage in this form of amusement if they desire to do so. If that is the position he should support the proposal to take away from the trotting association the right to limit the number of meetings to be held. Why should the number of meetings be limited by Act of Parliament? Why should we not allow a number of men to form a club and start horse-racing or trotting grounds in any part of Perth or elsewhere? If there is no harm in it, as the hon. member suggested, why have any restrictions at all? Why enable the Trotting Association to issue licenses for another 12 meetings, making 52 in all, and no more?

Mr. Davy: If a thing is wrong, why not abolish it altogether?

The PREMIER: Perhaps the question of abolishing gambling, as the hon. member says, may be worthy of consideration, but if the Government were to adopt his suggestion to prohibit gambling, whether in connection with horse-racing or trotting, the activity that has been shown during the last fortnight would be as nothing compared with that which would be seen then.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You try it!

The PREMIER: This is a responsibility of Parliament notwithstanding the desires of the people. Every day we legislate, we do something to curtail the desires of the people.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Gambling is already illegal.

The PREMIER: Bookmaking is illegal, not the totalisator. It is for the Committee to say what is good for the people; it is not for us to adopt the attitude that whatever people may desire, whether good or ill, shall be permitted. With 40 meetings in the year in the metropolitan area, that should be regarded as a fair thing. As to street betting, we see in that, cause and effect. The more race meetings we provide in the metropolitan area in a year, the greater the number who will be engaged in street betting.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: No, that concerns country meetings mostly.

Mr. Sleeman: There is no street betting on trots.

Mr. Hughes: Of course there is, and shop betting too.

The PREMIER: Every Saturday a crowd of men ranging from 30 to 100 can be seen outside suburban hotels, all of whom are betting upon the local races.

Mr. Mann: And they are all running a risk of prosecution.

Hon. G. Taylor: And they bet on football matches, too.

The PREMIER: But nothing like the extent to which they bet on racing. I know that they are liable to prosecution, but an increase in the number of race meetings will certainly increase street betting, and the number of people living on their wits. Without reflecting on trotting at all, associated with all form of horse-racing are a proportion of parasites and hangers-on who live on the game. The more racing we have the greater will be the number of parasites and hangers-on.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Not necessarily.

The PREMIER: I think so, because of the opportunity provided. If 100 men can make a living as hangers-on with 40 meetings and we increase the number of meetings to 50, probably the number of hangers-on would be 120.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It does not follow that there would be any more money invested. It would be distributing the money over a wider area.

The PREMIER: In practice that is not so. If we provide trotting in Fremantle we shall increase the number of patrons of trotting, because many people will acquire the desire and habit of attending who to-day do not come to Perth. So the number will be increased.

Hon. G. Taylor: Your amendment will have the effect of increasing the number.

The PREMIER: No, my amendment will restrict the number of race meetings in the metropolitan area to 40. The Bill as it stands would permit of 52 meetings being held, an increase of 12. I think 40 would be quite sufficient.

Hon. G. Taylor: There is racing every day in the year somewhere in Australia on which people indulge in street betting.

The PREMIER: I know that people bet on racing in the Eastern States, but they also bet on racing held here each Saturday.

Lieut.-Col. Denton: You will have to stop betting.

The PREMIER: I do not suggest that, but does the hon. member infer that we should give an open go to everybody?

Lieut.-Col. Denton: Not necessarily.

The PREMIER: If we had a two-up ring on the Esplanade hundreds and probably thousands of people would be there. That is a much fairer game than horse racing in my opinion, because one has a fifty-fifty chance. In backing some horses one has not a thousand to one chance.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If you have the kip you have a better chance.

The PREMIER: So the hon. member has had some experience of the ring! The opportunity to ring in the kip with the two-headed penny is not so great as is the opportunity to run a horse dead. It is easier for the ring keeper who is the steward to detect a two-headed penny than for the steward to detect the horse that is not having a day out.

Mr. Davy: There are numbers of book makers who never take a bet on Western Australian events.

The PREMIER: Yes, but the great majority live entirely by Western Australian racing.

Mr. Davy: All those people outside the United Service Hotel will take a bet on any race in Australia.

The PREMIER: They are the wealthy heads of the Terrace, but the great majority of bookmakers indulge in local betting. I have been informed that men engaged in street and shop betting have acquired enormous fortunes in a few years. I was told of a man who 12 years ago was sleeper bewing and to-day is worth £40,000, purely as a result of street and shop betting.

Hon. G. Taylor: I know of a man who started with a few thousand and who went down.

The PREMIER: But they generally start with nothing. Forty meetings will provide ample opportunity for those who wish to patronise trotting, and we should not increase the number.

Mr. WITHERS: This Bill will merely give the people of Fremantle the right to run 12 trotting meetings if they so desire, but there will be nothing to compel them to run the 12 meetings. It will rest with the people to show whether they will support trotting to the extent of warranting its being continued at Fremantle. They are the people to be considered. In Victoria some years ago I saw a type of trotting horse that was a credit to the district, and the influence of trotting on the utility horses there was marked. An increase of racing would probably lead to that class of horse being bred in greater numbers here. Whenever a good galloper is discovered here, it is immediately sent to the Eastern States, but not so with trotters. On the other hand, we have had champion trotters brought here from New Zealand. It has been said that one does not see trotters in bakers' carts. I knew a trotter that was used in a butcher's cart at Sandstone and it was afterwards brought to Perth, where it won some races. If an owner of gallopers has to go out of business the horses are valueless, but not so with trotters. I support the clause.

Amendment put and negatived.

The PREMIER: The proviso to Sub-clause 1 sets out that the net proceeds of two meetings shall be paid to a public hospital or charitable institution in the district. I would advise the member for Fremantle to adopt a provision similar to that in the Act stipulating that permission may be granted for the running of two meetings for charitable purposes. It is not right for us to say in connection with any form of racing that the proceeds of a certain number of meetings must be devoted to charity. Right through this debate there has been too much of charity covering a multitude of sins. We should discuss this matter entirely apart from any contributions made to charity. Let the case be decided on its merits. Otherwise we shall be adopting the dangerous principle of passing legislation which may be inimical to the well being of the country because a portion of the proceeds are to be devoted to

charitable purposes. It is wrong to say in effect that we are making a bargain with the trotting people, that we will give them 12 meetings but that they must give the proceeds of two meetings to charitable purposes. The Act provides that 35 meetings shall be held in the year, but the Treasurer may give permission for an additional five meetings. We should adopt that form in this Bill.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I accept the Premier's suggestion. I have all along tried to keep the charity business out of the discussion. I said that although the proceeds of two meetings would be devoted to charity, I did not want that to weigh with members. I think if I move to strike out the latter portion of the proviso and insert a provision as suggested by the Premier, it should meet the case.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We may do something we do not intend to do. I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of Subclause (1) the word "twelve" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I move an amendment—

That the word "ten" be inserted in lieu of "twelve" struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I move—

That the proviso be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be inserted:—
"Provided that the Treasurer may at the request of the West Australian Trotting Association authorise trotting meetings to be held on not exceeding two additional days in any year in aid of any public hospital or other charitable or patriotic purpose."

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

MR. LATHAM (York) [9.20] in moving the second reading said: This is a simple Bill. It provides for giving municipal councils the right to temporarily close roads.

The Minister for Lands: It will not be passed.

Mr. LATHAM: It does not give a municipal corporation the right to do this, but gives it to the Governor-in-Council. I will explain why I found it necessary to introduce the Bill. In York there is a large area of municipal land held in small blocks, which have been purchased by one owner until a fairly large area of land has been acquired. Through the centre of this, streets are running. The streets are fenced off by the owner, and the council derives no benefit from them. There is no necessity to keep them open to-day, but it would be inadvisable to close them permanently. If one block were sold at any time—each block has a separate title—the purchaser would have the right to demand the opening of the street, and this would involve the municipality in heavy expenditure. It is essential that some right should be given to the council to temporarily close these streets and to be able to lease them. Part 9 of the Municipal Corporations Act of 1906 provides that certain land may be leased by a municipal council for a period not exceeding three years. If this Bill becomes law it will not apply to many municipalities, but will apply to others besides York. It applies, however, particularly to York. In one area there are held within the district by one owner at least 100 acres of land, made up of small blocks not exceeding a quarter of an acre. Streets are laid out right through the centre. The owner has the benefit of the streets, but if this Bill passes it will enable the council temporarily to close them and derive some revenue from them. I know it is the intention of the Minister for Works, as it has been the intention of many Ministers for Works, to bring down an amending Bill, but no alteration of any consequence has been made to the Act since 1906. Under the Road Districts Act power is given to road boards to temporarily close roads, and I am only asking that the same privilege should be extended to municipalities. The municipal council of York does not want roads to be permanently closed, because of the expense involved in reopening them should the occasion arise. These blocks of land have each a separate title. I hope the House will agree to the Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [9.25]: This is a dangerous Bill. It does not provide solely for the municipality of York, but will apply to every municipality in the State. We may find that in some cases streets are being closed without the people being aware of this being done. The Bill certainly provides for the publication in the "Government Gazette" or some paper circulating in the district of the intention to do this. The same attention, however, is not drawn to a publication of that kind as when a matter is brought before Parliament. A person may have a building in the street, which is the only means of access he has to it. Before he is aware of it the street may be closed by order of the Governor-in-Council.

Mr. Latham: Only temporarily.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It may be closed for such a time as may be deemed expedient. Scarcely a week goes by without some road board applying to me for the right to close a road, and if people knew of it they would oppose it. Some time elapses before they hear anything about the application. It is a wrong principle to place this right in the hands of the Governor-in-Council.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is only a temporary expedient.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the hon. member had brought down a Bill which affected only the municipality of York, it would have been a different matter. As it is, it is a dangerous principle to adopt. What advantage will be gained from the Bill? The hon. member says that the land in question consists of quarter acre blocks and that it has not been sold.

Mr. Latham: The owner repurchased it block by block.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The roads are not macadamised, and no money has been spent by the municipality on the property. The hon. member now suggests that the municipality will get some revenue from the streets that have been fenced off on this land. The revenue obtained from some rights-of-way in a small area would not be anything considerable.

Mr. Latham: You would be surprised at the amount to be collected in York from that source.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not so sure of it. This Bill should be drafted in such a way as to apply only to the area

requiring it. It should not be a general Bill. Local authorities should not be entitled, at their whim, to come to the Government by the back door—

Mr. Latham: It is not right to say that. It is a very open way.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Bill provides that the municipality must advertise their intention in the "Government Gazette." Who sees the "Government Gazette"?

Mr. Latham: It is also provided that they must advertise in a newspaper circulated in the district.

The Premier: A local rag never read by anybody!

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: And the Bill does not say how many times the municipality are to advertise in the newspaper.

Mr. Latham: It is exactly the same provision as appears in the existing Act in regard to temporary closing of roads; and there has been no objection to that.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: This is an entirely different matter, because it refers to a municipality, wherein there would be many more buildings and rights-of-way.

Mr. Latham: This is copied from the existing Act. Read Section 269.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member knows very well that if this Bill passes, it becomes the law for every municipality in the State.

Mr. Latham: That is so.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Therefore there is a danger.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We will exclude Fremantle.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not want to exclude Fremantle or any other municipality. I have no feeling in the matter.

Mr. Latham: I thought you had.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The principle is dangerous as regards municipalities. If the hon. member will restrict the operations of the Bill to the municipality of York, I will support him.

Mr. Latham: I will do that to oblige you, but the department thought it might be done as this Bill proposes.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is a danger in applying the principle to municipalities generally. It might be used to the detriment of persons owning vacant land in municipalities. Such a person might find at any time that a road leading to this land had been closed without notice. The person might be living in another part of the State,

and before he knew of the position the approach to his land might be blocked by the closing of a road. The proposition is dangerous, and it should not be agreed to unless it is confined to the particular area.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [9.35]: I do not think the Minister is justified in his fears about this Bill. I would have been strongly opposed to a measure giving power to a municipality to close a road permanently, or to close a road at all; but this Bill only gives the Government that power. I am not particularly fond of giving those powers to the Government. However, it is a fact that the present method of closing roads, except for repairs under Section 241, is a very complicated business. A road closure Bill has to be got through Parliament. Frequently there are pieces of road which have become entirely unused, that is in country places, and which might well be made available for real purposes instead of a non-existent purpose. With full publicity it is not dangerous to give the Government power, in their discretion, to close a road temporarily.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It might be closed for 21 years.

The Minister for Lands: Or 50 years.

Mr. DAVY: I do not know that a Government would be justified in calling that a temporary closure. The fears of the Minister might be overcome entirely by restricting the power of closing a road to a certain number of years; say three years, which would be a reasonable time. If the Bill becomes law, there will be power under Clause 9 to lease for three years. If at the end of the three years the municipality wish to extend the lease, they can come along to the Government again. After the word "temporarily" there might be inserted "or a maximum of three years."

The Premier: Three years would be very temporary.

Mr. DAVY: I think that would meet the requirements of the municipality of York. They are asking for a luxury, for a short cut to make land available to ratepayers and to get money out of it. It is not asking too much that they should repeat their application every three years. That would absolutely prevent the possibility of abuse, and get rid of the present cumbersome method of closing a road by Act of Parliament on each occasion. I think the Bill should be supported.

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [9.38]: As regards road boards, this power already exists. The Minister for Lands said that road boards had closed roads and that afterwards complaints had been made. This Bill provides that advertisements shall be inserted in a newspaper circulating in the district. The Road Districts Act, by Section 151, provides—

The Minister for Lands, on the recommendation of the board, may close a road temporarily for traffic and grant permission to the owner of land adjoining to fence across such road without erecting gates at the board's pleasure, when in the opinion of the board the road should not be permanently closed, but is not required for immediate traffic.

That section stipulates nothing as to advertising or as to opportunity of protest by adjoining owners. As one who has had a good deal to do with the closing of roads, I have always adopted the system of writing to adjoining owners and asking them to lodge their objections if they had any. A similar provision might be included in this Bill. Objection should not necessarily stop the closing of the road, but adjoining owners should have an opportunity of stating their case. Under the Road Districts Act a road may be closed without the adjoining owners knowing anything about it beforehand. As regards road boards with which I have been connected, I have always laid it down as a principle that every owner of land in the vicinity of the road to be closed should be notified and given an opportunity to object. To overcome the difficulty raised by the Minister for Lands—

The Minister for Lands: There is a lot of difference between a road district and a municipality.

Mr. LINDSAY: I quite agree. However, we hope that the town of York will extend some day. It is right that there should be power to close a road temporarily in a municipality, just as there is power to do so in a road district. The owners concerned, however, should have an opportunity to place their objections before the municipality or the Minister. An amendment to that effect would overcome the objections of the Minister for Lands. The Bill is necessary. A similar power was found necessary in connection with road board districts. In some cases a road is to be closed only temporarily, with a view to being reopened at a future date, and therefore should not be excised as a road. The provision in question was asked for by a road board conference,

and has been in existence since 1917. Municipalities require some power on the same lines. The power has operated harshly in a few cases, but they have been very few. I support the second reading.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [9.43]: I support the Bill. In my opinion the power asked for is reasonable. Municipal councils do occasionally find that unnecessary roads have been dedicated to public use, and that because of the juxtaposition of another road the particular road gazetted is not really needed by the public. This is the first occasion on which such a desire has been expressed in a Bill, but I think the Minister for Lands will agree that there are examples of municipalities where such a measure as this would prove of utility. Of course it is not compulsory for the Governor in Council to approve: each case would be dealt with on its merits. The passing of the measure would mean, I suppose, that a closure would continue during the pleasure of the council, and until such time as the public needs demanded that the road which had been temporarily closed should be reopened. There is another aspect of the matter. On roads which have been dedicated but not constructed, rubbish and refuse do collect. Where that is the case, the existence of such a thoroughfare becomes a nuisance, or a nuisance is created by its existence. As pointed out by the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay), the Bill does not connote a new principle in local government, but aims to give to municipalities a power which is already enjoyed by road boards. I hope the House will approve of the Bill.

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [9.44]: I hope that if the Government support the Bill, it will be with some such limitation as that suggested by the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy). The suggestion was that if municipalities have the power to request the Government to close roads, the closure should be for three years. In my opinion the closure should be for a period not exceeding three years, and each case should be dealt with on its merits. Regarding the closure of roads in road board areas, there is an excellent system. Applications are dealt with by the Lands Department, which is undoubtedly the most efficiently administered department, and every request is referred to the district surveyor and it is approved if he recommends it.

The Minister for Lands: This would not apply to that, however.

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON: In some districts the district surveyors are too severe, but the fact remains that they are doing what they consider best in the interests of the public. The Municipal Corporations Act is not administered by the Lands Department, but I generally find that other departments approve of recommendations from local governing bodies without much inquiry. If the Government agree to the Bill, however, I hope provision will be made to secure the approval of the district surveyors in agricultural areas or of the wardens in mining areas. Some safeguard is required. Unless the proposed road to be closed is inspected by a capable Government officer, it may be found that roads will be closed for a number of years before the land owners and residents know anything about it. I hope the Government will not agree to give a free hand to municipal councils who in some instances are more concerned about the person making the request than they are regarding the future.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Angelo in the Chair; Mr. Latham in charge of the Bill:

Clause 1—Power temporarily to close roads not in use:

Progress reported.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

1, Western Australian Bank Act Amendment (Private).

2, Workers Compensation Act Amendment.

Without amendment.

BILL—DIVORCE AMENDMENT

In Committee.

Mr. Angelo in the Chair; Mr. Mann in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 23 of Ordinance 27, Vict. No. 19:

Mr. MANN: In keeping with the recommendation of the select committee I wish to move an amendment as follows:—"Subject to a provision retaining the liability of the respondent for the maintenance of the children." I want to know if I can move that as an addition to Clause 2, or whether I should move it as a new clause?

The Minister for Justice: You must put it into proper form.

The CHAIRMAN: It is for the hon. member to move what he desires.

Mr. MANN: Should it be moved as a new clause or as part of Clause 2?

The CHAIRMAN: If you have an amendment to move you must put it into proper form so that the Committee may consider it.

The Minister for Justice: Have you a clause drafted.

Mr. MANN: I will move it as a new clause.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest you report progress and have a clause drafted.

Mr. DAVY: I do not follow the reason for the amendment. The law of divorce governs the liability of a respondent for the permanent maintenance of his wife and children.

The CHAIRMAN: But we have no amendment before the Committee!

Mr. DAVY: All the clause provides now is a new ground for the dissolution of marriage. At present the law sets out the liability of a respondent for the maintenance of his wife and children, and there is no necessity to further provide for that. A divorce having been granted on the new ground, the petition for maintenance goes in in the ordinary way.

Mr. Mann: On the assurance of the member for West Perth I will allow the clause to stand as printed.

Mr. DAVY: But I am not satisfied with the clause. Subclause 3 refers to the respondent, being the petitioner's husband, having "during the period aforesaid failed to make such payments periodically as required by the decree, order or covenant, either entirely or repeatedly and habitually." What do the words "repeatedly and habitually" mean? Does it mean that a wife may bring a petition for divorce if the respondent has failed to make payments for two or three weeks, then makes up arrears, again fails to pay for a few months and so on, or does it mean an entire failure on his

part to make the payments? As drafted, the clause may be extremely productive of fees in the pockets of legal practitioners.

Mr. MANN: The clause was drafted by the Parliamentary draftsman and I relied upon the amendment to cover the grounds desired. I am not in a position to give an interpretation of the words from the legal standpoint. Perhaps "habitually" is unnecessary, but I hope the clause will not be struck out because of one word.

Mr. DAVY: I suggest we report progress and ask the Parliamentary draftsman for his interpretation of the words I have referred to. At present they are capable of a dozen different interpretations and it would be wrong to allow that.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—AUCTIONEERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

MR. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [10.2] in moving the second reading said: This is not a very difficult measure. It has been sent down from another place and, having perused it, I can see in it nothing to which members can take exception. It appears that in the parent Act there is no provision for the selling by auction between the hours of sunset and sunrise motor cars or motor vehicles. Since there are so many other things that can be sold by auction between those hours, I do not see any great objection to the selling of motor cars and motor vehicles at the same time. It seems that by some old Act of Parliament the selling by auction of motor vehicles between sunset and sunrise was excluded.

The Minister for Lands: And many other things, as for instance wool.

Mr. LAMBERT: If it is to be contended that before purchasing a thing one should inspect it there and then in the auction mart, I agree that wool should not be sold between sunset and sunrise.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is bought in classes. A catalogue has to be issued.

Mr. LAMBERT: That is not mandatory; it is done merely for convenience. It is not laid down by statute.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, it is. A catalogue must be issued prior to the sale.

Mr. LAMBERT: Assuming that it is so, it is mere custom.

The Minister for Lands: No, it is the law.

Mr. LAMBERT: Well, I will not dispute it. I need only speak broadly on the departure asked for by the Bill. Whether or not the Legislature has seen fit to prescribe that wool shall not be sold between sunset and sunrise has but little to do with the selling of motor vehicles. I do not know that it would be desirable to have metropolitan auctioneers promiscuously selling all sorts of things between sunset and sunrise.

Mr. Sampson: What is the object of selling these motor vehicles by night?

Mr. LAMBERT: To give those who desire to buy them an opportunity to do so.

Mr. Sampson: It will be a great convenience.

Mr. LAMBERT: Of course it will be. While I do not claim to be enamoured of the idea of auction sales by night, yet members opposite recently contested the fact that the baking of bread could be conducted by night. It is not to be thought that any man would be stupid enough to go to an auction sale where a motor vehicle was offered and bid for it merely on its appearance by night.

Mr. Sampson: He would accept it on the statements of the auctioneer.

Mr. LAMBERT: Then he would be much softer and more innocent than the hon. member. No prospective buyer of a motor car would accept the statements of any auctioneer regarding the value of the vehicle. It is almost impossible for any man, in the best of faith, to guarantee the value of any secondhand motor vehicle, whether by day or by night. Not even a man with expert knowledge of motor cars would have the slightest possible conception of whether the secondhand contraption would work if he were to buy it.

The Minister for Lands: Why sell motor cars but not a suite of furniture by night?

Mr. LAMBERT: I see no reason why furniture should not be sold by night. I can scarcely believe that this limiting of time and place for buying and selling by auction goes far to protect the public.

Mr. North: The buyer can always inspect beforehand.

Mr. LAMBERT: Many of your country folk come to the city and desire to acquire a motor car.

Hon. G. Taylor: Not by night.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is not always convenient for country folk, wanting a car, to hang about town till the following day. They are busy men and are set on their farm work. They can conduct their ordinary work in the day, and possibly at night, if they are able to have a proper inspection made of a car or a motor truck, they might be able to bid for it. It is not right for us to put any barrier in the way of our country folk, who may be interested in acquiring something that may suit them.

The Minister for Lands: That would apply to the whole clause.

Mr. LAMBERT: If it is going to be suggested that a car may be brought in that is in disrepair, let it be laid down in the Bill that the car before being auctioned shall remain in the auction rooms for at least seven days.

Mr. Sampson: It would be unnecessary to add that proviso.

Mr. LAMBERT: A car that is offered for sale might have been stolen, and if it is sold the owner might have no redress. In England there is no restriction upon the sale of goods. I do not know that in Australia we need impose any special restrictions upon auction sales unless there are peculiar circumstances surrounding them. The present exemptions seem to have worked well in the case of land and wool. Wool must be previously classified and catalogued before it is sold. If it is considered that there is a risk about having a secondhand vehicle offered for sale at night-time, let the wool restriction apply in that case. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [10.20]: This is a bad Bill. It proposes to make an exception in favour of one particular article when, if that exception is justified, the whole restriction ought to be wiped out.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is so.

Mr. DAVY: The Auctioneers Act was originally placed on the statute-book in 1873. That contains restrictions prohibiting all auction sales between sunset and sunrise. These were put in to protect the public, and enable people to have a reasonable opportunity of seeing that which they were going to bid for. In three different bites certain exemptions were made. There

is a common characteristic in respect of each of these. The first exemption was in respect of the auctioning of land; the next in respect of the auctioning of shares in a company; and the last was in respect to wool, which has to be catalogued prior to sale. The common characteristic in each of these cases is that the articles that are being auctioned are not present at the auction. It cannot matter whether the auction sale in Perth of land at Katanning is being held at midnight or at mid-day. The people who are going to bid cannot see the land. It cannot matter whether shares are auctioned at night or in the daytime, and it cannot matter twopence whether there is an auction sale of wool, which is at Fremantle, and has been inspected beforehand and catalogued, in the daytime or at night. The old restrictions were preserved in favour of everything except these articles, which are not at the auction room. Once we step over the line, what is there to prevent us from wiping out all the restrictions?

Mr. Sampson: It might be well to do that.

Mr. DAVY: If so, let this Bill be one to amend the principal Act by deleting Section 11. Then we can argue the matter on its merits as to whether or not there should be any restriction.

Mr. Lambert: Do you think there is any objection to selling at night time?

Mr. DAVY: That has nothing to do with it. We are asked to continue to prohibit the sale of every kind of article except motor cars and the other items mentioned in the Act.

The Minister for Lands: And spring traps, for instance.

Mr. DAVY: Traps and horses which draw them, and the harness on the backs of the horses and furniture, cannot be sold at night. What answer shall we have if next session someone else wants Parliament to agree to the selling of furniture at night? I ask the House to refuse to have anything to do with crossing that clear and logical line of division unless we are prepared to wipe out all the restrictions. I doubt whether the House would agree to wipe them out, because they were imposed for the protection of the public.

Mr. Lambert: Why was the sale of wool and shares allowed at night?

Mr. DAVY: I have already informed the hon. member. We are told that the Cham-

ber of Automotive Industries is in favour of the Bill, and that the auctioneers are also in favour of it. Why should they be against it? It does not concern an auctioneer whether he sells motor cars during the day or at night. The only people whose consent to this would be worth listening to would be the public, and we have no chance of hearing their opinion. We in this House are the only people who can possibly protect the public in this matter. I hope the House will decline to deal with the Bill. There is no need to deal with this matter in bits. If we are asked to wipe out the restrictions altogether, we will consider the matter, but we should not consider a proposal to cross a logical line without going the whole way.

MR. TEESDALE (Robeourne) [10.27]: I can see no great objection to the Bill. If there had been no demand for night auctions, the Bill would not have been introduced. It is evident that the public have asked for it. It has not come from the auctioneers.

The Minister for Lands: It is most likely that a motor seller has asked for it.

Mr. TEESDALE: It shows that there is an opening for night sales. Those who would patronise them would know the risk they would be running, if there was any. Auctioneers are people of good repute, or they would not hold their licenses.

Hon. G. Taylor: No one questions that.

Mr. TEESDALE: It was suggested that stolen cars might be offered for sale as well as others that are not up to requirements. Is it not possible to catalogue cars as well as wool? If an auctioneer guaranteed a car in his catalogue, need there be any doubt that he will not be as honest in his catalogue as the wool auctioneers are? We should not go out of our way to defeat the Bill.

The Minister for Lands: The public have not asked for it; only one motor seller.

Mr. TEESDALE: That is only guesswork. I do not think any one man would influence members of Parliament to the extent of bringing down this Bill. I can see no objection to it.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [10.30]: It is a far cry from 1873 to 1925. I understand that in 1873 this provision was placed in the Auctioneers' Act.

The Minister for Lands: The parent Act was passed in 1921.

Mr. SAMPSON: It was reaffirmed then, probably without being given very much con-

sideration. In 1873 lighting methods were comparatively poor.

The Minister for Lands: That applied to everything then.

Mr. SAMPSON: Just so. I do not say that the section is not an anachronism, in view of the progress made since as regards the candle power of illuminating auction rooms.

The Minister for Lands: In 1873 shops were kept open until midnight.

Mr. SAMPSON: That being so, I hope the Minister will support the Bill. The motor car is no longer a mystery machine. It is no more difficult to determine whether a car is a good car, and whether the engine is a good engine, in a well lighted auction room at night than in the same room during the daytime. The members of the Auctioneers' Association, we learn from a report that reaches us from another place, are unanimously in favour of this amendment.

The Minister for Lands: That may be one reason why we should look into it very closely.

Mr. SAMPSON: If the Minister will look into it carefully, he will say, "This Bill is a useful measure, and will make it convenient for those who desire to purchase a motor car to do so without the loss of those hours of business when perhaps it would be inconvenient for them to attend a place where cars are sold." The amendment will remove a restriction which certainly causes inconvenience to at least a part of the public. Under the section in the parent Act there are certain things which can be sold by auction at night, among them being tenements. The section does not say that the tenement is to be sold in an auction mart apart from the tenement itself. The tenement might be sold on the very site.

Mr. Taylor: Tenements are invariably sold away from the tenements.

Mr. SAMPSON: One cannot say that that is so invariably, as there is no rule in connection with the matter. I agree with the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) that Section 11 needs considerable amendment in addition to that which the Bill proposes and that no one would suffer from such amendments being made. The convenience of the community will be studied if the House approves of the measure. Finally, I would remind members that nowadays all auction rooms are well lighted.

The Minister for Lands: So they were in 1921.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes; but this particular phase was not brought forward and discussed then.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, it was, in connection with the Bill of 1921..

Mr. SAMPSON: Can motor cars be sold by auction at night time?

Hon. G. Taylor: One can buy and sell privately at night time.

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not see that anyone can suffer injury, and certainly a section of the public will receive something they are anxious to get, if the Bill is approved.

On motion by the Minister for Lands, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.35 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 15th October, 1925.

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

MOTION—ABATTOIRS ACT.

To disallow Regulations.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan)
[4.35]: I move—

That the regulations promulgated under the Abattoirs Act, 1909, published in the "Government Gazette" on the 7th August, 1925, and now laid upon the Table, be and are hereby disallowed.

There were recently laid upon the Table of the House certain regulations under the Abattoirs Act, and the motion I have moved seeks