

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

*House adjourned at 9.20 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 30th October, 1928.*

	PAGE
Questions: Synthetic drinks ... ..	1464
Drainage, South-West ... ..	1464
Select Committee, Land Agents Bill, extension of time	1464
Bills: Water Boards Act Amendment, 3R. ... ..	1464
Profiteering Prevention, 3R. ... ..	1464
Fertilisers, Council's amendments ... ..	1464
Railways Discontinuance, Council's amendments	1466
Abattoirs Act Amendment, Council's Message, request for Conference ... ..	1468
Electoral Districts Act Amendment, 2R. ... ..	1468
Lunacy Act Amendment, 1R. ... ..	1473
Jury Act Amendment, Com. ... ..	1473
Abattoirs Act Amendment, Council's further Message ... ..	1474
Abattoirs Act Amendment, Conference Managers' report ... ..	1474
Jury Act Amendment, Com. Report ... ..	1474
Quarry Railway Extension, 2R. ... ..	1478
Annual Estimates: Vote Discussed—Public Works and Buildings ... ..	1480

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

### QUESTION—SYNTHETIC DRINKS.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Health: 1, Is the sale of synthetic drinks in Western Australia illegal? 2, If so, is it incumbent upon the vendor to display an efficient notice or statement indicating the constituents of the liquid?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied: 1, No. 2, Any drinks which are made from synthetic essences or extracts must be labelled "Imitation," and sold as such. This is quite a simple matter when the drinks are sold in bottles, but it is most difficult to regulate in connection with drinks sold over the counter, as it does not appear to be practicable to require the glasses to be labelled. The vendor is not required to display a notice indicating the constituents of the drink.

### QUESTION—DRAINAGE, SOUTH-WEST.

Mr. WITHERS asked the Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: 1, Has any comprehensive scheme of drainage for the South-West from Pinjarra to Bunbury been completed; if so, when will it be put into operation? 2, Is the present drainage in the Harvey-Brunswick area a part of a comprehensive scheme?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1, Not yet. This must follow a full investigation of the land. It cannot precede it. 2, It may be so assumed, but cannot be definitely stated until the comprehensive scheme is designed.

### LAND AGENTS BILL.—SELECT COMMITTEE.

On motion by Mr. Lindsay, the time for bringing up the report was extended for two weeks.

### BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Water Boards Act Amendment.

2, Profiteering Prevention.

Transmitted to the Council.

### BILL—FERTILISERS.

*Council's Amendments.*

Schedule of 11 amendments made by the Council now considered.

*In Committee.*

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

No. 1. Clause 2.—Delete the definition of "financial year."

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is desired in this case that the year should commence on the 1st November. This is more convenient for all concerned. That would also be the best period in which to register fertilisers. Most of the other amendments are consequential upon the first one.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It does not matter what the date is.

Hon. G. Taylor: It takes another place to find out these defects.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** This amendment was inserted at the instance of the Chief Secretary. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 6, Subclause (1).—Delete the word "July" in line eight and insert "November." Delete "financial" in lines nine and thirteen, and in line sixteen delete "July" and insert "November."

No. 3. Clause 6, Subclause (2).—Delete "financial" in lines seventeen and eighteen.

No. 4. Clause 6, Subclause (3).—Insert a new paragraph (d) as follows:—

"(d) It is likely to mislead a purchaser as to the composition of the fertiliser."

No. 5. Clause 6.—Insert a new Subclause (5) as follows:—

"(5) In this section the word 'year' means the period of twelve months commencing on the first day of November and ending on the thirty-first day of October."

No. 6. Clause 8.—Delete the word "July" in the last line and insert "November."

No. 7. Clause 9.—Insert at the end the following:—

"Paragraph (c) of this section shall apply only to the author of the advertisement, and shall not apply to the printer, publisher, or exhibitor thereof in any newspaper or other printed matter."

On motion by the Minister for Agriculture, the foregoing amendments made by the Council were agreed to.

No. 8. Clause 15.—Insert after the words "per centum" in the last line of paragraph (b) the words:—

"Provided that an excess of water soluble or citrate soluble may be set off against a deficiency of acid soluble, and an excess of one of the water soluble or citrate soluble forms may be set off against a deficiency of the other."

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister should explain the effect of this amendment. Was it also made at the request

of the Government? It is rather important seeing that it is suggested there shall be a change from one unit to another unit. The question of water solubility is more important than that of citrate solubility.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** No principle has been altered by virtue of the Council's amendment. When the Bill was dealt with in Committee, we agreed to the insertion of this proviso, but the Council suggest that it should be inserted after paragraph (b), instead of appearing as a second proviso to the clause. It is probably more appropriately placed as the Council suggest. The next amendment suggested by the Council is to delete the second proviso. It simply means that the proviso is being transposed to another part of Clause 15.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: As we apparently passed the proviso ourselves, we can hardly oppose it now. It was difficult to understand, seeing that we have on our files the original draft of the Bill only, not a copy of it as amended.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 9. Clause 15.—Delete the second proviso.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 10. Clause 19.—Insert the words "minimum chemical or physical" before the word "standard" in line forty. Insert the word "prescribed" before the word "standard" in line forty-one.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The objection was raised in the Council that the word "standard" might be misunderstood. There is no doubt that it could be, hence the suggestion by the Council. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 11. Clause 37, paragraph (g).—Insert at the beginning the words "any minimum chemical or physical."

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

## **BILL—RAILWAYS DISCONTINUANCE.**

### *Council's Amendments.*

Schedule of two amendments made by the Council now considered.

### *In Committee.*

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

No. 1. Clause 2.—Delete all words after "be" in the ninth line and insert in lieu thereof the words "operated until the Governor otherwise declares and the material thereof may be used in the construction of any other authorised railway."

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: As the Bill left this Chamber, it was intended that the capital cost on the railways affected by the Bill should be deleted from the Railway Capital Account. As railways are removed, naturally the assets are correspondingly extinguished; there is no possibility of any earnings being derived from them. It does not make much difference from the standpoint of the Government whether the money is found from the railway account or from some other account because the interest has to be found by the State. The only point is that the railway administration is doing good work. Ours is the only system in Australia that is making ends meet and showing a small profit. We should not load the railways with dead capital from which they can secure no return.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Especially where temporary developmental lines are concerned.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Kanowna line has been down for about 30 years, but the White Hope line was certainly a temporary railway.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: All such gold-fields lines are temporary.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The White Hope line would not have been built had it not been that the Government of the day desired to give the Hampton Plains goldfield a chance to develop. The

field was entirely dependent upon the railway for water supplies.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It was built to give the field a chance.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That was all. The Government are not particularly anxious about the matter, but the Treasurer has to find interest and we do not wish to load the Railway Department up with the necessity to pay interest on the construction of a line like that to Hampton Plains. It does not make any difference to the State as a whole, because we have to pay interest on whatever amount has not been recovered from the line.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Like the State trading concerns, the successful among which has to pay for the other concerns.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is not a wise amendment, is it?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member can decide for himself. From the Government standpoint it makes no difference whatever, but the railway administration will be loaded up with interest on £18,000 for all time. That is in respect of the White Hope line.

Hon. G. Taylor: The cost of the Kanowna line must have been paid off.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Probably, but railway capital accounts are always debited with the interest on all capital expenditure.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Stick to your guns and say you will not agree to the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is not very much encouragement for the railway administration, endeavouring to do their best to get around and show a profit, to have this charge loaded on to them with no asset from which they can earn anything. It makes no difference to the Government or to the people, but only to the Railway Department.

Hon. G. Taylor: I would not accept the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We have not much feeling in regard to it.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is not fair to charge the interest against the Railway Department for all time.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No, it is not. To extinguish assets of this kind there is a small amount set aside every year. Last year we spent about £11,000 in putting in new capital works

and the capital expenditure was charged to revenue in betterment and special maintenance charges. Another principle contained in this amendment is that, should the Bill as amended by the Council become an Act, it will mean that if at some future time the Government of the day desire to reconstruct this line, it can be done without having to come to Parliament for authority; for the earthworks and culverts will have to remain, and the land will still be in the possession of the Railway Department.

Hon. G. Taylor: But there is no wisdom even in that.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No, nor any foolishness. There is not much chance of the line ever being required again, else the Bill would not have been brought down. That the line should not be pulled up is only a matter of sentiment.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: For a short length of line it is all very well to say that the earthworks and culverts and land must be retained, but suppose it was 100 miles of line.

Mr. Thomson: In any event, you would have to appropriate money before you could construct the line again.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We have to do that in respect of everything it is proposed to construct.

Mr. Thomson: But if this amendment be agreed to, the Railway Department could reconstruct the line themselves.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. We have waited seven or eight years for a valuable clay deposit to be exploited and so provide freight for the line, but nothing has come of it. The amendment means that the earthworks and culverts would have to be allowed to remain, and that at any time the line could be reconstructed without the necessity for bringing down a Bill to Parliament. However, that aspect of the question does not amount to very much.

Mr. Thomson: We can only say we hope a new line will be required some day.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Then there is in the amendment another principle to which I cannot agree. It is proposed that the material may be removed and used in the construction of other authorised railways. Some of that material has been down for over 30 years.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And you are not going to let it rot.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No, but it does not appear desirable that Parliament should pass a Bill on the understanding that we are never going to take any notice of it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I am pleased to hear that. It is a great relief to me.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is an outstanding point of policy to which we all agree.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I do not think it is; I will remind you of it some day.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is not desirable to put into an Act of Parliament something that will never be given effect to.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Some of these light rails could not be put into a new line.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Of course not. Some of them might be used for telegraph poles.

The Premier: It is a stupid amendment.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Are you going to agree to the amendment?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No. If the Committee desire to agree to the first part of it, which does not make much difference, we could move that there be added to the clause the words "or otherwise disposed of."

Hon. G. Taylor: I would not amend it; I would refuse to agree to it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The thing is not of sufficient importance to raise a quarrel between the two Houses. It does not make much difference to anybody.

Hon. G. Taylor: Yes, if you accepted the amendment you would be letting the Railway Department carry an unjust load.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I think quite enough has been said to justify the Committee in supporting the Minister's motion. I agree that the people of Kanowna may have some sentiment in regard to the pulling up of their line, but I do not think we would be justified in loading the Railways with this cost for all time merely to satisfy a little sentiment. If the occasion were to arise for constructing a new line, I am sure that any sensible Government would have it done. Under the amendment the earthworks and the culverts will be left and all that will be

picked up are the rails and the sleepers. The Bill, before it went to the Council, relieved the Railways of any further interest on account of the line. That, I think, was very wise. I will support the Minister.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 2. Title.—Insert the words "the operation of" before the word "certain," and at the end insert the word "and for other purposes":

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

Resolutions reported, and the report adopted.

A committee consisting of Hon. G. Taylor, Mr. Clydesdale and Hon. J. C. Willcock: drew up reasons for disagreeing.

Reasons adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

## **BILL—ABATTOIRS ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Council's Message.*

Message from the Council insisting on an amendment to which the Assembly had disagreed now considered.

### *In Committee.*

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

Clause 4, Subclause (2).—Delete the proposed new paragraph (c2).

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

That the amendment be further disagreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment further disagreed to.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

### *Request for Conference.*

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

That a Conference be requested with the Legislative Council on its amendment to the Abattoirs Act Amendment Bill, and that at such conference the managers to represent the Legislative Assembly be Mr. Lindsay, Mr. Pantou, and the mover.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

## **BILL—ELECTORAL DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [5.25] in moving the second reading said: It is known to hon. members that there has not been any alteration of the boundaries of electoral districts since the passing of the Redistribution of Seats Act in 1911. In 1912 a Bill was introduced and passed through the Assembly, but it failed to pass in another place. In 1922 the Electoral Districts Act was passed, and in 1923 a Bill based on the provisions of the Electoral Districts Act of 1922 was introduced into this House, but failed to secure a majority. The movement of population in this State has been very considerable for some years past, and the need for a rearrangement of the boundaries of electoral districts is not disputed by any section of the community. The Bill leaves untouched all the provisions of the 1922 Act, except Section 4 of the Act.

Hon. G. Taylor: That deals with the proportions, does it not?

The PREMIER: For the information of the public I may briefly recapitulate the main features of the 1922 Act that it is not proposed to amend.

Hon. G. Taylor: Is it not the 1923 Act?

The PREMIER: It was passed in 1922 and assented to in 1923, but it is known as the 1922 Act. The appointment of electoral commissioners consisting of a judge of the Supreme Court, the Surveyor-General and the Chief Electoral Officer, provided for under that Act, remains, and the powers and duties of the Commission are unaltered in any way. As to the matters to be considered by the commission in dividing the State into districts, the commissioners are to take into consideration such questions as community of interest, the means of communication, distance from the capital, the physical features and the existing boundaries of districts. Those provisions are not being amended in any way, and the margin of allowance that the commissioners may make in any of the areas—that is, one-fifth above or one-fifth below the quota—will also continue. The commis-

sioners may, under the Act, modify the boundaries of any area by excising portions or adding other portions thereto. Of course the commissioners are to make a report to be presented to both Houses of Parliament, and that is to be followed by the introduction of a Bill to give effect to the report.

Hon. G. Taylor: They will really draft the Bill.

The PREMIER: Yes. It is obligatory that a Bill should be introduced to give effect to their report.

Mr. Davy: That is the weak point of the whole thing.

The PREMIER: The hon. member interjecting holds, I think, that the report should be automatically adopted; but that would be taking away immense powers and responsibilities from Parliament.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is the Federal system.

The PREMIER: No. The Federal system automatically adjusts itself, but the adjustment has to be endorsed by Parliament. I remember an occasion when, pursuant to the Federal Act, the boundaries of the Kalgoorlie seat in the House of Representatives were affected, and the Federal Parliament rejected the Bill which followed. Section 10 of our Act provides, in a sense, for automatic alteration of boundaries, subject to a motion being carried in this House. Upon the passing of that resolution a proclamation is to be issued authorising the commissioners to readjust boundaries.

Hon. G. Taylor: At some future time.

The PREMIER: At any time that this House passes a resolution to that effect; or else, under Section 10, the commissioners may alter boundaries if the Chief Electoral Officer reports that in at least five electoral districts the numbers have varied more than is permitted under the Act, one-fifth above or below. All those provisions remain, and the present Bill does not affect them in any way. As I have mentioned, the measure merely proposes to omit Section 4 of the Act and to substitute a section in its place. It is proposed that the four northern districts, or the North-West, shall remain as at present.

Hon. G. Taylor: Those four districts are in the present Act.

The PREMIER: Yes, and they are to remain as at present. There is no amendment in respect of them.

Mr. Angelo: But their boundaries will be altered.

The PREMIER: Of course. Under the Act the commissioners have power to alter boundaries so as to adjust numbers. That is a very necessary power, because some North-West electoral districts have double the number of electors to be found in others. Under the Act, there are four electoral areas—the metropolitan, the agricultural, the goldfields central, and mining. Those four areas the Bill reduces to three. The goldfields central area disappears, being included in the mining area, the title of which is to be "Mining and Pastoral." I shall have something to say about that later. There never was, in my opinion, any justification for dividing the goldfields into two areas. Those two areas will now merge into one. That leaves, under the Bill, three areas. The agricultural area, as it were, remains the unit, as it is now. But the existing Act provides that the metropolitan area shall be reduced by one half; that is to say, that one elector in the agricultural area shall be equal to two electors in the metropolitan area. That provision of the existing Act is altered by the Bill, which provides that two electors in the agricultural area shall be equal to three electors in the metropolitan area. Instead of a two to one basis, under the Bill the basis will be two-thirds, or six to four. That is one of the chief alterations proposed. In the mining and pastoral area, which will include all the goldfields electoral districts, the basis is changed from that in the existing Act. At present, whilst the goldfields central area has the same basis as the agricultural area—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: In the populous towns, of course.

The PREMIER: I have always thought that was a poor excuse for the alteration. In the Act what is known as the mining area is on a six to four basis. Two electors in the mining area are equal to three in the agricultural. The Bill alters that to a two to one basis: one elector in the mining and pastoral area is to be equal to two electors in the agricultural area.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: One man at Kalgoorlie will be equal to two at Northam.

The PREMIER: I can show greater anomalies than that under the existing Act. In other words, the basis is turned round. Whereas under the Act it is two to one in the metropolitan area, and six to four in the mining area, the Bill proposes a basis of six to four in the metropolitan area and a basis of two to one on the goldfields. I venture to say that no impartial examination of the position can find fault with these proposals. Let me illustrate how it will work out. There are enrolled, as on the 24th of this month, six days ago, a total of 214,689 electors. Of that number 108,866 are in the metropolitan area.

Mr Stubbs: Exactly half.

The PREMIER: More than half. Under the proposals of the Bill the mean or average number of electors in the metropolitan area will be 6,404. The minimum, allowing for the one-fifth below, that under the Bill there could be in any metropolitan district would be 5,124. On the other hand, the maximum, the one-fifth above, would be 7,684. The number of members would be 17.

Mr. Stubbs: Against 13 now.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Against 12.

Mr. Thomson: An increase of five.

The PREMIER: Yes. In the agricultural districts the number of electors is 86,749, and there the mean or average number in each electorate would be 4,131—as against 6,404 in the metropolitan area—with a minimum, again one-fifth below, of 3,305, and a maximum of 4,957. The number of seats will be 21.

Mr. Lindsay: The same.

The PREMIER: The same as at present. In the mining and pastoral area there are 15,836 electors, the mean or average being 2,000, the minimum 1,583, and the maximum 2,375. The number of members would be eight, or a reduction of five on the present number. In the northern district the number of electors is 3,238 with four seats, giving a mean or average number for the four of 809. So that if we start at the north, there are 800 voters per seat; coming down to the goldfields the number is 2,000 for each seat; coming still further down to the agricultural area the number is 4,000, and in Perth it is 6,400. Thus the numbers run 2, 4, and 6. That is the basis on which it is proposed to make the alteration. There never was, nor could there ever be de-

vised, a redistribution of seats which could not be criticised unless perhaps we were to adopt the democratic basis of one vote on value.

Hon. G. Taylor: That would be impossible in a State like this.

Mr. Latham: It would be unworkable.

The PREMIER: Anyone who has examined the subject must admit that most powerful arguments can be advanced in support of the principle of one vote one value that principle does obtain in the Federal Parliament, but notwithstanding that, it results in some of the Federal seats being small in area and others being enormously large. Parliament has never even given consideration to the question of any alteration.

Mr. Thomson: It does not suit them.

The PREMIER: It would suit them if they thought it was fair.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They vary.

The PREMIER: They vary to the extent I think of one-fifth only; the variation is very slight. So we have in instances such as the Perth seat with a very small area and the number of electors not substantially greater, relatively speaking, than the total in the Kalgoorlie electorate which comes almost down to the Swan, and embraces all the territory north and goes south to the coast. Regarding the principle of one vote one value, I admit it would not be a equitable arrangement so far as Western Australia is concerned, but in other States or in countries where the area is smaller and there is a greater density of population—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: All engaged in the one job.

The PREMIER: Not necessarily in one job, but where there is a density of population such as in Victoria, I see no great difficulty in that policy obtaining there. But it has been recognised in all the States of Australia, even in Victoria, and particularly in this State—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The Federal Parliament is dominated by the cities.

The PREMIER: By the States as whole.

Hon. G. Taylor: The tariff suits them.

The PREMIER: After all, the citizens of the country have to obey the laws made by the Parliament and they have to pay the taxes that may be imposed. Thus a strong case can be made for equal representation in the House that controls the public purse.

That principle, however, has never been adopted here nor in the other States. But when we get outside the cities, we do not know what margin of difference should be allowed, because of distance from the capital and because of area and means of communication. After all, these are matters of opinion and there is no guiding principle except that we should endeavour to do what we consider to be a fair thing. We should be reasonable and fair in all such circumstances. That is the policy we have adopted in this State with regard to the outlying centres. There is no justification for having a wider margin between the metropolitan constituencies and agricultural areas which include outports, some of which come right down to the boundaries of the metropolitan district and most of them being within a few hours' train ride from the metropolitan area. We are not justified in having a greater margin than six to four or three to two. To say that the seats in the metropolitan area and others within comparatively easy reach of the city should have a two to one difference is altogether unfair and too great a departure from the basic principle—it is a basic principle—of one vote one value.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Albany is as far from Perth as is Kalgoorlie.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. Latham: Geraldton is further.

The PREMIER: Geraldton is nearer than Albany. But when we go to the goldfields, we find that the nearest goldfield city is several hundred miles from the capital.

Mr. Latham: Yilgarn?

The PREMIER: Yes, Yilgarn is several hundred miles away.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: To be accurate, 247 miles.

The PREMIER: Yes, the nearest point of Yilgarn, but it goes 200 miles further back than that.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It has a good train service.

The PREMIER: There is no train service at all through much of the Yilgarn district, to those areas lying on either side of the eastern railway.

Mr. Lindsay: Let us now put it into its proper place—an agricultural district.

The PREMIER: It is now fifty-fifty and it will become more in favour of agriculture perhaps when the Forrestania area has been settled. There have been already allotted

down there 300 blocks within the space of the last few months. The Land Board has never before sat for such a long period dealing with applications for land in that part of the State. It sat for six weeks every day and every night.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But before that it had not sat for months.

The PREMIER: That, however, is by the way. So as we get further out the distances increase. Take the Kanowna electorate: that goes across hundreds of miles along the Transcontinental railway to the South Australian border. The Leonora, Mt. Margaret and Murchison seats are quite as inaccessible, as it were, with regard to means of communication as is the Gascoyne seat. If there should be any two to one basis at all, it is surely justified in those outer areas such as the mining districts which are difficult to reach and where the population is very sparse. It should not be two to one as between metropolitan and agricultural, but between those outlying districts, the mining areas, which are now both mining and pastoral. As a matter of fact they are as much pastoral as they are mining, there being pastoral areas all over the mining fields to-day. Those areas are situated many hundreds of miles from the capital and have all the disabilities that are attendant upon the representation of those that are situated long distances from the capital and where in many cases no trains run. In some instances trains run only once a week. Surely those are areas where a two to one margin can exist.

Mr. Latham: They are more entitled to it than the inner goldfields areas.

The PREMIER: There always has been a sort of keen desire to separate the inner goldfields, but in some the population is greater than it is in others and so also is that the case with the agricultural areas. No attempt, however, has ever been made to divide the agricultural areas and to have a different quota for the outlying districts as against those nearer the capital. In the past the principle has been adopted of giving the Swan electorate which surrounds the metropolitan area the same representation as has been given to Albany and Geraldton that were mentioned. So I have no doubt whatever that the commissioners would give the goldfields central—Kalgoorlie and Boulder districts—the maximum by one-fifth and would give the outer portions of the goldfields the minimum. That is the reason why



the agricultural area was not divided into two districts. It was left in one, the argument being, I think, that the position could be met as between the agricultural districts that were close to the capital as distinct from those that were far away, by the commissioners giving two-fifths, as it were, of a variation. If that principle meets the situation in the agricultural areas, so will it meet the situation in the mining areas. The principle of dividing up the mining areas was introduced in the 1911 Act. That was not fixed by the commissioners, but by the Government of the day. The Act was drafted and the boundaries were determined by the Government.

Hon. G. Taylor: We had some difficulty in getting it through.

The PREMIER: But they got it through. We find from the figures of that day that under the Act some of the seats which are now in the agricultural areas had an enrolment of 1,500, as against the goldfields central of 4,600 in Boulder, and over 4,600 in Kalgoorlie. The basis of that Act was to give a three to one advantage to some of the agricultural areas as against the central goldfields.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Kalgoorlie and Boulder had a population of 50,000 then.

The PREMIER: Probably that was so.

Mr. Latham: You can get over the goldfields central seats in a day, but not the agricultural districts.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member is going to follow that principle, it justifies the two to one disparity on the goldfields to-day, for it is impossible to get over those electorates in a week. How long would it take the member for Mt. Margaret to traverse his electorate?

Hon. G. Taylor: I have to go 100 miles to address some of my electors now.

Mr. Thomson: And so have I.

Mr. Latham: I have 200 miles to go.

The PREMIER: Under that Act the goldfields central seats had an average of about 4,600 as against some of the agricultural seats with numbers ranging from 1,500 to 1,700. That was a wholly unjustifiable distinction, and should never have been introduced. The division of the goldfields was introduced then, and the high quota for the goldfields central was fixed with the object of depreciating the value of the vote there. That principle was accepted again in the 1922 or 1923 Act, and should

never have been adopted. It matters not what the area is, no one can consistently justify the same number of electors in a district 400 miles away from the capital.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is nonsense. There is a train from Kalgoorlie every day.

The PREMIER: It would not matter if there was a train every hour. How can a district 400 miles away from the capital be the equal of a district only a few miles away?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Do you think distance is the only thing?

The PREMIER: No, but it is an important factor.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Transport conveniences are an important factor.

The PREMIER: If a person wishes to travel to the capital to interview his member, or a Minister, it makes a great difference to him whether he has to journey only 40 or 50 miles at a cost of a few shillings, or whether he has to journey 400 miles at a cost of many pounds.

Mr. Thomson: Surely people can write to their members.

The PREMIER: Do all the hon. member's constituents make their requests by writing?

Mr. Thomson: The majority do.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: Every member will admit that there are many occasions when interviews are necessary and deputations have to be attended. Distance from the capital has always been recognised as an important factor in arranging the boundaries. The goldfields central area, therefore, should never have been introduced. Let me take the North. It has always been recognised that distance and means of communication are important factors there. For those reasons the North was given four members, and to-day the average number of electors is 800. That has always been considered fair. A few years ago it was a little higher than that. There we find the greatest margin of disparity between that part of the State and the capital, namely, four seats with an average of 800 electors. Then we come to the area adjoining the North, and to some extent linked up with it. There we say the average shall be 2,000.

Hon. G. Taylor: The disparity there is too great.

The PREMIER: It may be said that the part of the State best treated is the North, having regard for the value of the vote. Then we come down to the centre of the State, as it were, and there we say the number shall be 4,000. Then we come to the metropolitan area, where we say the number shall be 6,400.

Mr. Thomson: And you give the metropolitan area one-third of the representation.

The PREMIER: One-third of the representation, but it represents more than half of the electors.

Mr. Thomson: More than a third.

The PREMIER: The metropolitan area comprises more than half the electors in the State, and they have only one-third of the representation.

Mr. Thomson: And the people in the country are keeping them there.

The PREMIER: That is easily said. The rest of the State comprises less than half the total number of electors.

Mr. Thomson: And is providing all the wealth.

The PREMIER: They have two-thirds of the representation.

Mr. Thomson: And they are providing the wealth.

The PREMIER: There is the position. The rest of the State, with half the population of the State, has two-thirds of the representation.

Mr. Latham: Look at the area they cover.

The PREMIER: That is the only justification why less than half the number of electors should have two-thirds of the representation. Will anyone say that the metropolitan area is generously treated on the basis of one-third of the seats but more than half of the population?

Mr. Thomson: Very generously.

The PREMIER: It is not at all generous treatment.

Mr. Clydesdale: It is not enough.

The PREMIER: We have to bear in mind always the basic principle of one vote one value. We are not saying that should be the Act, but it is necessary to bear in mind the basic principle of one vote one value, and to determine how far we are justified in departing from it. I say we are not justified.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If you want to be a fair Government you must depart from it.

The PREMIER: We agree that we must—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course you must.

The PREMIER: But I do not agree that under any basis of fair government we are justified in departing from it to a greater extent than that set out in the Bill, that is, the basis of three to one or six to four. Having regard for the distance from the seat of government, the size of the areas and the means of communication, we are justified in departing from it in the mining districts to the extent of two to one. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell, debate adjourned.

### BILL—LUNACY ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

### BILL—JURY ACT AMENDMENT.

*In Committee.*

Mr. Angelo in the Chair: the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Repeal of Sections 35 and 36, and insertion of new section:

Mr. DAVY: It is proposed to differentiate in the fees and allowances granted to jurors in different parts of the State, but there is no differentiation between the earning capacity and occupation of the persons who have to serve on juries.

The Minister for Justice: Why should there be?

Mr. DAVY: If a man is called up and his earning capacity is 30s. a day. I do not see why his fee should not be 30s. This can be got over by a short amendment.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Service on a jury is recognised as a civic duty, which people in all walks of life have to undertake. People have to serve on juries not for the remuneration they are to receive but because it is a civic duty every citizen is liable to be called upon to undertake.

Mr. Sampson: I understood the purpose of the Bill was to increase the fees.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That does not mean differentiating in the rates as between different individuals. A man may have a private income of £5,000 a year. Does the hon. member expect that he should draw fees to the extent of £10 or £20 a day?

Mr. Davy: Nothing of the kind. Such a man would not be losing a penny by serving on the jury.

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

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again at a later stage of the sitting.

## **BILL—ABATTOIRS ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Council's Further Message.*

Message received from the Council notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's request for a conference, and had appointed Hon. W. H. Kitson, Hon. J. J. Holmes and Hon. H. A. Stephenson as managers, the President's room as the place, and 7.30 p.m. as the time.

Mr. SPEAKER: I shall leave the Chair pending the deliberations of the conference.

*Sitting suspended from 7.35 to 8.30 p.m.*

### *Conference Managers' Report.*

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I desire to report that the Managers met the Managers for the Legislative Council and failed to arrive at an agreement.

## **BILL—JURY ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *In Committee.*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting: Mr. Angelo in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Clause 2 has been partly considered.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: When we were considering the Bill in Committee at an earlier stage, I was dealing with the point raised by the member for West Perth regarding differential payments to jurors. It is a civic responsibility that has to be taken by people who are required to sit on juries. They are expected to undertake those duties irrespective of the payment they may receive, or the amount of money

they may lose through being unable to attend to their private businesses. It would be difficult to assess the payments to be made to different individuals. It would be almost impossible to frame regulations to achieve that end without creating among jurors a feeling of inequality and dissatisfaction. Under existing conditions we endeavour to remunerate them to some extent. In the past they have received 10s. a day, and now the proposal is that they shall receive 15s. or 16s. a day.

Mr. Thomson: That is not much. Even 15s. will not recompense many men for what they will lose.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: But it will be better than the arrangement in the past.

Mr. Thomson: You should at least make the minimum £1 1s. per day! Even then, plenty of men would make a loss.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The object is not to make money, but to carry out a civic duty. The only possible way to deal with such a matter is on a uniform basis.

Mr. DAVY: I agree with the Minister that it is a civic duty a man should be glad to perform, but I can see no reason why, in performing that duty to the community, a man should actually lose money by it, particularly if he is dependent upon his daily earnings for bread and butter for his family. This is no small matter. A man who is called upon to act as a jurymen during a session of the Criminal Court may lose a week or a fortnight's work. At present, if his earnings are 15s. a day, such a man loses 5s. per day for the whole period he is called upon to act as a jurymen. Why should there not be a sliding scale of payments according to occupations, not according to bank balances or incomes? The Minister says it is impossible, but it is done where witnesses are concerned. I do not intend to propose anything that will tie the hands of the Government, but I shall move to insert some words at the end of the clause.

Mr. Marshall: I have an amendment to submit before that.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member had better move his amendment first.

Mr. MARSHALL: I disagree with the contentions of the member for West Perth and I desire to move an amendment to provide that the payment shall be not less than

£2 2s. per day. The Government will be able to please themselves as to what amount over and above £2 2s. shall be paid to a jurymen.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot accept the amendment.

Mr. MARSHALL: I have merely attempted to do what other members of the Committee have tried, but if that is your ruling, I will accept it.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot increase the burden on the community, and I must rule his proposed amendment out of order.

Mr. SLEEMAN: On a point of order. Do I understand that a member cannot move to fix a minimum that the Government shall pay to a jurymen? It is not proposed to fix the allowance, but merely the minimum. If that is the position, we have no jurisdiction at all.

The CHAIRMAN: At any rate, the amendment suggested was out of order.

Mr. Latham: Unless a private member has a message from His Excellency the Governor, he cannot move such an amendment.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Then it means we are to be run by regulations.

Mr. DAVY: I move an amendment—

That at the end of the clause, after "State," the words "and to different persons" be inserted.

That will not compel the Government to do anything; it will merely give them power to act.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It might be awkward on a jury where men were receiving different payments.

Mr. DAVY: I cannot see that there would be any cause for jealousy because one man was losing 30s. a day and was receiving payment to recompense him, while another man was being recompensed for a loss of 20s. a day.

The Premier: The jurymen do the same work and have equal responsibilities to shoulder.

Mr. DAVY: And the jurymen would be compensated merely for the actual loss they suffered through being compelled to perform a civic duty. Therefore there cannot be any jealousy between individual jurymen. The same thing happens with witnesses, and I have not heard of anyone raising the point. I ask the Minister to consider whether a scheme could not be worked out on the lines I suggest.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I understood the Minister to say the object of the Bill was to enable the Government to pay jurors so that they would not lose through being called away from their work.

The Minister for Justice: That is so.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Then the Bill goes far enough, because the fees will be prescribed by regulation. The wages of most jurors are fixed by the Arbitration Court and there would be no difficulty in fixing the fee for a bricklayer who was working under an award prescribing 23s. per day.

Mr. Marshall: Suppose he was on piecework, how would it operate?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: If he could earn £4 on piecework, and 23s. on day wages, he must go pretty fast and pretty slow under the different conditions. About 40 jurors are summoned from whom a panel of 12 is chosen and, if the case is going to last two or three days, the rest are discharged meanwhile. We do not want to make jury-serving an industry.

The Minister for Justice: That could not happen.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Jurors should be remunerated according to their wages, but if a high salaried man, who may not lose his day's pay, was summoned, it would not be fair to pay him several pounds per day as against the ordinary fee paid to an artisan serving on the same jury. Even if the additional power were granted, I do not think the Government would need to exercise it.

Mr. CHESSON: If any differentiation were made, jealousy would be created. The foreman is chosen by the jurymen and he might be receiving in his ordinary avocation the smallest pay of all. Consequently, to pay any jurymen more than the foreman would be unjust. Every one dislikes being summoned to sit in judgment on his fellow men, but it is a civic duty he is compelled to perform. Whatever remuneration is provided, all should be on the same footing. Sometimes men are summoned from a distance of 20 or 30 miles and those not selected to serve on the jury find it costs them more than it does the man who actually serves.

Mr. DAVY: I wish to see all jurymen placed on one footing. If we pay all of them 15s., some will lose nothing and others will lose something. To put them on the same footing that all should do the job

without losing, there must be some differentiation. One jurymen might be receiving 13s. 4d. and another 30s. per day and both would be paid 15s. If a man lost half his wages in that way, it might be a matter of importance to him. I merely ask the Minister to take this power; I am not asking the Committee to direct the Minister to use it. If it proves impracticable, he will not use it, but it is an aspect that should be considered. A man should not be out of pocket for doing a civic duty, as some of the jurors will be if the fee is fixed at 15s. or £1.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Government could have secured the expeditious passing of the measure if they had said exactly what they intended. The existing Act is clear, but this clause proposes to give the Government power to prescribe the fee by regulation. Members are put in the invidious position of accepting the regulation proposal or of its going out to the public that they are opposed to an increase. We are not sure what the increase will be. Why not state it definitely? Originally, 10s. per day was considered a fair day's pay for a jurymen.

Hon. G. Taylor: The average man then earned 6s. or 7s. a day.

The Premier: The objections in recent years have arisen through that very reason because there was a fixed fee in the Act. Had it been possible to fix it by regulation, as we now propose, the 10s. could have been increased years ago.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is correct, but the Premier must admit that whatever is prescribed by regulation must continue until a further regulation is brought forward.

The Premier: If money values changed, the regulation could be altered from week to week.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Government could just as easily amend the Act, and then Parliament would know what was proposed.

The Minister for Justice: The existing Act has stood for 30 years.

The Premier: Because there was in the Act a fixed sum which you want.

Mr. MARSHALL: No, I want a minimum rate.

The Premier: That would be like an Arbitration Court award; it would become the maximum.

Mr. MARSHALL: I cannot see why the Government should resort to this method. They could have stated the minimum in the Bill and asked for power to differentiate. Parliament would then have had some idea of what was proposed. If I vote against the proposal to fix the fee by regulation, I shall be accused of opposing an increase to jurymen. Therefore I shall vote for the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I have no strong objection to the amendment, which will give the Government power to differentiate if so desired. My impression is that fees were originally fixed for jurymen, not as remuneration, but to enable them to get sustenance during the time they were serving on a jury.

Mr. Davy: A small compensation for what they did.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Not even compensation; merely sustenance.

Mr. Latham: Really, expenses.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. Everyone was supposed to serve for nothing.

Mr. Sampson: The working man cannot afford 10s. expenses.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Working men, like everyone else, have to attend to their responsibilities and 10s. was granted as the ordinary expenses of ordinary people serving on a jury. But we have gone beyond that, and we recognise that if a man loses a day's pay, we should compensate him to the extent of what an ordinary man would earn. It may be considered necessary to differentiate, and there is no harm in providing for differentiation as it will be purely optional.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not believe in leaving too much to be done by regulation. In this Bill, however, we require to have power to stipulate by regulation what shall be paid. The matter can well be left in the hands of the Government.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is not often that I find myself in opposition to the member for West Perth.

Mr. Withers: Because the Minister agrees with him you are opposing him.

Mr. SAMPSON: I can see that the position is hedged round with difficulties and I do not know where it will end.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do not like the amendment. As our friends opposite often

say, so long as the present Government remain in power everything will be all right. But there is a possibility that the present Government may not always be in power, and then we cannot say what might happen. I want to make sure that if the present Government should go out of office the incoming Government will not pay whatever, in their opinion, is sufficient. The minimum should be fixed. I intend to move an amendment to add these words to the clause "provided that no man so summoned on a jury shall be at a loss for so serving." I wish to make sure that everybody's interests will be safeguarded. After the amendment moved by the member for West Perth is disposed of, will I be permitted to submit mine?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, I will take the hon. member's amendment after the amendment now before the Chair has been disposed of.

Mr. BROWN: I oppose the amendment because there should not be differential treatment. The jury system is the law of the land and whether rich or poor, every man must do his duty and no distinctions should be made. If the amount of 10s. per day fixed in the past is considered too little, we should increase it. A man holding a high position and called upon to serve on a jury might claim that his time was worth five guineas a day. A poor man whose wages may be only 10s. a day, though he may claim more than that, may be paid only 10s. a day. That would not be right.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added to the clause:—"Provided also that no man so summoned on a jury shall be at a loss for so serving."

The CHAIRMAN: After reading the amendment through, I regret that I cannot accept it. I therefore rule it out of order.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am sorry, also, that I cannot accept your ruling, and will move to disagree with it. Only a few minutes ago I read the proposed amendment and I was told that it could be moved after the amendment submitted by the member for West Perth had been disposed of.

The CHAIRMAN: I did not have the hon. member's amendment before me at

that time. He is now asking that a man who may be at a loss by serving on a jury shall be compensated by the Government. That man might claim £50 or £100.

Mr. SLEEMAN: He may do that. If he did it would be the fault of the authorities for not fixing a maximum. A man would claim for loss of wages and expenses in getting to the court.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment would mean an increase in the appropriation and that would involve another message from the Governor. I cannot accept the amendment.

#### *Dissent from Chairman's Ruling.*

Mr. Sleeman: Then I shall have to move to disagree with your ruling.

The Chairman: Will the hon. member set out his dissent in writing?

Mr. Sleeman: Very well. I move—

That the Committee dissent from the Chairman's ruling.

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

The Chairman reported the dissent.

Mr. Sleeman: I have moved to dissent from the Chairman's ruling, because in my opinion, he was wrong. A few minutes before, the Chairman accepted a somewhat similar amendment submitted by the member for West Perth. I cannot see how my amendment will mean increasing expenditure. I desired the Government to provide for a minimum, but that was ruled out; next the member for West Perth moved his amendment to give the Government power to differentiate in the rates of pay. Whilst I was on my feet speaking against that amendment I asked the Chairman whether I could subsequently move an amendment, the effect of which I outlined. The Chairman said I could do so, but when I submitted it he ruled it out of order.

Mr. Speaker: As I understand the amendment, it deals with fees prescribed in different parts of the State. The payment for loss is an unknown quantity and cannot be contemplated in any Act. If the amendment does anything, it adds to the burden, it does not lessen the cost to the taxpayer; that is not the object of the amendment. The object is to give someone in the community the opportunity to get more than the prescribed fee. Therefore I uphold the Chairman's ruling.

*Committee resumed.*

Mr. SLEEMAN: I hope the Government will give some attention to the matter of fees. During the debate the Minister said that the fee would be something like 15s. If that amount is paid it will mean decreasing some of the fees now paid, because under Section 36 the sum of 21s. is set out.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The Government have taken into consideration the necessity for this legislation. As in other instances, they ask power to do a certain thing and then they determine upon their action. In this instance we wish to increase the fees. But, before giving us authority to do so, some members want to know the exact extent of the increase yet to be determined.

The Premier: They want to see a two-penny-half-penny thing like this before it can become law. If the Government cannot be trusted to do this properly they ought to be thrown out.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course you ought to be.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The Government have brought down the Bill for the purpose of making things fairer than they are. It is ridiculous to say we must already know exactly what we are going to do. As a matter of policy the Government consider the fees to be inadequate and have resolved that they ought to be increased. Having decided that, they come here to see if Parliament will support that policy. The only question of principle in the Bill is that consideration has been given to increasing the fees. When the Bill becomes law the Government will consider by what amount the fees are to be increased.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I can quite understand the anxiety of the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) since the Minister knows so little about what it is intended to do. It is unthinkable that the Bill should have been brought down without thought first being given to the proposal.

The Minister for Justice: Thought has been given to the increasing of the fees.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister has indicated that he does not propose to go to very much more than 15s. or 16s. per day. But the Committee should have the fullest possible information as to what is intended. We do not know whether the

fee is to be one guinea, two guineas, or three guineas. We anticipate that it will be a fixed sum, and generally our anticipations are pretty right.

The Minister for Justice: You ought to take a ticket on the Melbourne Cup.

The Premier: Or try the "Mustard News."

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Only today I bought a ticket on the Melbourne Cup.

The Premier: I bought one, too. I bet that mine beats yours.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: At any rate, the Minister does not know or will not tell us what the fees are to be. When in future he brings down a Bill like this, he should have the information for us. I am prepared to trust the Minister, although he does not deserve it.

The Premier: What do you think would be a fair rate for the fee?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If I had to fix it for the hon member I do not know what I should make it; but if I had to fix it for the member for Fremantle, I would take him at his own valuation. At all events, I will leave the matter with the Minister.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

## BILL—QUARRY RAILWAY EXTENSION.

### *Second Reading.*

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [9.21] in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill for a short extension of the railway from North Fremantle that was originally built to connect the quarry with the Fremantle harbour construction works, and subsequently was used by the State Implement Works and is now used by the Mt. Lyell Superphosphate Works as well. Although the measure provides for just a short extension of that railway, it brings with it the significance of the starting of a new industry. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company have begun to erect works at North Fremantle, and this line is to give them railway access. I am sure the House will be prepared to encourage this company in starting

a branch of their business here. We are told it will mean the employment of approximately 100 men, and will have the effect, I think, to some degree at any rate, of obviating Western Australia's occasional shortage of sugar supplies experienced from time to time when there is industrial trouble on the water front.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We have finally got over that now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know. I should not like to say we are over it, not by any means at all. The company have started to erect works and are asking for railway connection. Of course they pay the cost of construction and, except for one point, I do not think there can be any objection to the measure.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What is the length of the line?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is in the second schedule. It is something under a mile.

Hon. G. Taylor: The second schedule gives the total length as being about 48 chains.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The Minister has not read the dashed Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The only aspect of the project that I do not like is the site. If it were in our power I would try to get the company to select another site, for I do not agree with these factories being erected in beautiful positions right on the river front. Here we have a place known as Billygoat Farm, one of the oldest cleared spaces along the river bank. It has been used as a picnic ground for many years past and is a very pretty spot indeed. I dislike the erection of factories on the river bank, but there is no law to prevent it. The company have purchased this land and have a right to erect the factory on their own property. There is no law to say them nay. If our Town Planning Bill was an Act now, we might be able to deal with this position. This is only a further argument in favour of the early passing of such a measure. But the company having acquired the land and being determined to start their works, although I disagree with the site they have selected, it is for us to give them all possible facilities in order that they may establish that industry.

Mr. Davy: Does their property take in Billygoat Farm?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. Davy: Then the next thing will be a bit round the corner, and they will be in Blackwall Reach.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We shall have the Town Planning Bill through in time to allow us to control that. But this is private property, and we cannot stop them from erecting their factory upon it. It is their own ground, and it would be a dog-in-the-manger policy if we were to say to them, "Although you have bought that land, we refuse to connect you with the railway."

Mr. Angelo: Have you not some suitable reserve where you could place them?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They like to get on these pretty spots.

Mr. Angelo: Is there not a reserved strip along the water front?

The Premier: In some places the land is owned right down to the water.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is so right round to Claremont; the land is sold right down to the water. It would be unfair to single out these people and say, "We are not going to give you railway connection." They have purchased the land and can put it to what use they think fit.

Mr. Davy: The only course would be to resume it from them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We cannot do that unless we require it for public purposes. We cannot resume it to prevent them from using it. We have first to demonstrate that we want it for public purposes. Under a town planning law this question would be governed and a district set aside as an industrial centre where these people would be able to erect factories without let or hindrance. The only preventive attitude we could adopt would be to say, "We refuse to connect you with the railway." That, of course, would be most unfair and a dog-in-the-manger attitude that no self-respecting Government could adopt. We are now asking Parliament to agree to the construction of a short length of line so that these people shall have railway connection. We are glad to have them here, glad to encourage them to give employment locally. There is only the one feature about it that I do not like.

Mr. Kenneally: Where will the line connect with the main system?



The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At North Fremantle. It is an extension of that loop. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell, debate adjourned.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES. 1928-29.

### *In Committee of Supply.*

Debate resumed from the 25th October; Mr. Panton in the Chair.

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

*Vote—Public Works and Buildings.*  
£113,001:

Mr. STUBBS: At the last sitting of the Committee the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) was debating this Vote when, at a quarter past six, the Committee, to suit both sides, adjourned until to-day. Under Standing Order 114 I move—

That the member for Katanning be now heard.

Mr. LAMBERT: I should like to hear some reasons for the motion. I was not here when the position arose.

Mr. Teesdale: Then you ought to have been.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am merely asking for information.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Katanning started to speak at about five minutes to 6 and it was intended that the House should adjourn at the dinner hour. The member for Katanning asked me as Chairman whether he would have the right to continue his speech to-night if progress was reported. I ruled that he would not have the right to continue except by consent of the Committee on a motion being carried.

Motion put and passed.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [9.31] continuing his speech said: I was dealing with the Scaffolding Act and had directed attention to the fact that when the Bill was before the House I contended it would mean an additional tax upon the people. At a function that the Minister for Works attended, Sir Talbot Hobbs stated that the

scaffolding inspection fees being levied upon the University would mean an approximate cost of £500 to the University, for which practically no value was shown.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Five hundred pounds!

Mr. THOMSON: That is the statement Sir Talbot Hobbs made. I have endeavoured to ascertain the amount being collected for the inspection of scaffolding but so far have failed to find it. I contended when the Bill was before us that the inspection of scaffolding would mean additional cost, and Sir Talbot Hobbs's remark proves the truth of my contention.

Mr. Davy: A percentage is charged on the cost of the building.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes.

Mr. Davy: How much is it?

Mr. THOMSON: I am not sure; I think it is about 5s. per cent. The Minister agreed to give the matter further consideration. We should know how much is being collected by means of this tax; I have not been able to find any indication of it in the Estimates. When the Bill was going through, the Minister said it would cost the State practically nothing to do the work of inspection. In the country districts the Public Works supervisors are inspecting scaffolding. While that idea is a good one, I fail to see what benefit has been gained by the people in the country districts. However, I direct the attention of the Committee to the statement of Sir Talbot Hobbs that we are being levied to the extent of a large sum for which there is no return.

The Minister for Works: Who are we?

Mr. THOMSON: The people.

The Minister for Works: The people!

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, the people.

Hon. G. Taylor: The Minister does not understand anything about the people.

Mr. THOMSON: If Sir Talbot Hobbs's statement regarding the University is correct—and I have no doubt it is—a considerable sum is being levied on the people. That £500 could have been well spent in providing additional facilities at the University.

Mr. Lambert: Did he say that was the cost of the scaffolding or of the inspection?

Mr. THOMSON: The charge for the inspection. The fees are fixed by regulation; they were not fixed by the Act. Many of the Bills submitted to us have meant an

additional burden on the people. The fees for the inspection of scaffolding should be considerably reduced. A flat rate should be introduced. The average building erected in the country, I should say, would have to be inspected twice, and the inspector is fortunate in being able to inspect it often. The Minister for Works stated that last year we expended on public works and buildings £2,388,103, of which £1,732,105 was from loan and £89,688 from revenue; on labour the expenditure was £12,310; on Government Property Sales Trust Account £104,235, and on Federal aid roads £286,433. When the Auditor-General is preparing his report in future, it would be interesting if he showed the percentage of the various charges. I should like to know the percentage for overhead charges, the percentage for labour, for supervision and for material. Business concerns always have submitted to them the average cost of material and labour, and they are able when they get the report of their auditors year by year to see whether their costs for labour or material are increasing. To a business man that is a very important check on his costs. I have found the expenditure incurred in employing a qualified auditor to go through my books the best expenditure of all. If we had a somewhat similar check on public works, we would know whether the costs of such a huge spending department, which has handled £2,388,103 during the past 12 months, were yielding a fair return. I do not intend to deal extensively with the Main Roads Act, which is the subject of consideration in another place. I hope that, if a select committee is appointed by another place, the Government will see fit to convert it into a Royal Commission. I was on a local road board and was a member of the executive for many years, and main roads formed a theme for discussion at conference after conference. The desire of the road boards was that prescribed roads should be declared main roads and should be maintained by the Government. When the present Act came into being, and particularly when we had such a large amount of money made available through the Federal aid grant, we hoped that many of our troubles would be overcome. The Minister has pointed out that, apart from the Federal road grant, the Government have expended £400,000 for the construction of roads and

bridges in the group districts and in other parts of the State. He went on to say that with the two years' carry-over of £574,695, he has a total of £1,246,695 to expend on road construction during the coming year. He also told us that owing to insufficient staff and to not having the necessary surveys, plans, etc., it was not proposed to expend the full amount. I should like to ask the Minister whether, in his opinion and the opinion of the Main Roads Board, it is absolutely necessary to have every road surveyed and extensive plans prepared. I am of opinion that is not necessary, and the local authorities hold the same view. Years ago before the Act came into existence there was a system under which the Government allocated sums of money to the road boards for road construction. The work was carried out with profit to the boards and to the State. Surely if a system that was in existence years ago, under which the Government could trust the local authorities to construct roads in their districts in accordance with conditions laid down by the Public Works Department, could be operated effectively, as I claim it was, and under which the road authorities considered they obtained very much better value for the expenditure than they are getting to-day, it would be well worth consideration by the Main Roads Board whether that system should not be continued. That would enable the Government to spend this money more expeditiously and to get better value for it than we have apparently been receiving in the past. It would also enable the work to be spread over the whole State, and would mean the absorption of a larger number of men who are unfortunately out of work. It is contended that the present costly methods are increasing unemployment. The Leader of the Opposition stated that much more work should be made available. I believe the increase in costs and the shortage of employment have to a great extent been brought about by the curtailment of working hours and the necessary increases in wages which have been given by the Arbitration Court.

Mr. Kenneally: Why look over here?

Mr. THOMSON: Because I was expecting an interjection. I am not in favour of low wages. The wife of the average work man will, however, say that she was as well off on the lower wage as she now is on

the higher wage, because of the increased cost of living.

Mr. Kenneally: Would you keep the workers on the old wage?

Mr. THOMSON: People were no worse off on the old wage than they are to-day. The average price of wheat and wool is going down. If we are not able to pay our way with the commodities we are producing, I am sure there will be more unemployment than ever.

Mr. Chesson: Bread and meat are not coming down in price.

Mr. THOMSON: During the last wool sales there was an average reduction in the price per bale of £6.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the hon. member going to connect his remarks with the vote before the Chair?

Mr. THOMSON: I am showing the necessity for a closer scrutiny of the expenditure of the Public Works Department. We will get better results if we induce the local authorities to do the work and have more employment available for our people. The high costs are aggravating the unemployment trouble. We may be faced with a reduction in the price of many other commodities besides wheat and wool. In the "West Australian" I read one of the best leading articles I have seen in that journal for a long time. It appeared under the heading of "Financial Reform," and the following is an extract from it:—

When the Financial Agreement is either accepted or rejected, there will be need for a great stocktaking of Western Australia's position. If it be rejected the Government will be in grave financial straits; if it be accepted the obligation will be upon Parliament to see that the present financial advantage it affords to the Treasury is not abused to the detriment of future citizens of Western Australia. How is this critical overhaul of Western Australia's financial position to be secured? Not by a debate in the Assembly, which might easily resolve itself into an attempt by each side to show how much more competent it is than its opponents to handle the finances. A committee composed of the best financial brains and the fairest minds in Parliament is needed to make a searching investigation.

I am glad to have seen this leading article. It practically confirms the plank in our platform of 1924 when we went before the people.

Mr. Marshall: That is where they got the information.

Mr. THOMSON: In season and out of season I have spoken upon these lines. It shows how essential it is there should be a

closer scrutiny of our finances, particularly those of the Public Works Department as it is now being administered. The Main Roads Board should welcome the appointment of a select committee or Royal Commission. I have the greatest sympathy for the officers. They were asked to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds without being furnished with an adequate plant and without having time in which to draw up a co-ordinated system. It was more than any human being could accomplish. There was no organisation, such as was required, in existence. Possibly it would have paid the State better to have given the responsible officers a little more time in which to perfect their plans and provide themselves with a thoroughly efficient plant. Some of us visited the Midland Railway Company's lands last week. I was interested when motor-ing over the Greenough flats to have my attention drawn to a road which had been constructed there by the board. It appeared to be fairly well constructed. The most amazing thing about it was that men were sent out to make that road armed only with axes. They had neither picks nor shovels, and no provision was made for them to work.

Mr. Kennedy: That is not true. That is something that has been handed down to you from mouth to mouth.

Mr. THOMSON: Will the hon. member deny that they were sent out with axes to clear trees which had not been growing along the road for 30 years.

Mr. Kennedy: I will deny it.

Mr. THOMSON: The hon. member will deny anything if he denies that.

Mr. Kennedy: You do not know anything about it.

Mr. THOMSON: I drove over the road with other members who were on the trip.

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

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: Did you see the axes there?

Mr. THOMSON: I did not see the Minister there. I know there were no trees there.

The Premier: Where was this?

Mr. THOMSON: On the Greenough road.

The Premier: I rise to a point of order.

Mr. THOMSON: I expected the Premier would do that.

The Premier: I would have to rise pretty often if I attempted to keep the hon. member in order. The incident referred to by

him took place some months prior to the beginning of the last financial year. These Estimates cover the work and expenditure of the department for the last 12 months only, from June to June. The subject the hon. member is discussing concerns something that took place four or five months prior to the commencement of the last financial year. It has been discussed in this Chamber over and over again, and I submit the hon. member is not in order in referring to matters which have no relationship to the Estimates for this financial year.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We can discuss anything that the Government are doing.

The CHAIRMAN: No. The hon. member may discuss the Estimates as they appear before the Committee. The Premier has taken a good point, and I must uphold his point of order. The member for Katanning must confine his remarks to the Estimates before the Committee.

Mr. THOMSON: I have no desire to disagree with your ruling, Mr. Chairman. I am dealing with the administration of the Main Roads Board.

The CHAIRMAN: That is a moot point, too. The Main Roads Board is to a large extent working on loan money, and we are not discussing loans on these Estimates.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There is the expenditure of £38,000.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member may discuss matters that come within the scope of that £38,000.

Mr. THOMSON: I regret I am not permitted to discuss something which I have had verified for the first time by men who were in a position to know the facts.

The CHAIRMAN: I have given my ruling. It is no use the hon. member trying to discuss the matter.

Mr. THOMSON: No, but it goes to show that men were sent out before all the necessary arrangements had been made. I am compelled now to say something I had no desire to say, because it will mean my discussing the Main Roads Board.

Mr. Kenneally: Apparently the hon. member did not hesitate to accept the hospitality of the Midland Railway Company, and to use it for political purposes.

Mr. THOMSON: The same hospitality was extended to other members. During that tour no one made any remark such as has

just fallen from the lips of the member for East Perth.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for East Perth is not in order in interjecting, and the member for Katanning is not in order in discussing matters outside the scope of these Estimates.

Mr. THOMSON: Some of us are not satisfied with the results we are getting. I am going to make this statement: that when these men were sent out they were not sent out on the authority of the engineer of the Main Roads Board. I could never think that the board would send out men without tools to do a job of that description! It is time a searching inquiry was made into the board's administration. Only in the last report of the Auditor General there is a reference to the disallowance of a sum of £37,000, as to which we have had no explanation from the Minister.

The Minister for Works: It has been explained often enough.

The Minister for Railways: The subject is worn threadbare.

Mr. THOMSON: It may or may not be. Once we are found out in doing something wrong, it is a point to be brought up against us; and the Government may get even a little more of this. Someone blundered. In the enormous expenditure of money by the board, there is no guarantee at present of adequate returns. Now I come to a subject which I approach purely from a sense of duty. On closely examining last year's Estimates, members will find that no provision was made there for an item which appears here as expenditure. Though it is a delicate matter, I feel that it cannot be allowed to pass without explanation. I refer to the grant of £2,165 to the Minister for Works, including the expenses of his secretary, to visit England and other countries. The House is entitled to ask what was the financial result of that trip? The expenditure was incurred without authority. I am not taking up this position in a spirit of hostility to any individual, but we would be lacking in our duty as members of this Chamber if we did not draw attention to a matter which, so far as I know, has no precedent. Administration is largely governed by precedent. The procedure is of a nature that might be seriously abused. I hope some explanation will be forthcoming as to the benefits

derived by the State from that expenditure I hope the Minister, when replying, will give the House and the country a definite assurance that Mr. Blake, who has been selected as the engineer to confer with the Engineer-in-chief on the subject of the Fremantle harbour, will be given an opportunity not only to consult with Mr. Stileman but also to consider any other scheme for harbour extension which has been submitted to Parliament. Then Parliament will have the opportunity of adequately discussing the construction of a bridge in connection with the Fremantle harbour and the future extension of the harbour itself. I mention the matter again because it has been reported to me that the Minister for Works, at Home and in Canada, stated that the Government intended to construct a bridge across the River Swan at a cost approximating £2,000,000. I hope the Government will give serious consideration to the appointment of a committee as suggested in the leading article of the "West Australian," and as discussed by me on many occasions here. Some hon. members may be intensely amused.

The Premier: I was not thinking about the hon. member. My thoughts were hundreds of miles away.

MR. THOMSON: In the interests of the finances of the State I hope we shall have an opportunity to secure more information than is available at present. As the Minister has said, the Public Works Department is one of our largest spending departments. Personally I am doubtful whether we get from the money expended by that department the value we should get. I hope the Minister will furnish information as to the benefits derived by the State from his trip, and also give an assurance with regard to Mr. Blake and the Fremantle harbour.

MR. LATHAM (York) [10.8]: I fully agree with what the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Country Party have said about expenditure by this department. A large sum of money is being spent, and the amount grows greater year by year. No department requires closer attention from the Minister than does this one. I can only repeat what other members have said, that until the Public Works Department carry out their operations under the contract system, we shall not get full value from the expenditure. Dealing

with Main Roads Board expenditure, I advocate that it should be done through the local governing bodies. Probably under those conditions the cost of works would be considerably less. Not many of our local governing bodies have the services of qualified engineers, and thus they are at a disadvantage. Expenditure of Main Roads Board funds by local bodies would therefore render necessary the supervision of departmental engineers. Better results will be obtained by letting works on contract throughout the State. My suggestion is that small contracts should be let to the men themselves—a system that would lead to greater satisfaction among the workers. Dealing with the item specially mentioned by the Leader of the Country Party, the Minister's trip abroad, the State has probably received value from the expenditure. I understood it was the Minister's intention to look into various matters for the State Sawmills. I fail to see that there is any delicacy about the subject. The Minister has a perfect right to tell the people what is the benefit they received from his trip. There is nothing to hide, and I daresay the hon. gentleman will do that. The expenditure may or may not have been large; I do not know exactly what was the scope of the Minister's tour. But there was a great deal to be done for the State abroad. I had an opportunity of meeting the Minister in London, and I consider he upheld the dignity of Western Australia very well while he was there. I often wish that more of our public men could travel abroad and see what is being done in other countries. Probably the knowledge they would gain would prove beneficial to the State. I think the Minister should tell us in what direction his visit to other countries is likely to benefit the State Sawmills, or other avenues of Governmental activities. I would be very interested in listening to him. There is nothing delicate about the subject, because we have a perfect right to know what benefit the State is likely to receive as the result of his trip abroad. During the current year, a number of railways will be constructed in different parts of the State. I regret it is the fixed policy of the Government to have such work done by day labour. It would be beneficial to the State if that class of work were done by contract. I understand there is some difficulty at present in getting the right type of contractor to undertake such work,

but I believe that if some inducement were offered, such as continuity of employment, we could easily attract the proper people with up-to-date plant. I was struck with the work I saw abroad and the expedition with which much of it was undertaken. It appealed to me that in a country such as ours, where there are so few engineering difficulties, we should be able to do much more work than is effected at present. I hope the Government will give some consideration to these points. It is our duty to-day to husband our resources and to see that we get full value for money expended. The State is exceedingly lucky in that we have so much money to spend on public utilities, and in the opening up of our country areas, thus leading to increased development. It is only by the close attention devoted by the Minister to the work of his department that we are likely to derive much benefit from the expenditure of public moneys in that direction. Regarding the Main Roads Board, I do not propose to offer any comment at present. I understand that the members of another place are discussing the position and anything I may say may be premature. At any rate, I do not propose to deal with that question at the present stage, particularly as we shall have another opportunity to discuss the board's expenditure when we deal with the Loan Estimates. In all probability, another place will have settled upon a course of action by that time and we shall be able to discuss matters then. I am convinced that the chief engineer of the Main Roads Board, Mr. Tindale, is doing his best for the State, and I do not think we have a more conscientious officer.

Mr. Thomson: He has a hard job.

Mr. LATHAM: And it is a big job. Mr. Tindale has had to build up a vast organisation. I regret that he was rather handicapped because he was sent abroad at an inopportune time. Had he remained in the State, in all probability the operations of the board would not have reached such a position as we find them to-day, and possibly the work of the board would have been more favourably regarded. At any rate, I do not think it fair for members to adversely comment upon the work of professional men. Laymen are not qualified to pit their knowledge against that of professional men. I think Mr. Tindale is cap-

able of doing the work required of him, if he gets the moral support of the people.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is rather out of order in proceeding along those lines.

Mr. LATHAM: I am not so sure that I am! I do not know that Mr. Tindale is not paid from the funds covered by the Estimates. I do not think he is paid out of Loan funds.

The CHAIRMAN: He is paid under the provisions of a special Act.

Mr. LATHAM: With all due respect to you, Mr. Chairman, surely the Committee have some control over that expenditure! I do not propose to prolong the debate unnecessarily, but I think careful consideration must be given to the points I have raised. The times ahead may not be quite so bright as at present. The member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) has referred to declining markets. If we are confronted with declining markets as well as diminishing wheat and wool yields, the Treasury will suffer. For that reason I stress the point that such a big spending department as that controlled by the Minister for Works must exercise every care in the expenditure of public money.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [10.12]: I will delay the Committee for a few minutes only. Before we proceed to deal with the items, I would like to refer to one or two matters, particularly the expenditure on main roads. Members have drawn attention to some utterances of mine relative to the construction of roads in the drier portions of the State. I have previously brought that matter before the notice of hon. members on various occasions and have directed their attention to the effective and economical methods adopted in those parts. Roads of that description have been constructed under the old system and have stood up to traffic for 10 or 12 years in some parts of my electorate. Whereas the expenditure of £1,000 there has resulted in the construction of eight or nine miles of road, the expenditure of a similar amount outside Kellerberrin, for instance, has resulted in the construction of but one mile of road. The roads I refer to as having been constructed under the old system have certainly stood the test of time. It has to be remembered that in Western Australia we do not require roads of

the type that were evidently in the minds of those who framed the specifications for use in the early stages of the Main Roads Board's operations. Chains of super-excellent roads may be good enough for Victoria, but miles upon miles of pioneering roads will be sufficient for us in Western Australia for 30 years or more. That brings to my mind what has taken place in the Kellerberrin district. A gang of men have been working there since last April. I believe they are still there, and they are engaged in carrying out surveys that practical men, who have been engaged in superintending road making during the whole of their lives, consider absolutely unnecessary. They are using hundredweights of pegs at a time. To such an extent has this been going on that a timber merchant made inquiries as to the purpose for which the men were using up the timber. They have been buying up timber in connection with surveys along level roads. I should like to know what is the use of these surveys. Large sums of money have been spent in keeping that gang of men at work. Mr. Tindale when in Kellerberrin recently said it was not intended that that should continue. However, the last I heard of it, the men were still at work. I agree with what the member for York has said regarding the onerous duties and difficult tasks the Main Roads Board have had. I believe that Mr. Tindale sees now that the specifications and instructions issued by the Federal authorities are totally unsuited to many districts of our State, and that common sense has to be exercised and a lot of useless expense cut out. The member for Katanning just now referred to a certain item on the Estimates, which he questioned. As the member for York said, there should be no delicacy about this. I amongst others applauded the announcement that the Minister for Works was going to England. He must have benefited by his trip, and probably the State also will receive a benefit as the result of it. Still, there is the item, and it is due to the Committee that justification should be shown for the placing of that item on the Estimates. I do not want to sit in silence when anything of the sort comes up. Certain other things that have been mentioned we can well discuss on the Loan Estimates. I do not propose to detain the Committee any longer.

**MR. MARSHALL** (Murchison) [10.22]: I should like to say that in the main the roads constructed in the Murchison district have been constructed under the supervision of the local authorities. While there have been a few small hitches between the local authorities and the Main Roads Board, the construction of the roads has been done very efficiently. Those roads are very good at present and look to be of a permanent character, and we are pretty thankful for them. I do not know anything about the complaints made by other members, but I suppose there is some justification for them. I have a grievance that has to do with labour rather than with works, both of which come under this Vote. We hear a good deal about the decline in wool and wheat, but nothing has been said about the increase in the price of bread and other commodities upon which the workers have to depend. Nor has anything been said about the attitude recently adopted by the Arbitration Court. We hear a good deal of sympathy expressed for the unemployed, and sometimes advice is given to them and to the workers generally to come down to the level of a coolie in India, and they will be well provided for. The attitude of the Arbitration Court, instead of tending to bring about peace in industry, is likely to bring the court itself, along with the industrial sections of the community, into a state of chaos. I refer to the court's attitude respecting the gold-mining award, or rather the recent application by the union to get a review of the case decided at Kalgoorlie 12 months ago. I was in the Chamber when that legislation went through, and I have since perused the Act, but I can find in it nothing authorising the court to measure its awards by the financial position of the industry concerned. Yet recently when Mr. Watts on behalf of the A.W.U. applied for a review of that award, he was informed by the president of the court that unless he could show that there had been some alteration in the financial position of the industry since the date of the award, his efforts to secure an increase of wages or better conditions for the workers would be hopeless. It is coming to a pretty pass and will lead us into a dangerous state of affairs to have a court, which has been given by Parliament definite principles to work upon, introduce features such as this. I am not pessimistic,

but I am prepared to foreshadow some trouble if the court's attitude is persisted in.

Mr. Thomson: Is that a threat to the Arbitration Court?

Mr. MARSHALL: It is not much good threatening the court; it is like the member for Katanning, immune from attack. But it must be clearly understood that an industrial union of workers is not going to tolerate this new state of affairs. It does not matter what evidence the union may bring to show justification for an increase in wages, for all that the president has to do is to say, "In my opinion the financial position of the industry is not bright enough. Despite the health conditions and the cost of living in Kalgoorlie, the financial position of this industry cannot stand any more strain, and therefore you cannot get what you ask for." I do not know how long the miners in Kalgoorlie or the employees in other industries will tolerate this retort from the Arbitration Court.

Mr. Latham: Move a substantive motion to do away with the court, and we will support you.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not prepared to act as stupidly as the member for York does. Within the last 12 months, other industries have approached the court and presented their cases, but because certain requirements in the logs entered by the union did not apply in some other State the court has said it could not apply here. When the cement workers went to the court they could not get a 44-hour week, because it was but a young industry. Yet when we looked up the shareholders to find out who owned this young industry we discovered them to be the Commercial Bank, the National Bank, the Bank of Victoria and the Bank of Adelaide. Incidentally, although the court would not give the workers a 44-hour week, they got it by an agreement with the boss himself.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have allowed the hon. member a good deal of latitude, but I am unable to agree that he can discuss the whole of the ramifications of the Arbitration Court under this Vote.

Mr. MARSHALL: Then can you show me where I shall be able to do it on the Estimates?

The CHAIRMAN: No, I cannot; not on the Estimates. I am afraid the hon. member will have to do it by a substantive motion. To discuss the Arbitration Court

under these Estimates is distinctly out of order, because it is not even mentioned here. The Arbitration Court comes under a special Act.

Mr. MARSHALL: I think the court is mentioned here. I know the president of the court comes under a special Act. However, if that is your ruling, Mr. Chairman, I will resume my seat.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sorry. I must carry out the Standing Orders.

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [10.30]: I wish to pass a few remarks only on the road work in the State. During the Address-in-reply I made some statements when the Minister for Works was not present. From my knowledge I do not think there has been any improvement in the position since. Mr. Tindale, the Chairman of the Main Roads Board, informed the Road Boards Conference that things were going to be better in future, and I am prepared to agree that Mr. Tindale is doing his best to improve matters. But it seems strange to one who knows the work of the Main Roads Board in the past in connection with development roads—and I intend to confine my remarks to them—that the cost of making the roads is more than double what it was a few years ago. Engineers have been through my electorate for more than two years making surveys and preparing specifications, and although we were informed by the Minister that each of the local governing bodies would get an average of £2,000 per annum, in my electorate no money has been spent since just after August of 1926. That money was spent only on a certain condition; the local governing bodies were asked to put in tenders, not on these specifications but on the ones to be worked on while under the development roads grant. Although a board in my electorate had tendered for the construction of certain development roads, it was informed at the Road Boards Conference in August, 1926, that if it agreed to men doing the work by day labour, it could get the work done.

The CHAIRMAN: The year 1926 covers a period prior to the Estimates now under consideration.

Mr. LINDSAY: But there are sums in these Estimates dealing with development roads.



The CHAIRMAN: Provided the hon. member deals with matters within the scope of these Estimates, well and good.

Mr. LINDSAY: I shall deal with the period of the last 12 months. Within that time and previous to it engineers have been going through my electorate—and I assume through other parts of the State—making surveys, taking levels and preparing huge specifications and blue prints; and within the last few months road boards have been asked to tender for the work. The first contract that came into my district was for the Dowerin Road Board. I was shown the plans and specifications and, although we had done the work previously in a satisfactory manner under the Main Roads Board, the cost of making the roads under the plans and specifications submitted was more than double. This particular board put in a tender of £18 per chain for work that could have been done satisfactorily under the old conditions for £7 per chain, and the road would have been just as good. When the board sent in its tender, it stated that it did not want the work at all. The department did alter the specifications later on and the board was able to reduce its tender by about £5 per chain. The fact remains that work under the Federal aid road grant to-day is costing under the conditions laid down, I assume, by the Main Roads Board, twice as much as it should do. We were also told by Mr. Tindale at the conference that he had seen the roads in Merredin where no engineer or surveyor had been engaged; they were constructed by the Merredin Road Board and were quite satisfactory. Every other road board in the wheat belt has been building roads satisfactorily for years without engineers or surveyors and without putting down lines of pegs every few feet, all of which costs money. It seems to be a wilful waste of money to do such things unnecessarily. Only last Sunday week the chairman of a road board took me and two other visitors over a road that was being made. The board had already formed that road and made it not two years before, and it was a very satisfactory road. I examined the Main Roads Board contract for ploughing up that road, notwithstanding that it was quite satisfactory to the whole of the people who were using it. The work was being done at this time of the year—an absolutely unsuitable time to make roads in the dry

areas. We have not had an opportunity to make roads at the suitable period of the year. The beautiful level surface of that road, formed within the preceding two years, was being ploughed up and the loose dry spoil was being placed in the centre of the road for the purpose of having gravel put on top of it afterwards. What is more, that was not one of the roads for which the local governing body had asked; it was not a preferential road. On a previous occasion £1,000 had been spent on the road, and the board had five other roads ahead of this one in preference.

Mr. Thomson: How did the board come to do that one?

Mr. LINDSAY: That is the point. After Mr. Tindale's statement—and I think it was an honest statement—there appears to be something wrong. He said the road boards should be consulted; that the engineers should consult the local governing bodies on the spot, and should decide on their local knowledge what kind of material was suitable. He gave us to understand that there would be no more engineers' plans and specifications and blue prints. Why should there be? Was there anything unsatisfactory during the two years we were under the Main Roads Board with the development roads grant? I do not think there was. The roads then constructed in my electorate are a credit to those who designed and built them. All that was done in the way of preparing plans at that time was to make a bit of a sketch showing that the road was to be 26ft. or 33ft. wide and showing how the gravel should be boxed in. We tendered on that at £7 per chain, and it is now costing twice as much to do work that, to say the least, is no better. In the interests of this State something should be done to ensure that the money is spent in a way to give better service. I know I shall be told it is the fault, not of the State Government, but of the Federal Government for insisting upon the preparation of plans and specifications before tenders are called. The point I wish to make is that tenders were called in the past on the simpler specifications to which I have referred. Quite sufficient information was given in those specifications and in the sketch to enable any individual to tender. To-day we have huge documents and blue prints and pegs every few feet along the road. I believe it is

costing almost as much for surveyors, draftsmen and printers as it would cost to make a decent road in the dry areas. A while ago Dr. Earle Page visited the State and I was deputed by the conference to put the matter before him. I told him I thought the time had arrived when the Federal and State Governments should get together and discuss the question; that whoever was to blame, the Governments should sink their differences and try to make it possible for us to get value for the money expended.

Mr. Thomson: Hear, hear!

Mr. LINDSAY: Dr. Earle Page, in reply, said the Federal Aid Roads Act stipulated that the work should be done by contract, but the Federal Government were not concerned with any specifications. I realise that in order to call for tenders some plans and specifications must be drawn up. The point I wish to make is that for two years we used to put in tenders for the work at about £6 10s. to £7 a chain, whereas to-day the price is fully twice as much and people are afraid to tender.

The Premier: They will stick to these plans and specifications. We have been trying for 20 months to avoid them. There must be surveyors when there are all these blue prints and specifications.

Mr. LINDSAY: I understand that these things are necessary in the case of main roads, but I am referring particularly to development roads, such as are necessary to enable the producers to transport their output to the railway. For two years we worked satisfactorily under the conditions laid down by the Main Roads Board. No elaborate blue prints were in use, and all that was required was a sketch showing how the road was to be made. In my district the local governing bodies let contracts by tender. All that was required was a small specification showing that the road must be of a certain width, that it should be ploughed to a certain depth, have a certain camber, have put upon it a certain amount of gravel, and be boxed to a certain width. That is what the Main Roads Board were doing in the past. No engineers were then employed surveying all these developmental roads. Why should pegs be required every few inches? Why should we want every little bump taken off the road if it is only 6in. in height? It makes no difference to us if the road is not absolutely level. That is how

the expenditure goes up? The roads are no better in consequence, but we are now getting only half the length of road that we got before. I hope Mr. Tindale will be able to carry out the proposals he put forward at the conference of road boards. If he would do that we would have our roads made for half the cost now being incurred. We should also get a greater mileage of roads. We want to avoid what is going on at Kununoppin, where a road, formed only two years ago has been ploughed up. It is not a road that requires any gravelling. It has a natural surface of loamy sand, and contains no clay. If the local governing bodies had been consulted, that tract of road would not have been interfered with, and the money would have been spent on worse patches further on. If the work had been going on as it was going on two years ago, twice as big a mileage of road would have been laid down. Something should be done to avoid this waste. When the business was originally started, the plans and specifications were unsatisfactory. After 12 months the Minister for Works altered them, and for two years the work proceeded quite satisfactorily. About two years ago the struggle began, and no work has been done since. I hope the Minister, in conjunction with the Main Roads Board, will make it possible to consult the local governing bodies, as Mr. Tindale indicated he would do, so that all the plans and specifications will be abolished, and that road boards will be allowed to tender as they did in the past. By that means any allocation of £1,000 for road construction will provide £1,000 worth of value instead of £500 worth as at present. That would be to the interests of the local governing bodies as well as to the State.

‘MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [10.45]: I wish to refer to some remarks that were made by an eminent engineer who visited this State recently. For many years that gentleman held a high position in the Eastern States, and later went into the manufacturing business, where he has done very well. During the last two years he has been touring the world, and as an engineer has interested himself in many big works that are going on, especially water conservation. When in Perth last month he visited the Mundaring Weir. He told me the next day he was surprised the Gov-

ernment had not used the water power with which to do their pumping. He said that in other parts of the world the water would first be passed through a turbine, which would create the necessary power to enable the water to be pumped for long distances. I told him I thought there were seven or eight pumping stations between Mundaring and Kalgoorlie, and he replied that power generated from a reservoir like that at Mundaring had been known to provide power in America to pump quite that distance.

**The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies:** He was dreaming.

**Mr. ANGELO:** Even if the pumped water could not be driven by that means the whole distance, it might be taken far enough to do away with a couple of the pumping stations. I bring this matter up in the hope that it may be worth the while of the Minister to have an investigation made by the Government engineers. This gentleman also told me that the water was not spoilt when passing through the turbines.

**Hon. G. Taylor:** It does not deteriorate?

**Mr. ANGELO:** No. The turbines are kept absolutely clean, and the water is in no way affected. This gentleman was so keen on the matter that I thought it was of sufficient importance to bring it forward. Reference has been made to the Minister's expenses. I expect he will give a satisfactory explanation as to how the money was spent. I should like to point out a divergence in policy on the part of the Government. One or two members were desirous of gaining a knowledge of the North-West. Members are often asked to vote on important matters relative to that part of the State. I believe those particular members offered to pay their sustenance on a State steamer, and all their expenses, but they were denied a passage on the vessel.

**Hon. G. Taylor:** Under those conditions?

**Mr. ANGELO:** Yes. There is a big divergence of policy in respect to the two instances. I hope that in future the Government will see, when members are prepared to spend their time and their own money in visiting the North-West, that every opportunity is afforded them to do so, so that they may give an intelligent vote upon matters relating to the North.

**HON. G. TAYLOR** (Mount Margaret) [10.50]: I listened with great interest to the Minister for Works when introducing these Estimates, and was rather struck by his statement that the expenditure was the largest the Public Works Department had made since the inauguration of responsible Government. The statement is rather alarming when one considers the condition of Western Australia in the matter of employment. I mention it so that the Minister may, when replying, give a reason, if he thinks fit, for so many people being out of employment. Side by side with the expenditure of millions of loan money, we find more people looking for work in this State than there have been for years. I have heard the reason advanced that people have come here from the Eastern States knowing that there was large public expenditure in Western Australia. That, however, is not quite borne out by the statistics of arrivals and departures.

**The Premier:** It is, absolutely. The figures I gave on the Address-in-reply are absolutely correct. It is all right to the extent of 3,000 people. There is no question about it.

**Hon. G. TAYLOR:** The Premier's speech on the Address-in-reply indicated that, and I have heard the hon. gentleman make the statement outside.

**The Premier:** Correct to the extent of 3,000 for the first six months of this year above the average of the past four years.

**Hon. G. TAYLOR:** I do not know that that would account for the large number of unemployed, in view of the money the State is spending.

**The Premier:** It would more than account for it, because the unemployed have never reached that number before.

**The CHAIRMAN:** It would be a good idea to discuss that matter under immigration.

**Hon. G. TAYLOR:** I am really asking for information on a matter which strikes me as strange.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle—in reply) [10.52]: I did not desire to deal with the Main Roads Board under these Estimates at all, because, as I said when introducing the vote, the Loan Estimates appear to me to be the right place for that discussion. I undertake to give the Chamber full details

in connection with Main Roads Board operations when the Loan Estimates come down. Many of the statements made by hon. members opposite, and many of the fears expressed by them, are absolutely unfounded. The Leader of the Opposition asked about the amount of money disputed by the Commonwealth Government. There is no amount in dispute this year, so far as I know.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Last year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Last year there was an amount of £30,000 as to which I have given explanations repeatedly in this House and repeatedly in the Press. The Auditor General has also reported on it. In this year's Estimates there is nothing dealing with that matter. I have followed the bad example set by the Leader of the Opposition when in office, but the Federal Government refuse to pay me where they paid him.

Mr. Thomson: The amount is £53,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That £53,000 means Commonwealth and State money. Let me repeat that under the old agreement, conditions being much more stringent than under the present agreement, approval was never asked for. Just on the eve of an election, the Commonwealth stopped payment of the money, without giving us any warning, without affording us the opportunity of altering a policy which had also been followed by the previous Government. As to calling for tenders for all works under the Main Roads Board, that has been the decision of the Commonwealth Government. I agree with the member for Toodyay that we could get a lot more work done, and done more cheaply, if those conditions were not insisted upon. The Leader of the Opposition was good enough to co-operate with the Premier in sending a wire to the Commonwealth asking them not to insist on the calling of tenders for works between the local authorities and the Main Roads Board, where we could follow the policy adopted previously of sending our engineers to the road boards to give a price for works without elaborate plans and specifications.

Mr. Thomson: Are the Commonwealth insisting upon every road being surveyed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. The hon. member, as a contractor, knows that he would not submit a figure for a work unless he had all the details before him: and every other contractor wants all the de-

tails submitted. The previous policy was for the Main Roads Board to agree with the local road board a price at which the job was to be done. The figure would be submitted and if the road board engineer thought it reasonable, he would recommend its acceptance.

Mr. Thomson: Will not the Federal Government agree to that now?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. Definite instructions have been given that the Federal Government will not agree to it, and every request for reconsideration has been refused.

Mr. Thomson: That is contrary to what I hear.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Leader of the Opposition was good enough to co-operate with the Premier just last month in sending a telegram to the Prime Minister asking him to relax that and revert to the old conditions.

#### *Member Suspended.*

Mr. Thomson: Why did you not ask for our co-operation?

The Premier: We thought we had all the strength that was necessary.

Mr. Thomson: That is a very insulting remark, and the Premier ought to withdraw it. I think we are just as much entitled to consideration as is the Leader of the Opposition, or as any other party. You are always insulting us, and I am just about getting fed up.

The Premier: I will please myself.

Mr. Thomson: You will not.

The Premier: You will compel me to consult you?

Mr. Thomson: I will compel you to treat us with courtesy.

The Premier: Oh!

The CHAIRMAN: I think the leaders of the two parties should set a better example to other members of the House.

Mr. Thomson: Mr. Chairman, on a point of explanation—

The CHAIRMAN: There is no explanation necessary. You are both grossly disorderly.

Mr. Thomson: I think, Mr. Panton—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member had better obey the Chair.

Mr. Thomson: On a point of order. I think—

The CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. member resume his seat while the Chairman is on

his feet. I hope there will be no more excited talk across the floor of the House while the Minister for Works is speaking.

Mr. Thomson: On a point of order, I wish to draw the attention of the House to the fact that we are a separate and distinct entity.

The CHAIRMAN: That is not a point of order.

Mr. Thomson: It is a point of order, Sir.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Katanning must allow the Chairman to decide what is a point of order.

Mr. Thomson: Yes, but I can disagree with you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Then the hon. member can move to disagree with my ruling.

Mr. Thomson: It has become a habit of the Premier to insult this party.

The Premier: I ask that that be withdrawn. Such is not my habit.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Katanning will withdraw the remark.

Mr. Thomson: No, Mr. Chairman, I will not withdraw it.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member will not withdraw the statement, I must suspend the hon. member.

Mr. Thomson: Mr. Chairman, if you—

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member will not withdraw, he must leave the precincts of the House; I must suspend the hon. member for the rest of the sitting.

Mr. Thomson: I will not withdraw a statement that I know is correct.

The CHAIRMAN: Then the hon. member will withdraw from the House!

Mr. Thomson: I will withdraw from the House as a protest against such continued actions on the part of the Premier.

The Premier: Good evening!

Mr. Thomson: I do this deliberately.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is grossly disorderly by speaking out of his place. If he continues, I shall have to report him to the Speaker.

Mr. Thomson: Very well!

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member having left the Chamber, the Minister may proceed.

#### *Debate resumed.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I was saying that we have done our best to have the position defined so that the work could be done through the road boards without having elaborately prepared plans and

specifications, such as have been required in the past. If we can achieve that, it will save money and enable us to do the work direct through the local governing authorities. That is the explanation of why so few developmental roads have been constructed during the past 12 months. No surveys or levels were taken in the past, and those particulars were necessary under the Commonwealth conditions. Regarding the point raised by the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) about earth-formed roads and utilising the natural surface, that policy has been adopted by the Main Roads Board. It is in operation throughout the drier districts where that class of work is suitable. The Main Roads Board are constructing earth-formed roads to a width of 30 feet, and gravel roads to a width of 18 feet. All contracts now embody that condition. As to the question of the unemployed, to which reference was made by the Leader of the Opposition, I would point out that through the Perth and Fremantle Labour Bureaus, the Government have engaged during this year 2,740 men. That is quite apart from engagements made in the country of men who have been taken direct to Government works. By engaging such a large number of men, I think we have done something towards relieving the position. Despite that, I regret that there are still a large number of men out of work at the present time. I think that is largely due to the fact that there was a big influx of men from the Eastern States during the winter months. Strange to say, however, the officer in charge of the Labour Bureau has expressed the opinion that the great bulk of the men who came from the Eastern States rapidly secured employment after making one application at the bureau. He goes on to say that the large majority of the men unemployed now are new arrivals who have not so far fitted in with our local conditions. If the suggestions contained in the telegram that the Premier sent, with the concurrence of the Leader of the Opposition, to the Federal Government had been adopted, we could have employed all the men through the local authorities—not directly through the Main Roads Board, perhaps—on the construction of developmental roads, for that work could have been put in hand quickly. In a very short time we could have absorbed all the men who were offering. As

it is, the large amount of £1,250,000 that was available this year is held up on account of the conditions imposed upon us. Money spent on surveys and the preparation of plans and specifications means so much less money for expenditure on road construction. We have adopted the principle advocated by the Leader of the Opposition that works put in hand shall be such as will create work and help to develop the country. That has been the guiding principle in connection with Loan expenditure. It must be realised that money does not go so far now as it did a few years ago. The cost of material, labour and everything else has gone up, and there is not the quantity of work provided per pound sterling spent as was secured a few years ago.

Hon. G. Taylor: Has the cost of materials gone up during the last few years?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, costs have gone up all round. That means that although we have a record expenditure, there is not the same amount of employment provided. A point was raised regarding the criticism by the Auditor General about the salaries allocated to Loan as against those allocated to Revenue. It was strange that the Auditor General should express such an opinion in his report seeing that when he was written to asking what, in his judgment, was a fair thing to charge, he replied that he was not in a position to express an opinion on that point. Seeing that he went so far as to express such an opinion in his report, he should have been prepared to state what he considered was a fair proportion to charge against Loan expenditure. As a fact, the same policy is carried out now as has been followed during the last 30 years, and ever since the Public Works Department has been in existence. To argue that we should allocate a certain proportion of salaries to Loan expenditure and a certain proportion to Revenue, according to the amount of money expended under either heading is simply ridiculous. It is obvious that practically all money spent out of Loan Funds means so much work, whereas expenditure from Revenue is such that a good deal of the money does not result in any work at all. Take the item dealing with £22,000 for grants to various road boards. That is merely an entry out of our books. We could not charge a pro-

portion of that to salaries. That money is distributed amongst the local governing authorities and would employ a clerk for an hour or two. If that amount had been taken out of Loan funds there would be a large charge to be made against it. Then again, the item relating to £38,000 and the Main Roads Board is merely a transfer from the Public Works Department to the Federal Aid Roads Trust Account. It would occupy a clerk five minutes, not more. There are a great number of items that would be dealt with similarly and there is no relationship to the same amount of expenditure from Loan funds. It would require a man with a thorough knowledge of all the ramifications of the department to express an opinion on that particular point.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: A great deal of expenditure is charged direct to Loan funds.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, but when it comes to allocating a proportion of salaries, one has to possess a very wide knowledge of the working of the department to arrive at a basis. The procedure adopted is for the accountant to confer with the heads of the department, then discuss the position with the Under Treasurer, and later to make a recommendation to the Minister. That is a policy that has been followed ever since the Public Works Department was established.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I think they got a little too much out of it this time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The same policy has been adopted for the past 30 years.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell. The idea is the same, but the amount allocated is not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But the amount has been based on the same principle. With reference to the Fremantle harbour and the firm of engineers who have been appointed by the Government to confer with the Engineer-in-Chief and to submit a report on the harbour scheme, one member seems to have an idea that the Government will be anxious to keep back some information from the consulting engineers. I do not know what has put that thought into his head. The Government desire to get the very best decision it is

possible to secure, and naturally we shall submit to the engineer every particle of information he desires, and all that is at our disposal. If it is any solace to that particular hon. member, I will inform the Committee that we have already sent a great bundle of information to London so that it will be available for the engineer to study on his way to Western Australia. That information includes a copy of Sir George Buchanan's report, notwithstanding that he shows wharves on the top of a hill 114 feet high! We are anxious that all the information that the department possesses shall be placed at the disposal of the consulting engineer so that the soundest judgment may be passed on the scheme.

Mr. Davy: Will opportunity be given to any responsible persons to put their views before him?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In that regard I suggest that a letter be sent in outlining the views to be expressed. Such a letter will go to the engineer, and if he considers it desirable he will make arrangements to see the writer. But I do not think we could give a general undertaking in that respect.

Mr. Davy: There may be forthcoming ideas, not necessarily by experts, that would be worth while considering.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, I agree with that. But if a general invitation were issued there are so many cranks in the community that it would take this visiting engineer all his time to receive them. It means a lot of money to bring him here, and we could not undertake that all those who might want to see him should have the right to put their views before him. I suggest that in the first instance communication should be by letter, following on which the expert if he so desires can arrange to see the writers. I want to refute a statement made by the Leader of the Country Party as to the work on the Fremantle wharf. He said the lumpers' union had a domestic rule under which a 3-ton crane was not permitted to lift more than 16 cwt. There is no truth whatever in that statement. The hon. member has a habit of listening to all the tittle tattle offered him, and I think a large number of people practise putting up jokes on him in the certain knowledge that they will be brought up in Parliament. A few years ago a crane toppled over into the harbour, and the ex-

planation given was that an attempt had been made to lift too big a load with it. Thereupon the Harbour Trust issued written instructions to all crane drivers that if they lifted more than the crane was designed to lift they would be instantly dismissed. Subsequently a crane driver operating a 3-ton crane was asked to lift 3 tons 5 cwt. He declined to do it, although pressure was put on him and even bullying was resorted to by the foreman. The driver would not do it until he got written instructions from the secretary of the Harbour Trust.

Mr. Lindsay: Does that crane lift three tons?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, the crane referred to by the Leader of the Country Party lifts three tons.

Mr. Lindsay: I had information that it would lift only 16 cwt.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This is what the hon. member referred to: He said it was a domestic rule of the union. There is in the Commonwealth Arbitration Court's award a clause prescribing that not more than 15 cwt. shall be put on a truck when only two truckers are employed, and that there is to be one extra hand for every additional 5 cwt. What was pointed out to the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) on a morning when he was down there, was the coming over of 16 cwt. of pig iron when there were only two men to the truck. That is the explanation. I understand that pig iron takes a lot of hooking on down below. It is not stowed, but is put in higgledy-piggledy and has to be pulled out. So smaller slings are got up more quickly, and it pays to have only two men on the wharf. That is the true explanation, and from that it has developed to a statement in the House that the union has a domestic rule under which only 16 cwt. is permitted to be lifted by a 3-ton crane. That is an unfair statement. The Leader of the Country Party has got into the habit of making such statements and it is time he recognised the harm he is doing in that way. Some member made further reference to fees under the Scaffolding Act. Those fees are provided by law. They are in the schedule of the Act itself. Yet that member made of it a grievance against the department and said I should remedy it. But Parliament has determined those fees, and the Minister cannot interfere. I think I have

covered the main points raised during the debate. Larger issues relating to the Main Roads Board I propose to deal with pretty fully on the Loan Estimates, giving an account of what has been done, the difficulties we are up against and what it is proposed to do. We have decentralised the work, subdividing the State into nine districts, putting an engineer in charge of each of those districts and establishing a local district office. Plans and specifications will be prepared in the respective districts, instead of an engineer having to go out and put them into a field book and that field book subsequently having to be brought back here again. We shall have a district office with an engineer located in the district with his field assistant, and the whole of the work will be done out there so that the local authority can keep in touch with the office and know exactly what is going on. When plans and specifications are complete they will come up to head office for approval, and tenders will be called from that office. That will expedite the work materially, minimise costs and allow the Main Roads Board to keep in touch with the local authorities. Approval has been given for the engagement of the staff, and that plan will be put in hand right away. As I say, I will deal more fully with it when the Loan Estimates are before us.

Item—Draftsmen and cadets ranging from £72 to £288 per annum, subject to automatic increases under Public Service and cadet regulations, £2,800:

Mr LATHAM: I should like to ask the Minister whether there is any truth in the statement that cadets from the University are unable to get engagements here, although young fellows brought from other parts of the world have no such difficulty. I hope it is not true, for since we are providing a free university for those young men, it is only fair that they should be given openings here.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We initiated a scheme some years ago, under which we take all the University students during the recess and put them on to Government work, where they are kept all through the recess. Afterwards they go back to the University, having entered into an agreement with us to work for the department for two years dating from the completion of their studies at the Univer-

sity. So we are giving them, not only theoretical training at the University, but practical work in the department. We get an undertaking from them that they will stop with us for two years after leaving the University.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 11.20 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Wednesday, 31st October, 1928.*

	PAGE
Question: Stock regulations ... ..	1495
Bills: Feeding Stuffs, report ... ..	1496
Jury Act Amendment, 1A. ... ..	1515
Dog Act Amendment, recom. ... ..	1516
Police Offences (Drugs), 2A. ... ..	1517
Bunbury Electric Lighting Act Amendment, 2A. ... ..	1519
Motion: Main Roads Board administration; to inquire by Select Committee ... ..	1496

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

### QUESTION—STOCK REGULATIONS.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is the Minister aware that the regulations governing transhipment of stock, at Parkeston, from the Eastern States, were broken on or about the 13th inst.? 2, Is it true that the gates were removed or broken at the Parkeston yards, thereby allowing the cattle to travel a considerable distance over ground frequented by local dairy cattle? 3, Seeing that the incident was reported by the local stock inspector, do the Government intend to take action to prevent future breaches of the law, and avert the danger of pleuro being introduced among goldfields dairy cattle?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, From the inspector's report this would appear to be the case. 3, This matter is receiving consideration.