

Hon. J. Ewing: What difference could that possibly make?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Those members might have a leaning towards the views of the Government.

Hon. J. Ewing: I think I should object to that.

The PRESIDENT: Does the hon. member desire a withdrawal of the remark?

Hon. J. Ewing: No.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I should like to hear some other member express an opinion.

HON. G. POTTER (West) [12.0]: Mr. Hamersley's wish shall be granted. While it is quite in order in referring to the procedure under the Standing Orders, it is hardly consistent with the procedure or the traditions of this House to question the appointment of managers. The members suggested know the feelings of the House, and from the debate they will have been able to grasp the desires of the House. On many previous occasions we have appointed managers who, some members thought, would cause our representation to be somewhat loaded. I, for one, would not like the question to go to a ballot.

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

*Sitting suspended from 12.2 to 1.20 a.m.*

### *Conference Managers' Report.*

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [1.20]: I have to report that the Conference has met, concluded its business, and come to a satisfactory agreement. Legislative Council amendment No. 6 is abandoned. Legislative Council amendment No. 7 is amended by deleting the words "age" in line three and substituting "amended" in line one, and by deleting all words from "thereof" to the end. Legislative Council amendment No. 8 is abandoned. Clause 13 of the Bill is amended by deleting all words after "amended" in line one down to "age" in line three. Clause 14 of the Bill is deleted. I have now to explain the position to hon. members. All references to age have been deleted from the Bill; we go back to the old position, and the whole matter will be determined by the Commissioner of Police. Even the reference to age of drivers of motor buses has been excised. Mr. Hamersley's amendment referring to licenses for drivers of motor vehicles has been preserved

in its entirety. The amendment referring to an age limit of 17 years for persons sitting beside a licensed driver has also been removed. I wish to emphasise that the age limit has been deleted in every case. That is the effect of the decision of Conference. The amendments agreed to by the Managers are not intelligible as presented in the report, and cannot be understood unless one makes a comparison of them with the amendments made by this Chamber; but what I have stated is the effect of them. I move—

That the Conference managers' report be adopted.

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

*House adjourned at 1.25 a.m. (Friday.)*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 28th October, 1926.*

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

### QUESTION—BREAD, WHOLEMEAL AND REFINED FLOUR.

Mr. NORTH asked the Hon. S. W. Munsie (Honorary Minister): 1, Has any action yet been taken to introduce, by propaganda, in the schools the use of whole

meal diet as opposed to refined flour? 2, If not, will he indicate any objections that may have been raised to the proposal?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE replied: 1, No. 2, There is no objection, but it is probable that such propaganda directed to the parent would be productive of more result.

### QUESTION—EDUCATION, SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS.

Mr. NORTH asked the Hon. S. W. Munsie (Honorary Minister): What are his intentions regarding,—1, The proposed extensions to the Eric-street School, Cottesloe? 2, The proposed grant to assist the cost of improvements to the Cottesloe Central State School grounds? 3, The proposal to resume additional land adjoining the Swanbourne State School?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE replied: 1, Provision has been made on the draft Estimates for a new classroom, in brick, at the Eric-street State School. 2, The question of a grant to assist in improving the Cottesloe State School grounds will receive consideration as soon as it is definitely known what funds are available for schools. The provision of schools in localities where no educational facilities exist, and additions to schools where the existing accommodation is insufficient must, however, receive first consideration. 3, The question of acquiring additional land at Swanbourne has been under consideration for some time. The matter will again receive consideration when the Estimates are passed.

### QUESTION—DIVIDEND DUTIES ACT. APPEAL.

Mr. NORTH asked the Premier: Is he aware—1, That under Section 7 of the Dividend Duties Act, 1902, the Commissioner of Taxation may disallow as expenditure any money paid by a company as salary, fees, or otherwise to any director, officer, or employee of the company in so far as, in the opinion of the Commissioner, such payment was not made bona fide as remuneration for services rendered but as a means of avoiding taxation? 2, That in Dr. Stow's opinion as expressed in a letter to the Commissioner, there is no appeal in a court of justice against his decision? 3,

Is it his intention to remedy the position by introducing legislation to enable companies to appeal from the Commissioner's decision regarding their bona fides?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, It is not proposed to amend the Dividend Duties Act during this session.

### QUESTION—OLD MEN'S HOME.

Mr. NORTH asked the Hon. S. W. Munsie (Honorary Minister): 1, Is he satisfied with the present administration of the Old Men's Home? 2, Has he any reason to doubt that it is being run, at the present time, equally as well as when he took over the administration?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE replied: 1, Yes, except that it is hoped to improve the lot of the bed-ridden cases in the near future. 2, There is no reason whatever to doubt that the Home is run equally well as when the Government took office. Indeed, in certain respects in connection with dietary, the lot of the inmates has been improved.

### QUESTION—WOOROLOO SANATORIUM.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Hon. S. W. Munsie (Honorary Minister): 1, Has action been taken to provide a suitable motor vehicle to convey patients and visitors to and from the Wooroloo Sanatorium? 2, If not, when will it be done? 3, Has a decision been reached regarding the erection of necessary fencing of the Sanatorium, thereby preventing annoyance to patients caused by straying stock?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE replied: 1 and 2, Tenders are at present being invited for the supply of motor transport both for passengers and goods to and from the Sanatorium. 3, There is no change in the position regarding the proposed fencing from the position reported in reply to a question some two months ago. The question of fencing was under consideration by the hon. member when Colonial Secretary, and its urgency has not increased since that time.

Mr. Sampson: Time should bring improvements.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Apparently no progress is possible in this country.

## QUESTION—CANNING RIVER, WEIR.

Mr. CLYDESDALE asked the Minister for Works: 1, Does he intend to construct a weir across the Canning River at Kent-street, Cannington? 2, If so, when does he propose to commence operations?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM (for the Minister for Works) replied: 1, Yes. 2, The materials are being assembled, and operations will be commenced early next month.

## BILL—ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

### *Second Reading.*

### THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [4.37] in moving the second reading said: For some time an agitation has been in progress amongst the agricultural societies of this State for the purpose of securing legislation on the lines set out in this measure. Owing to the lack of co-ordination amongst the agricultural societies, the Royal Agricultural Society and the delegates who meet at the council of the Royal Agricultural Society in Perth from time to time are asking for legislation that will give them the power of control and also enable them to carry on the administration and activities of their societies more satisfactorily. It is generally desired that there should be a recognised body capable of dealing with all the questions that arise from time to time between the societies, and that the head should be the Royal Agricultural Society of Western Australia. The Royal Agricultural Society has functioned in Western Australia for many years, and the fact that the greater number of agricultural societies in the State are affiliated is evidence that it is recognised as the head of agricultural societies in the State. It is desired under the Bill that the Royal Agricultural Society should be vested with the necessary authority as the governing head. The association between the local societies and the Royal has served a useful purpose and has been a cordial one. I have not heard of any instance of any serious disagreement having arisen. The aim of the Royal is to work harmoniously with the local societies and to help and encourage them as far as possible in all their activities. The agricultural societies play a very important part in the development of the State. In addition to fostering the educational and

social sides, they advertise their respective localities and create a feeling of rivalry and competition which, of course, is beneficial alike to the localities and the industries of the State. We look upon the Royal Show as the event of the year. To attend it people come from all parts, and competitors are attracted not only from within the State but from beyond its bounds. I think it can be said that the Royal Show is the best possible advertisement that the State could have, and for that reason the society should be encouraged. There are 60 societies affiliated with the Royal, and for the purpose of effective administration those societies are grouped into zones. The Royal assists not only by providing judges, but by arranging the dates and endeavouring to prevent the date of a show in any zone conflicting with that of another show in the same zone.

Hon. G. Taylor: I wish they would hold all the shows on the one date. Then there would not be so many members absent.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am glad they are not all held on the one date.

Mr. Lindsay: The member for Mt. Margaret is only jealous because an agricultural show is not held in his district.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is desirable that visitors should be able to attend the various shows and benefit from the lessons imparted by them. The affiliation fee is the modest sum of £1 1s. A majority of the local societies are affiliated with the Royal. A number are not affiliated, but they work under the Royal and are able to get the benefit of the exchange of stock and exhibits that goes with affiliation. They are exempted for a period until it is proved whether they can conduct a show successfully on the recognised lines. The societies desire the control provided in the Bill because they have no real control over their own show grounds or over exhibitors. Some exhibitors may give trouble, and it is impossible for the Royal Society or any of the local societies to take any step to regulate the conduct of exhibitors. It has occurred that an exhibitor assaulted a judge on the show ground because he was not satisfied with the award of the judge.

Hon. G. Taylor: Footballers often assault the umpire.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That sort of thing should not occur, particularly with societies of this description. Again, it has happened that the local authorities have made arrangements with the

Railway Department to put in trucks for the purpose of bringing exhibits to a show on an understanding with the exhibitor, and that the exhibitor has not kept faith, with the result that the societies have been inconvenienced and put to expense. It is desired that the societies should have some control over such conduct. I understand that when the Leader of the Opposition was Minister for Agriculture, at a time when the Government were subsidising agricultural societies, he called a meeting of the societies and expressed a strong desire for affiliation. A Bill was, I think, then drafted; and for some years it has been the intention of Governments to introduce a measure of this character. However, for some reason which I am unable to state, the introduction of the Bill has been delayed. The time now, however, is opportune for legislation of this character, and the Bill under consideration should serve the purpose. The president and secretary of the Royal Agricultural Society have discussed the measure with me. Although I could not see my way to agree to the Bill which they proposed, still, after discussion of the amendments which I introduced, they think this Bill will serve the purpose admirably. The measure is to be known as the Royal Agricultural Society Act, 1926, and is to come into operation on a date to be proclaimed. It will be noted that "the Royal Agricultural Society" means the Royal Agricultural Society of Western Australia. "Agricultural Society" means any society or association registered in pursuance of this measure. "Agricultural show" means any show having for its principal object the exhibition of agricultural or pastoral products. The Bill provides that no society, club, or association shall hold or permit an agricultural show until such society, club, or association shall have become registered with the Royal Agricultural Society. In order to secure this registration, the society, club, or association must make application in writing to the Royal Agricultural Society, and 10 persons must sign such application. That should not be difficult; it is a very small locality where there are not 10 persons sufficiently interested to create a society of this character. The Royal Agricultural Society may grant registration on payment of the prescribed fee. I understand that the affiliation fee at present is one guinea, which is not very much. All existing societies have the right, under the Bill, to registration, and the Royal Agricultural Society cannot refuse registra-

tion. No cavilling can deny an existing society the right of registration. In the case of new societies, as well as in the case of established societies, if the Royal Agricultural Society should refuse registration, an appeal can be made to the Minister for Agriculture, whose decision shall be given effect to. Therefore the Bill does not give the Royal Agricultural Society power to refuse registration absolutely. A society which has been refused registration may appeal to the Minister for Agriculture against the decision of the Royal Society, and the Minister's decision shall be final and shall be carried into effect. In that way we exercise an influence over the Royal Society. Further, the Royal Society must keep at their head office in Perth a register of societies registered under this measure, and the register must be open for inspection. Uniform by-laws governing all registered agricultural societies shall be made at a meeting of the council of the Royal Society sitting together with delegates of the registered agricultural societies and meeting in conference on a date to be fixed by the Royal Society. It will be noted that the rules are not to be made by the Royal Society, but by the council of that society sitting in conjunction with delegates of the affiliated societies throughout Western Australia. That will give all the societies a voice in determining what the rules and by-laws of the organisation shall be. Any agricultural society may make by-laws for the regulation of matters of local concern, provided such by-laws are not inconsistent with the uniform by-laws or regulations made at the conference to which I have already referred. All by-laws and regulations under the measure will be subject to the approval of the Governor, and must be laid upon the Table of this House. If they are not fair and reasonable, they may be objected to in the same way as this House has the right to object to other by-laws and regulations.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If they have the force of law, they must be laid on the Table.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** Yes. Under the Bill the Governor may make regulations for the registration of all agricultural societies and for the cancellation of such registration for breach of by-laws or other sufficient cause. The Governor may also make regulations for the convenience and holding of the conference, as well as by-laws prescribing all other matters and things that may be necessary or convenient

for carrying out the provisions of this measure. The Bill is very small. I hope there will be no objection to the provisions embodied in it. I believe it meets with the approval of the Royal Society and of the other agricultural societies.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You have conferred with them, have you not?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And they have agreed to this Bill?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

Hon. G. Taylor: Have you consulted all the small societies?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No. I have, however, protected those societies, inasmuch as I have given them a voice in the drawing up of the rules, and inasmuch as nothing can be done in regard to rules and regulations without their consent and agreement. I do not think there will be any objection, because I have here a file, furnished to me by the Royal Society, containing a large number of letters from affiliated societies asking for this legislation.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is perfectly reasonable.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I hope, therefore, that the Bill will meet with cordial acceptance from hon. members, and I have pleasure in moving—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [4.54]: I have no objection to offer to the Bill. Indeed, I think it is very necessary. Years ago the Government subsidised agricultural societies, but it was stipulated that before they could draw any subsidy they must affiliate with the Royal Agricultural Society. In that way some control was secured. Recent developments make it quite clear that some organisation must have power to deal with those who default, it may be, in the payment of entrance fees, those who abuse officials, those who have differences with judges, and those who exhibit stock in other than fair fashion. Therefore it is necessary that the Royal Agricultural Society should have the powers which the Minister now proposes to confer upon them. Agricultural shows do a great deal of good. Largely they are shows of pure stock, and it is necessary that the stock shown should be true to type. If a pedigree is produced, it should be a pedigree properly applying to

the animal exhibited. It is not possible for show authorities to prosecute for fraud, but under this measure there will be power to disqualify persons guilty of fraud; and they ought to be disqualified. People guilty of fraud at agricultural shows should have the same treatment meted out to them as is now meted out to those who transgress the rules of racing.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Under the Bill, the parent body and all agricultural Bill, the parent body and all agricultural societies affiliated will have the right to disqualify. That is particularly necessary in these days, when most of our prizes are for pedigreed stock, and when we have herd books and other means of recording pedigrees. Stock are brought into the country, and pedigrees with them, and we want to be certain that all is straight and right. To that end we should see that transgressors can be penalised. If, after the passage of this measure, a man goes to, say, Geraldton with an exhibit which is not in accordance with the requirements of the programme of prizes, and if he misrepresents the exhibit, he can be dealt with. If he is disqualified at Geraldton and the disqualification is approved by the Royal Society, his name will be entered on the "black list" or list of defaulters or disqualified persons, and he will not be able to exhibit in future. It will mean that the societies will have control over exhibits and over exhibitors too, and that some authority will be exercised. The Minister has mentioned two unpleasant happenings affecting a secretary and a show judge. Such things must not be. People who give their time in connection with shows—and nearly all judges act in an honorary capacity—must be protected. But that is not the important matter. The chief point is that exhibits shall be what they purport to be, and the societies must have the right to deal with persons who act otherwise than squarely at shows. Agricultural shows are of vital importance to the country. Once a year at each centre people interested in stock can go and see the best breeds, see what a Jersey or a Shorthorn cow or a Clydesdale stallion ought to be.

Hon. G. Taylor: Mr. Boas should be sent to look at your dairy herd.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is important that all exhibits should be true to type. To-day we have a show of flowers

in the Town Hall. There one finds many exhibits which are just what they are supposed to be. This year I have visited three or four agricultural shows held to encourage the breeding of stock. Every year we see better and better stock, except in some classes. At this year's Royal Show there was a wonderful display of sheep and an excellent display of pigs. There were also some very good cattle, though the display was not all that it might have been. However, the type was excellent. The sad feature of the Royal Show to me was the disappearance of draught stock, and I may say the horses generally. At the first show I visited, that at Meekering, there was a Clydesdale stallion owned by the Government, and one other horse, which ought not to have been there. At the Nungarin show I saw one very good horse, a draught stallion, and also a trotting stallion. I went to the Northam show. That gathering is held in the centre of a very old agricultural district where at one time large numbers of well bred stallions were seen in the stock parades. The locally bred stock from that district held their own with the products of any other part of the country and many of them proved their superiority at the Royal Agricultural shows. On this occasion, however, no draught stallion and only one thoroughbred stallion was shown. I do not know what we are going to do about it, but we might be able to arrange for the agricultural societies to take charge of draught stallions and so supply a want that is apparent at present. It is quite evident to me that horse breeding is not very popular at the moment, although this is just the time when that occupation should be popular. The industry will be profitable because we must have draught stock. Every ship from the Eastern States brings in draught stock and yet there is none bred within the State. In the Northam district this year it was not possible to go in for breeding, because there were no draught stallions available. The same thing may be said of other districts.

Hon. G. Taylor: Dealing in light horses is unprofitable.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am referring to draught stock. Of course, there are hundreds of the inferior type that can be procured, but they are not the animals we want for agricultural purposes. We want animals that can be sold as remounts. When the affiliation conditions regarding

agricultural societies are tightened up, it will be possible to encourage the breeding of the heavy stock required on the farm and also of the several breeds of cattle suitable for various districts. Why should we bring draught stock from the Eastern States when we were able to breed the necessary stock ourselves in years gone by? Good must come from the agricultural societies getting together. This may lead to the subsidising of the societies in respect of stallions throughout the State. Agriculture plays a big and leading part in most countries to-day, and in other parts special steps are taken to assure the breeding of suitable stock. In Ireland specially good mares are subsidised, whereas in other countries sires are subsidised. The Minister knows that Continental Governments take steps to keep up the standard of their blood stock and pay very high prices for animals in order to maintain their standards. That applies to horses especially. In Australia we have not taken any trouble in this respect. To-day the Arab, the Timor, the Percheron, and the Clydesdales are as pure as they ever were. On the other hand, in Australia we do not worry about mixing the breeds, with the result that the standard of our horses has deteriorated. I hope the affiliation of the various agricultural societies will prove helpful, for, by acting together they may be able to make suggestions regarding the weaknesses that are evident in our agricultural life to-day. At any rate, it will give them the opportunity to do so, and I hope the officers of the Agricultural Department will make special efforts to secure the promotion of horse breeding again. The Chief Inspector of Stock might well give consideration to the question. To-day we are putting thousands of people on the land and not all of them are in a position to buy tractors and so forth. The Minister for Lands told us that there are over 1,000 horses on the group settlements at present. The settlers there will require at least 1,000 more. Many other people will take up land and they, too, will require stock. The agricultural societies can help in that direction. Thus it is that the breeding of stock is essential in the interests of the farmers. I can see nothing but good likely to come from the operations of the Bill and it has my hearty support. Only transgressors can raise objections to such a measure and to the regulations that will be framed under the Bill. As to the suggestion that people in small centres will not be able

to hold shows because permission is likely to be withheld, it has to be remembered that provision is made for an appeal to the Minister. As a matter of fact, we do not want too many shows throughout the country. We want good shows at convenient places. What with our railways and motor cars, people in country districts can travel easily to the centre where a show is to be held.

Mr. Latham: But they cannot transport their stock so easily.

The Minister for Agriculture: Shows should be a creditable business.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. We want fairly good shows and it is not possible to hold shows every ten miles or so. I am sure no objection will be raised by the parent body to the establishment of other agricultural societies and the holding of shows.

Hon. G. Taylor: But the Bill will give the Royal Agricultural Society a monopoly.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, it will not.

The Minister for Agriculture: No, of course not.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It does not give the society a monopoly at all.

The Minister for Agriculture: It merely gives the society statutory power.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Someone has to administer the legislation and the regulations. As the result of the deliberations of representatives of the various show committees, suitable regulations will be framed. I not only willingly give my support to the Bill, but feel sure that the time has come when we should have some such legislation enacted. We are not slow in this House in taking away liberty from people. In this instance, however, what is provided for is a guild in which everyone is free. There is no compulsion about it.

Mr. Sleeman: There is no job control.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And no compulsion at all. The Bill is a very moderate one and all that can be done is to require that all people controlling agricultural shows shall see to it that the proper standard is maintained and the necessary regulations observed. I hope the Government will find it possible to subsidise agricultural societies as was done at one time. By the means provided in the Bill it will be possible to see that any such money is well spent. Agricultural shows are of great importance to Western Australia because people are brought together in order to study the various breeds and standards of

stock. In a country such as ours, where many people have gone on the land without experience, it is of great importance that opportunities shall be provided for them to see stock of an excellent type. Some people I am acquainted with knew nothing about stock a few years ago, but to-day they are successful exhibitors. I welcome the Bill and hope the House will agree to pass it. It will make for much better control, and I believe the authority sought to be set up will work for good and do something to improve our methods of agriculture and our stock throughout the farming areas.

On motion for Mr. Latham, debate adjourned.

## BILL—CITY OF PERTH ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [5.15] in moving the second reading said: The Bill, like most of those I introduce, is a very small one.

Mr. Sampson: And consequently dangerous.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think so. Last year we passed a Bill conferring on the City of Perth additional powers relating to the alignment of streets. It was thought at the time that the legislation met all requirements but, according to the solicitors for the City Council, it seems there is a doubt as to whether the Act applies to vacant land. The Act provides that the City Council shall have power to declare a new street alignment when an old building is being removed to make room for a new one, but it is open to doubt whether the Act applies to vacant land on which a building is about to be erected.

Hon. G. Taylor: That seems strange.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is grave doubt about it. The Bill removes that doubt, for it makes the Act apply also to vacant areas. When the Act was passed last year, I think Parliament intended there should be no doubt whatever about vacant land.

Hon. G. Taylor: Do you know whether there have been any cases to test the Act?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot say, but there is a doubt about the application of the Act to vacant land, and the City Council desires that that doubt should be

removed. The Bill provides that the Act shall apply to land upon which no building or work, or portion of a building or work, is erected or in course of erection at the time of the prescribing of the new building line, or the date of such prescribing, or on the date of the commencement of this measure, whichever shall be the later date. It merely makes it clear and definite that the Act shall apply to vacant land, just as it applies to land upon which a building is or has been erected. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. G. Taylor, debate adjourned.

## BILL—DAIRY CATTLE COMPENSATION.

### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE** (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [5.20] in moving the second reading said: The Bill is introduced largely as the result of the activities of the Stock Department during last year. That department has been endeavouring to clean up the dairy herds in the metropolitan area, and has been administering very rigidly the Stock Diseases Act relating to tuberculosis or actinomycosis in our dairy herds. In consequence of cattle being condemned and destroyed, a deputation waited on me and asked that compensation should be provided for those dairymen whose stock had been destroyed by compulsion. They claimed that their livelihood was at stake as the result of departmental action, that they were not a very prosperous community, that they had to work long hours, that they had built up their herds over a number of years by exercising care and industry and thrift, and that they felt very strongly the action of the department in destroying what they had so laboriously built up. They also claimed that if the community was to be protected by the provision of a pure milk supply, the community should compensate the dairymen who ran the risks of the trade. Of course, that is not to be admitted in any principle. In almost every industry, the persons carrying on the industry take the risk. But much can be said for those in the dairy industry, because the community are protected by the Stock Diseases Act. In order to give them the protection of a pure milk supply, we

have entered into dairymen's premises and seized and destroyed their stock. I do not know any other industry in which the department acts so decisively. There are other industries penalised by enactments such as the Noxious Weeds Act.

Mr. Latham: That is pretty well a dead letter.

The **MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: Under that Act we do not go in and deal with the offender as decisively as we deal with the dairymen. Then there is the Plant Diseases Act, giving the department extensive powers, and imposing penalties. However, none of these other Acts goes so far as to empower the department to destroy a man's means of livelihood. Since the stringent measures taken against infected cattle are for the protection of the community, I really think the dairymen are deserving of some consideration. In the Bill compensation is based on the principle of self-help by means of an insurance scheme under which the owner contributes a certain sum in registration fees. To the amount so subscribed, the Government will contribute a further sum, and the two amounts, the registration fee plus the Government contribution, will constitute the compensation fund. Compensation shall be paid to the owner of cattle destroyed by the department to the extent of 90 per cent. of the assessed value of the animals destroyed, the Government contributing two-fifths of the amount payable, and the dairymen the remaining three-fifths. Compensation can only be paid subject to registration in accordance with the Bill, and registration is compulsory. The claimant must have made registration at least 14 days prior to making a claim, except in such circumstances as the Minister may decide.

Hon. G. Taylor: Who assesses the value of the stock?

The **MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: I will come to that. Where it can be proved that the owner of the stock has not registered because of certain valid considerations, the Minister will have power to set aside the condition that the owner should have registered 14 days before making his claim. For the purposes of the Bill, no animal shall be assessed at a value exceeding £15, and the claimant will be paid only up to 90 per cent. of the assessed value. The assessed value of animals slaughtered shall be determined by the inspector ordering their destruction and the



owner of the beasts. Provision is made whereby, in the event of a disagreement between the owner and the inspector, the Minister shall appoint an independent arbitrator whose decision shall be final. The Minister will be able to act impartially, because the amount is to be paid from the fund, and so all the Minister has to do is to appoint an independent arbitrator, whose decision shall be final. Registration of dairy herds for the purposes of the Bill shall be compulsory in such districts as shall be defined by proclamation. It is proposed first to confine the measure to the metropolitan area. In that area during the past 12 months the Stock Department has inspected between 3,000 and 4,000 dairy cows, a percentage of which has been taken out of the herds and destroyed.

Mr. Griffiths: What percentage?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: A pretty small one, only about 32 beasts in all. If a similar inspection had been carried out in previous years, the percentage would have been still smaller, for the herds would have been cleaner. It is proposed to proclaim the Act first in the metropolitan area, and to extend it later by further proclamations. In the metropolitan area there are 6,000 dairy cows. The registration of those animals at 2s. per head will provide £600 as a nucleus for the fund. It will be necessary, therefore, for the Government to set aside £300 towards the operations of the Act in the first year. The Bill provides that if the funds become sufficiently strong to warrant a reduction in the amount provided to make up the fund, this shall be done.

Hon. G. Taylor: Proportionately.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. There would be no value in establishing a fund and holding a big sum of money unless that money was utilised for the purposes set forth in the measure.

Mr. Latham: Are you going to pay for the inspectors out of the fund?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No. The administration will be carried out by the inspectors under the Stock Diseases Act. Nothing will be paid out of the fund except by way of compensation. Any animal that is ordered to be slaughtered must be delivered at a Government abattoir and slaughtered there. After it is slaughtered there the value of the carcass or part thereof will be passed into the compensation fund. The Bill says that the proceeds

shall remain the property of the Government. It must be the property of someone, but actually the proceeds will be paid into the compensation fund.

Hon. G. Taylor: Who will control the fund?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Nominally the Treasury, but actually the Department of Agriculture will control it. I consider that dairymen are entitled to some consideration at the hands of the community. Their lot is a difficult one. I do not think anyone can say that dairying is a prosperous calling, or that it attracts great numbers to it. The life is a hard one. The people engaged in that occupation rise early in the morning and work long hours. There is natural feed available only for a few months of the year, and for the rest of the year the cattle have to be hand fed. When officers of the department enter a dairy farm and take cattle out and destroy them, this must be a great blow to the owners. As this Bill will be the means of protecting the community, the community should pay a little by way of compensation of this character.

Mr. Sampson: Will the Bill be restricted to the two diseases mentioned in it?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. The cattle can by law be destroyed for pleuro, but that would not be done for the sake of the health of the community, but in order to protect the remainder of the herd.

Hon. G. Taylor: It would be the same with rinderpest.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. This compensation is to be given because we intend to protect the community. We, therefore, think the community should to some extent compensate the owners for the cattle destroyed. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Sampson, debate adjourned.

## BILL—SPECIAL LEASE (ESPERANCE PINE PLANTATION).

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 21st October.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [5.35]: For some time past people in this country with money have been buying shares in a company promoted to carry on pine planting in New Zealand. I al-

ways thought it was wrong that our money should go to New Zealand when pine trees, that would prove so useful in this State, can be grown here. People put their money into this venture no doubt lured by the promise of a substantial and quick return. The company in question has expressed a desire to plant pines in Western Australia. In submitting the Bill the Minister asked the House to authorise the issue of a conditional purchase lease of 45,000 acres. Under the Land Act the amount is limited to 5,000 acres of second class land, and concerning anything beyond that area Parliament must be consulted. We have heard from the Minister that the people who are applying for this lease believe that pine trees will grow well in this area. I do not know if the Minister has consulted the Forests Department.

The Minister for Lands: I read the report.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It appears that the Forests Department are favourable to the granting of this lease. The railway line from Esperance to Salmon Gums runs through a portion of the area. I have been across from Salmon Gums to Esperance, and I know something of the land in question.

Hon. G. Taylor: Did you not go through at night time?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope it will be found that pine trees will grow there, and that the Minister is not letting go any land suitable for agriculture. We have plenty of land of the class in question, but not too much land near Esperance of the class that will grow wheat.

The Minister for Lands: I made full inquiries about that beforehand.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I suppose the land has been thoroughly classified. If the trees will grow there, after some years we shall reap the reward. Under the Bill it is provided that 1,000 acres will be planted in the first year, and a similar area during each year thereafter. It will, therefore, be a long time before the full area is planted. I hope it may be possible to carry out the programme earlier than that. There is a good deal of coastal land of a quality the Minister seeks to sell to these people, so that I am not going to object to the passage of this Bill. The Minister rightly provides that a freehold may issue for each thousand acres when pines have been properly planted upon it. If we are going to do the thing at all, it is just

as well we should do it generously, and encourage these people to put their money into the venture. We cannot, of course, accept any responsibility as to whether or not the trees will grow there, but we can permit these people to feel that when 1,000 acres have been planted and properly cared for, their investment, so far as the title goes, is safe. I should object to the arrangement if anything better could be done with this land, but I think no better can be done with it according to the report the Minister has submitted to the House. Some members think that land can be classified merely by driving through it, but one cannot see much of an area of 45,000 acres over a trip of a few miles. We can, however, accept the report of the department upon this area. In order that the money may be kept within the State, and these trees grown here, we should assist the Minister in the passage of the Bill. I have often wondered why people are so willing to invest their money in pine plantations in New Zealand. They might well consider that it would be worth while to plant wattle trees in order to obtain tanning bark within the State. In British East Africa, as well as in South Australia, a great deal of money is made from the growing of wattle trees. British East Africa obtained its seed from South Australia, and has been growing these trees for years. The wet parts of this country are suited for the growing of wattle. At Harvey and in various parts of the South-West some wonderful trees can be seen on the railway reserve. I think that from the Moore River to Albany we could grow wattle successfully and profitably, possibly more profitably than other trees could be grown. The return would be quicker, for the tree grows at a fast rate. The trouble in this country is that there are too few of these trees grown. It is like the people in Heaven as compared with those in another place. There are so few of them to do the work that they have a fairly hard time. In this favoured country of ours there are so few people that we, too, have a fairly hard time, and we have not been able to do the things that can most profitably be done. I hope the result of this planting will be to call the attention of other enterprising people to the opportunity which is afforded of investing money in the growing of other profitable trees. There is no reason why we should not do a considerable amount in this direction. If British East Africa can take seeds from Australia, grow trees, and market the bark, surely in the home of the

seed we can do more than we are doing. I hope this venture will prove successful. We are letting go a fairly large area of land, but the position is safeguarded to the extent that it must be planted. An undertaking of this nature involves a considerable outlay of money. If the trees grow well, a considerable revenue will come to the Government by way of the transport charges that will be imposed on the timber. I am glad that the enterprise is being entered upon, and have no desire to oppose the passage of the Bill.

**MR. SAMPSON** (Swan) [5.43]: I am glad the Bill has been brought down. The idea is a splendid one. Our imports of softwood, I believe, average something like £100,000 in value every year; consequently there is a good opportunity for the growing of that timber in this State. I had an opportunity when in New Zealand of seeing what is being done there in respect to the afforestation of soft woods. I have also seen what is being done in South Australia. These trees are being grown on what may be termed land of a nondescript character, and that is very often the best type of land for the production of softwood. There is a great deal of land in Western Australia that has proved good for the production of *pinus insignis* and *pinus pinaster*, and other pines. In the Darling Ranges the Forests Department are doing splendid work. Some hundreds of acres of pine plantations were recently inspected by the Premier. I understand he expressed surprise and admiration at the wonderful growth that had been made in so short a period.

The Premier: Admiration for the work of my own department.

**MR. SAMPSON**: I am advised that the Premier put up something of a record in the number of miles that he walked.

The Premier: I did that, and became very tired.

**MR. SAMPSON**: If there is anything calculated to weaken the physical powers of a member it is the long hours that he has to spend in the House. The ex-Premier had a similar weakness. It was difficult to prevent him walking a long distance if there was a cow to be seen or a new grass to be inspected. Out from Ballarat a great deal has been done in the way of producing soft woods. These are now being used for the making of fruit cases in the dried fruit areas. That must mean an immense saving. Speaking of the wattle of commerce, one of the varie-

ties of the acacia, I can endorse what has been said by the Leader of the Opposition. I have never seen better wattle trees than are to be seen in Western Australia. Unfortunately there are only a few examples, and those have been specially planted. The late Mr. Thomas Blake, who was town clerk in the municipality of North Perth, was responsible for having the broad-leaved wattle planted in some of the streets of that suburb. Those trees can be inspected to-day; they are of immense size and their appearance goes to prove that if wattle planting were entered upon in a commercial way, it would prove a payable proposition. In South Australia, small farmers add to their income each year by stripping wattle trees when they reach maturity. I can speak with some assurance in this respect because when I was a lad I did a good deal of it. I understand that other members in this House spent some of their youthful days in a similar way. It is a great pity that Western Australia has not seized the opportunity that exists here to grow wattle because there is no climate more suitable for its production than that of this State. I welcome the Bill and I hope the company that is to be formed will prove successful. It has been a matter of deep regret to me to know that a large sum of money has been sent out of Western Australia to assist in the growth of soft woods in New Zealand and certain of the Eastern States. I support the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time

*In Committee, etc.*

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

## BILL—WIRE AND WIRE NETTING.

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 7th October.

**MR. LATHAM** (York) [5.52]: There can be no objection to this Bill as the Minister has told us the object is to confirm the advances that have been made.

**MR. SLEEMAN**: You must be in favour of State trading.

**MR. LATHAM**: If all legislation proved as helpful as this is likely to be, we would have no occasion to worry.

Mr. Marshall: Who is going to be the judge?

Mr. LATHAM: The supply of netting has proved of great benefit to the farmers of this State, and I am pleased that the Minister has been able to render assistance at such a time. If the netting had not been distributed early, there would have been great destruction caused by rabbits. I do not know of any instance where Government officials have been so active as in the case of the handling of the netting for distribution. They all seemed to realise the importance of getting the work done quickly. Having come closely into contact with the work of those officials, I can vouch for the expedition that they used. I hope the Minister will get the money from the Commonwealth. It will not be a gift to the people, but it will mean a slight reduction in interest. Anything that we can do to assist in the netting of the agricultural lands will mean not only protecting the assets of the farmers, but it will improve the value of the production, and it will further mean that every time we enclose a holding, that holding will be rendered capable of carrying additional stock. It may also mean a mortgage, but the mortgage on the holding is necessary. The amount, however, will be small and the security of the property will not be affected. The Associated Banks have fallen in with the idea, knowing that the asset is doubly protected by the erection of the fence. As I said last night, the people in my district appreciate very much the efforts made by the Minister for Lands in getting the work done quickly. There is no reason why the Bill should not be adopted in its entirety.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [5.56]: I have no intention of opposing the measure because I realise the importance of rendering assistance to the agricultural industry in the manner intended. It is a remarkable thing how some members can support a measure such as this without apparently a blush upon their faces, and at the same time, almost within 24 hours, they can oppose a measure on all-fours with it, even when the Government have actually expended money without the authority of Parliament.

Mr. Latham: To what are you referring?

Mr. MARSHALL: State insurance.

Mr. Latham: A totally different thing.

Mr. MARSHALL: Of course, and hon. members take a delight in urging the Gov-

ernment to leave private enterprise alone. That is the substance of their argument.

Mr. Latham: Are you going to vote against the Bill?

Mr. MARSHALL: That is a matter for my conscience and I shall exercise it more amiably than does the hon. member on many occasions. I merely rose for the purpose of drawing attention to the unblushing way in which some members attack the Government because of what they call the Government's socialistic legislation, and the manner in which the Government dabble in State trading. I would like to hear what the member for West Perth has to say on the question. It is most interesting to hear members speak on legislation of this nature, if only for the purpose of finding out the type of political acrobats that they are. This will be of value on the hustings in March next.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [5.58]: Some of my friends who wanted wire netting a little time ago had to give a mortgage over their property. The mortgage rather stifled them. The whole of the area was secured against dogs and rabbits except two miles of it that needed to be fenced. I do not know whether I am correct in saying that a mortgage under this Bill will be on an equality with a prior mortgage.

The Minister for Lands: We have priority under the Bill.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: You supersede other mortgages?

Mr. Latham: Only by arrangement.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Bill will certainly be of great value to the people so long as the netting supplied is sufficient.

The Minister for Lands: There is no limitation.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not know what conditions obtain, but I was told that five miles would be the maximum granted to any one individual.

Mr. Latham: The Federal Act fixes that.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I have an idea that it is fixed by regulation under the Federal Act.

The Minister for Lands: That does not apply to this measure. I shall explain it later.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [6.0]: I seem to have received a challenge to make a speech on this Bill and I am not afraid to accept it. The tail-end of the speech of the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) appeared

to indicate that he had made a strong protest against the inconsistency of members on this side of the House. It is a poor kind of creature who is afraid of being inconsistent.

Mr. Sleeman: It is a bit inconsistent, is it not?

Mr. DAVY: I do not think so, but if it were inconsistent, I should not be afraid to alter my mind. Any man who governs his views by some rigid formula becomes a valueless member of the community—

Mr. Sleeman: But there is a vital principal involved.

Mr. DAVY: And a valueless member of this Assembly. We are charged with having accepted the principle laid down in this Bill, whereas we contested, as a matter of general principle, the advisableness of State trading. This Bill does not appear to involve State trading in any sense of the term. The Premier smiles and I feel sure that he agrees with me.

The Premier: That is why I am smiling.

Mr. DAVY: All that is proposed by this Bill is that the Government shall have power to advance money to settlers who wish to buy wire netting, and allow them to repay it on long terms secured by a mortgage over their property. That is not State trading. It has not the elements of State trading. It is not not competition with other people.

Mr. Sleeman: Of course it is.

The Minister for Lands: This Bill does not say that. It provides for wire netting supplies.

Mr. DAVY: What is the difference? The Minister knows there is no difference between providing the wire netting or the cash with which to buy wire netting. The Agricultural Bank makes advances to persons for specific purposes and when they receive the money they have to expend it for those specific purposes. In fact they have to spend it before they get it. The chief criticism levelled against the Government over the State Insurance Bill was that they embarked upon the State insurance business first of all and then asked the approval of Parliament.

Mr. Sleeman: That is what this Bill does.

Mr. DAVY: No, the Bill asks the permission of Parliament and proposes to carry out the work after permission has been obtained.

Mr. Sleeman: How much wire have the Government bought already?

Mr. DAVY: Is there any Act of Parliament that forbids the Government to buy wire?

Mr. Sleeman: No, it is quite right, but last week it was quite wrong.

Mr. DAVY: I am not aware that the Government have bought any wire netting, though they might have done so. If they have done so, and if for any reason this Bill is defeated, they could always sell the wire netting and no one would be any the wiser. If for any reason the State Insurance Bill—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not discuss the State Insurance Bill.

Mr. DAVY: If on the other hand the other measure were defeated, the Government could not revert to the position in which they stood previously. I do not think any member on this side of the House is afraid of being charged with being inconsistent occasionally. It is impossible to lay down a rigid principle and apply it with absolute exactness all the time. The needs of the country are elastic.

Hon. G. Taylor: And the views of the farmers are more so.

Mr. DAVY: In agreeing to this Bill I can see no departure from the principle that actuated most members on this side of the House in opposing the State Insurance Bill. The members for Murchison and Fremantle are extraordinarily difficult to satisfy. If we fight their Bills they get very cross.

Hon. G. Taylor: Venomous at times.

Mr. DAVY: Almost venomous. They work themselves almost into a passion, as the Minister for Works did the other night. Some of them look towards us with looks of hatred and contempt.

Mr. Sampson: Some of them with murder in their eyes.

Mr. DAVY: That is how they regarded us the other night. Now, when we approve of a Bill, the member for Fremantle works himself into a passion. There is no satisfying members opposite. I propose to refrain from making any attempt to satisfy them, but shall vote on any measure as I think proper. I hope other members on this side will continue to do likewise.

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [6.7]: I support the second reading. This is a subject of which I know something. I congratulate the Minister for Lands on having taken the action that he has done. Although the measure contemplates a departure, it cannot be described as State trading. We have in existence an Agricultural Bank and an Industries Assistance Board who

are prepared to advance to settlers money for wire netting and who have done so. Unfortunately they have not been as liberal in their advances for wire netting as they should have been. Some time ago the Federal Government decided to make available to the State certain money free of interest for the purchase of wire netting. This State secured a large share of that grant. Later the Federal Parliament agreed to provide a certain amount with interest.

The Minister for Lands : The Federal Parliament has not yet agreed to it.

Mr. LINDSAY : I am aware that the measure has not yet been passed. The Federal Government agreed to find a certain amount to provide wire netting. Pending the passing of the Federal measure, this State could not afford to wait for the wire netting. I told the Minister for Lands some months ago that if we obtained 2,000 miles of wire netting early enough, the saving of damage to the crops would more than pay the total cost of the netting. Unfortunately we did not obtain it quite early enough, but it came to hand in sufficient time to save damage to quite a lot of the crops. Before I entered Parliament I accompanied to Perth a neighbour of mine who had been practically driven off the land through the rabbits eating his crops. I approached the then Minister for Agriculture and he agreed to go to the trustees of the Agricultural Bank and ascertain whether they would grant advances for wire netting. That was in 1922, which was rather a dry season owing to the lack of spring rains. A considerable number of failures in the wheat belt have been due to the non-provision of advances for netting holdings. A private financial institution in my district, before it will take a client, insists upon his providing a certain amount of netting around his holding, and that is not a State trading concern. The Minister, in providing wire netting, is not doing anything that the State has not done before. The Government have been lending money to people on the land, and that is all they propose to do under this measure. By no stretch of imagination can that be termed State trading. The sole object is to make advances of wire netting to the farmers in order that they may protect their crops. That is the right thing to do, and I compliment the Minister for Lands on having done it. There is nothing socialistic about the scheme. Private institutions have

been making similar advances for years and they cannot be described as socialistic concerns. In the wheat belt the banks are advancing money for wire netting on the security of a mortgage.

The Minister for Railways: And insurance companies are doing insurance business.

Mr. LINDSAY: Before a settler can obtain an advance for wire netting, his title must be investigated and the Agricultural Bank trustees must be of opinion that the position of the applicant warrants his being granted an advance. The applications have also to be approved by the Federal Government. The Minister has informed us that he has received between £50,000 and £60,000 from the Federal Government free of interest, the repayment to be spread over 20 or 30 years.

The Minister for Lands: That does not come under this measure.

Mr. LINDSAY: Under this measure a settler has to pay for any advance he receives.

Hon. G. Taylor: I am glad to know it is not a socialistic scheme.

Mr. LINDSAY: The repayments will be spread over 25 years, and the rate of interest and sinking fund will be £8 1s. 2d. per cent. Between such a scheme and State insurance, there is no analogy whatever. We are seeking to benefit still further the agricultural industry, to which the Government have already advanced about £10,000,000 of the State's money. To protect the State's security in vermin-infested areas, it is necessary that vermin-proof fencing should be provided. If the netting were not made available, in some instances sufficient crop would be eaten by the rabbits to pay for the whole cost of fencing the property. I compliment the Minister for Lands, not so much on having introduced this Bill, as on having taken prompt action in the first place.

Mr. Pantou: This Bill is to legalise his action.

Mr. LINDSAY: The Minister's action was taken to protect this season's crop. A good many farmers are enjoying the benefit of the protection, which will result in the safeguarding of a considerable portion of the wheat production. I support the second reading. There is no comparison between this measure and the State Insurance Bill.

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

**MR. BROWN** (Pingelly) [7.30]: After the remarks of the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) I wish to say a few words on this Bill. I do not know whether I shall be called a political aerobat, but I favour the Bill. I cannot see any likeness between what the measure proposes and the functions of State trading concerns. The Premier has told us that the whole of Western Australia depends on primary production. If this Bill is not passed, some of our largest wheat-producing districts will be eaten out by rabbits. The Premier realises that if we can get a 30-bushel average per acre—which is quite possible—it will mean huge prosperity for Western Australia and for its Treasurer. Therefore I assure the House and the country that the Bill ought to be passed. Who holds the mortgages over the properties of Industries Assistance Board clients? The Agricultural Bank, which means practically the Government. Therefore it behoves the Government to see that the farmers get wire netting. The Government will reap the benefit. Are the farmers to get the wire netting for nothing? No. Thanks to the cheap money obtained from the Imperial Government, our Government are enabled to supply money for the purchase of wire netting at a cheap rate. Eventually, however, the money has to be refunded, with interest and sinking fund, by the men who get the wire. Thus they will be under no obligation whatever to the Government. There is good in all Governments, even in a Labour Government. Probably, however, there is "better" in other Governments. Representing an agricultural constituency, I regard the Bill as of the utmost importance. Only a little time ago, when passing through the eastern portion of my electorate, I was surprised to see thousands upon thousands of rabbits passing in front of the car.

**Mr. Panton:** Millions of them!

**Mr. BROWN:** Yes, millions. I could not have counted them, nor could the hon. member interjecting. Not much discussion is needed, the Bill being good and fair. Any one having the interests of Western Australia at heart must support the measure unreservedly.

**MR. J. H. SMITH** (Nelson) [7.33]: I do not oppose the Bill, though I believe its object could have been attained through the Agricultural Bank without the introduction of any legislation. I believe I can read the mind of the Minister for Lands so far as the

introduction of the Bill is concerned. I want the Minister in his reply to assure me that the favours proposed by the Bill are not to be extended only to the wheat areas. I understand that the primary object of the Government is to provide wire netting for the wheat areas solely. South-Western farmers and settlers, however, are now troubled with rabbits and vermin. Even in the orchards the rabbits are gnawing the fruit trees. Consequently the South-West needs assistance of the kind proposed by the Bill. I presume that the reason why the proposals of the Bill are not to be effected through the Agricultural Bank, which would be an adequate channel, is that people who are dealing with private banks may be assisted. The policy of the Agricultural Bank is not to advance money on orchard properties. Indeed, that has been its policy in the past. Through the strenuous years of the war and its aftermath, therefore, orchardists had to go to the private banks for funds to carry them over. Thus the private banks have first mortgages over orchard properties. Will the Bill admit of advances being made to orchardists and others who are clients of the private banks and not of the Agricultural Bank or the Industries Assistance Board? If not, hardship will be occasioned to many deserving people who are unable to purchase wire netting themselves. Will the Bill apply only to the wheat areas, or will it apply also to the South-West?

**MR. SLEEMAN** (Fremantle) [7.35]: I support the Bill. Having always tried to be fair and conscientious, I cannot for the life of me understand the attitude of members opposite on this Bill, having regard to their attitude of a few days ago. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) said that in this matter the Government were right because it was impossible for the farmers to wait for wire netting. It is no more impossible for the farmers to wait for wire netting than it was impossible for the Minister for Works to wait before coming to the rescue of stricken miners on the goldfields. The member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) said I was working myself up into a passion over the fact that the Opposition were supporting a Government measure. Nobody ever worked himself into a greater passion than did the member for West Perth when the Bill to establish State insurance was before the House. That was when we saw exhibitions of passion from members opposite,

who said it was utterly wrong from the Government to do something behind the back of Parliament instead of waiting for Parliament to meet.

Mr. Davy: You have never seen me in a passion yet.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The same principle applies in this case. In connection with the Bill establishing State insurance we saw the insurance companies ramping and roaring all round the State and circularising members of Parliament against the measure. I have no doubt that to-day the private firms dealing in wire netting are roaring just as much. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill. I merely rose to point out the inconsistency of members opposite.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle—in reply) [7.37]: Replying first to the member for Mt. Margaret (Hon. G. Taylor), I wish to point out that work under the Commonwealth Wire Netting Act of 1923 has ceased. That measure, which imposed a limit of five miles, has not operated since the 30th June last. As regards mortgages, a large number have been fixed up with private banks. That answers the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith).

Mr. J. H. Smith: It will make no difference?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It makes no difference. If the Commonwealth complete their work, we shall have sufficient money to supply a very large quantity of wire netting. Wire netting is urgently needed by farmers in the wheat areas who lost their crops last year. They suffered most severely, and they would not have been likely to put in crops for this season if wire netting had not been supplied. The member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) and the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) said this Bill did not represent State trading. Apparently they do not want to know what it represents; they certainly do know. The Government are buying wire netting and selling it again, which is an entirely different matter. If a farmer had money lent to him by a bank for the purpose of purchasing wire netting, he could go to Sandover's or to McLean Bros. and Rigg to buy it. In this case, however, the Government buy the wire netting and sell it to the farmers. The Government do not profit from their action, but all the same it is State trading. The wire net-

ting is to be paid for if bought with money obtained from the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. Lindsay: Does the farmer get the wire netting cheaper from the Government than from private firms?

Mr. Panton: Of course.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If a farmer gets Government money to buy wire netting, he gets it at a lower rate of interest than he would have to pay outside. Under the Bill wire netting will be supplied at a cheaper rate than that at which the Agricultural Bank can supply it, because that institution requires 1 per cent. over the rate which it has to pay for money. The member for West Perth said it was a matter of entire indifference. However, with the consent of the Treasurer, I have spent over £90,000 without the consent of Parliament.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: That is quite all right.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The reason for my action was the urgent necessity of the case. The action was taken for the purpose of protecting the best interests of the State, for the purpose of securing the sowing of larger areas than otherwise would have been sown. Another object was to protect crops already sown.

Mr. Davy: Nobody is complaining of what you have done.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Precisely similar action was taken in regard to workers' insurance. Without the authority of Parliament the Government agreed to grant insurance covers in order to prevent the mining industry from closing down and in order to protect miners who were suffering from diseases.

Mr. Davy: But you did not confine yourself to the mining industry.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is the reason why State insurance was started. It was started in the interests of the mining industry and has been extended to other industries. The action taken was absolutely necessary in the interests of the State. Perhaps I am trespassing, but I should like to add that while the Government expended over £90,000 on wire netting without the consent of Parliament, they did not expend £10 on State insurance.

The Premier: And have not done so yet.

Mr. Sleeman: It is all right when the Government spend money on wire netting.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I know what is in the legal mind.



Mr. Latham: You had better not mix up the two things.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Though I knew it was illegal, I would do the same thing next year in similar circumstances. We could not wait for the Commonwealth Government because it was necessary to proceed at once, and we took action accordingly. The Bill does not refer to wire netting only. We are able to provide supplies of wire in accordance with the scheme we hope will be arranged with the Commonwealth Government. If that arrangement is not made, a higher rate will have to be paid for the netting, but if the scheme is arranged, the farmers will get the benefit of the reduction in accordance with the Commonwealth scheme. At present three States have not approved of the proposal, and time has to be allowed to enable them to give the matter full consideration. I hope members, who represent country constituencies, will advise farmers, whose applications for wire netting have been approved, to secure their requirements quickly. We have about 900 or 1,000 miles of netting at Fremantle and there is considerable congestion. If the farmers, whose applications have been approved, do not take their supplies, others who are asking for the netting will get it instead. We cannot keep them waiting as well.

Mr. Lindsay: The trouble is that many farmers cannot make use of it at present, and not for some time to come.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That makes no difference. Other people are asking for supplies.

Mr. Corboy: The farmers could take delivery of their supplies now.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so.

Mr. Stubbs: Is there any limit to the mileage that can be obtained?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not know what action the Under Secretary has taken, but there is no limitation that I know of regarding the Commonwealth supplies. Under the Commonwealth Act of 1923 there was a limitation of five miles, but on this occasion I know of no such proposed limitation. In my opinion the Government took a wise step in securing the supplies in order to protect the farmers, just as we acted wisely for the protection of the miners.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

## BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Standing Orders Suspension.*

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [7.48]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the consideration of the Council's amendments in the Traffic Act Amendment Bill to be taken into consideration upon the receipt of the message from the Legislative Council.

Question put and passed.

### *Council's Amendments.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Bill subject to a schedule of 18 amendments.

### *In Committee.*

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; Hon. J. Cunningham (Honorary Minister) in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 7.—Add at the end of the clause the following words:—"and by adding to the section a further proviso, as follows:—Provided also that a local authority may, in exceptional circumstances, and with the approval of the Minister, grant a license to the owner of a particular vehicle therein mentioned without payment of the prescribed fee, under and subject to such conditions, if any, as may be stated in the license."

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

The amendment provides for the total or partial exemption from the payment of fees for vehicles rarely used. It further provides that if, instead of a fee being charged, a lump sum may be agreed upon between the owner and the local authority, in that event no fee shall be charged, provided the approval of the Minister has been obtained. Heavy steam-driven tractors which are seldom used, are one type that would be affected.

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

No. 2. Clause 8.—Delete the first three lines of paragraph (a), and insert the following words in lieu thereof:—" (a) By inserting after the word 'and,' at the beginning of the amendment to paragraph (b) of Subsection (2), made by the Act No. 16 of 1922, the following words:—'as to one-half of the net balance of said fees to deduct therefrom.' " (b) By adding to paragraph (b) of Subsection (2), as amended, the following words:—

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

The effect of the amendment is that not more than half the traffic fees can be retained for

the repair of main roads, the Causeway and the Fremantle road bridge. We see no serious objection to the amendment. The next three amendments proposed by the Council are consequential.

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

No. 3. Clause 8.—Delete the words "the Metropolitan Traffic Trust Account," in lines 11 and 12, and insert the words "the said one-half of the net balance of said fees, so far as the same shall be available after providing for the deductions aforesaid."

No. 4. Clause 8.—Add the following, to stand as paragraph (c):—(c) Paragraph (c) of Subsection (2) of Section 13 of the principal Act is hereby repealed, and the following is inserted in lieu thereof:—"(c) The remaining half of the net balance of said fees shall, together with any moneys remaining unexpended out of the said first-mentioned half of the net balance of the said fees, be annually paid to and divided amongst the local authorities of the districts and subdistricts comprised in the metropolitan area in such shares and proportions as the Minister may determine."

No. 5. Clause 12.—Add at the end the following words:—"The proviso to Subsection (7) of Section 20 of the principal Act is amended by inserting after the word 'shall' the words 'subject to the next following proviso'; and a further proviso is added to the said Subsection (7), as follows:—Provided also that the Minister may appoint officers of the Main Roads Board to regulate and control traffic within the metropolitan area, on roads under construction or maintained by the said Board under the provisions of the Main Roads Act, 1925."

On motions by Hon. J. Cunningham the foregoing amendments were agreed to.

No. 6. Clause 13.—Delete "eighteen" and insert "seventeen," in line three.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

The Legislative Council seek to reduce the age at which a person may receive a license to drive a motor vehicle from 18 as agreed to by this Chamber, to 17 years. When the Bill was introduced, the age limit proposed was 19 years. The question was discussed at great length, and, in my opinion, we should adhere to our earlier decision, when we decided to make the age 18 years.

Mr. DAVY: It is very difficult to draw a definite line in such a matter. There is a lot to be said for the younger age, particularly when we bear in mind the Council's amendment relating to this subject. From my experience, I should say that 99 boys of 17 years of age out of every 100 are quite fit, bearing in mind the further limitations sug-

gested by the Legislative Council, to drive motor vehicles. There are one or two members of this House whose sons of 17 drive their motor cars with conspicuous skill and caution.

The Premier: What, breaking the law!

Mr. DAVY: At present there is no law except such as is set up by way of regulation. I take it that the amendment proposed is, in effect, a recognition that the regulation dealing with the subject is ultra vires. Even under the proposed law it may be possible to allow an individual under the specified age to drive a car in the presence of an older person. I know at least one member of this House who expressed the opinion that his son, who is 17 years old, was a better driver than he.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: That may not be saying too much.

Mr. DAVY: From what I know of the member in question he drives particularly well and particularly carefully. One could understand the age limit being pushed up by crusty conservatives, but it is hard to realise that the proposal would receive the support of our radical Minister for Works or of the radical Honorary Minister who is now representing that Minister.

Mr. Sampson: He has young ideas.

The Premier: If I may divulge a secret, it was their influence in Cabinet that decided the question.

Mr. DAVY: When the Minister for Works introduced the Bill he said that the age should have been 21 years and not 19, and now the Honorary Minister takes up the same attitude.

The Premier: I had a job to hold the balance between the two sections in Cabinet.

Mr. DAVY: It was the older people who prevented the tendency to raise the age to 21, instead of 19.

The Premier: It was.

Mr. DAVY: That is a surprising thing! One would expect to find members viewing the position somewhat along the lines of fathers and other older people who, with their long experience of life, and the older they get, have less trust in youth.

Mr. Panton: Some of us remember when we were boys.

Mr. DAVY: Some of us look back over long years as through a dark veil, and see a hazy picture of ourselves in youth.

The Premier: Look at the old chap drawing on his vast experience of many years!

Mr. DAVY: It is surprising that we

should be taught a lesson as to trusting youths by the members of another place to whom in our lighter moments we refer as "the dear old gentlemen." I suggest we accept their amendment.

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

No. 7. Clause 13.—Insert after the word "age," in line three, the following:—"and by substituting the word 'any' for the word 'a,' in the fourth line, and by inserting the words 'or kinds' after the word 'kind,' in the fifth line thereof"; "and by adding a proviso to Subsection (1), after the word 'specified,' as follows:—'Provided that no annual license shall be granted to drive a motor wagon or motor omnibus in the metropolitan area to any person who is under the age of twenty-one years'"; "and by adding a proviso to Subsection (1), as follows:—'Provided further that a license may be granted to a person not under the age of sixteen years permitting him to drive a motor vehicle in the road district in which he resides, except in the metropolitan area.'"

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I move—

That the amendment, down to the words "21 years" be agreed to; and that the remainder of it be not agreed to.

If the whole of the amendment were agreed to it would cause endless trouble, for we should have no check on persons 16 years of age leaving their own district and coming into the metropolitan area or some other district.

The Premier: It is a supremely silly amendment.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: In consequence, it would mean reducing the age limit to 16 years.

Mr. SAMPSON: Surely this amendment was the result of a misunderstanding in the Council.

The Premier: No, it was twice affirmed.

Mr. SAMPSON: Still, I cannot understand how it came to be passed unless indeed it was misunderstood. I will support the Minister.

Mr. PANTON: I cannot agree to the provision in the amendment that no person under 21 years of age shall drive a motor wagon or a motor bus within the metropolitan area. Apparently we are to allow a boy 18 years of age to drive a motor car, but not to drive a motor truck moving at considerably less speed than the car. I hope the Minister will reconsider that provision.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I also am opposed to that provision. It is altogether inconsistent with the age at which a youth may drive a speedy motor car.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am surprised at the easy way in which the Minister accepts an amendment precluding a person from driving a motor lorry until he reaches the age of 21 years.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: There is a similar provision in the existing regulation, under which a man must be 21 years of age before driving a motor bus.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is absurd to say that a boy of 18 may drive a motor car with other persons aboard, but is not to be allowed to drive a motor truck. I hope the Committee will not accept the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest the Minister withdraw his motion and resubmit it in sections.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I will withdraw my motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

Mr. PANTON: I move—

That in line 8 the Council's amendment be amended by striking out the words "a motor wagon or."

I agree that a man should be 21 years of age before he drives a motor bus full of passengers.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I will accept that amendment.

Mr. DAVY: I suggest that the supremely silly thing—to use the Premier's language—was, not the act of another place, but our own act in attempting to fix a rigid age limit at all. After all, before any person can drive a motor vehicle, he must have a license, and before he can get a license he must undergo a test.

The Premier: There is nothing silly in that.

Mr. DAVY: But it is supremely silly to attempt to fix a rigid age limit.

The Premier: There is no comparison in silliness between the two propositions, the fixing of an age limit and the fixing of that limit at 16 years.

Mr. DAVY: Our fundamental error was in endeavouring to fix an age limit at all, since each person has to undergo a test before obtaining a license. Some persons are never fit to drive motor cars, whereas others at 15 years of age are peculiarly fitted for the task. I will agree with any extension of the age limit.

The PREMIER: The fixing of an age limit is essentially sound. There is no weight in the contention that the test should be, not one of years, but one of capacity to drive a vehicle under examina-

tion. A boy of 16 could pass such an examination: but that is not to say he has the judgment and experience required for practical driving. On the other hand, a sufficiency of years constitutes a fair criterion of judgment and discretion. The fixing of an age limit plus an official test is absolutely sound.

Mr. DAVY: I drove a motor car when I was 14 years of age.

The PREMIER: But the hon. member was quite an exceptional youth. There is a fair percentage of boys of 15 or 16 who can not only pass the official test, but are in every other respect well qualified to handle a motor car. However, we are legislating, not for the exceptional boy, but for the average boy.

Mr. DAVY: What about an age limit at the other end, say a man over 70?

The PREMIER: Some of the greatest deeds in history stand to the credit of men over 70 years of age. It is difficult to understand how another place could go to one extreme with regard to the driving of a wagon, and to the other extreme with regard to the driving of a motor car. They appear to have done this after recommitment. I am justified in saying there is something supremely silly in the amendment. Possibly their strenuous application over a period of four hours caused a little mental exhaustion.

Mr. SAMPSON: I support the amendment. We cannot consistently refuse to license a man to drive a wagon, and permit him to drive a motor car.

Mr. KENNEDY: I am opposed to the striking out of these words. This is the most important part of the Bill. There is a big difference between driving a motor car and a motor wagon. The latter is loaded up to its full capacity of possibly 10 tons and requires very skilful handling. In the railways an age limit is always fixed in the case of engine drivers and signalmen owing to the fact that human life is involved in their work. Some time ago I was standing outside the Barracks when a motor lorry came down the adjoining hill. It was in charge of a young man who, owing to lack of judgment, turned the vehicle so sharply that it capsized and killed another young fellow. Licenses to drivers of motor lorries should be restricted to persons over the age of 21.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: In the case of a recent accident that occurred in St. George's Terrace, when two men on a motor bicycle

lost their lives, both of the deceased were men over the age of 21. We cannot legislate to prevent accidents. If a person at 18 is competent to drive a motor car, he should be deemed competent to drive a motor lorry.

Amendment on the Council's amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I move—

That the Council's amendment be further amended by striking out all the words after "years" in line 10.

Amendment put and passed: the Council's amendment, as amended, agreed to.

No. 8. Clause 14.—Insert after "words," in line 3, the word "who," and in the same line delete "seventeen" and insert "sixteen."

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

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

No. 9. Clause 16.—Delete all words after "follows" in first line and insert the following words:—"No driver of any motor vehicle shall pass any horse being driven, ridden, or led, or any drove of animals, in such a manner or at such a rate as is likely to endanger the safety of such horse or drove of animals or the driver, rider, or leader thereof. Penalty £5."

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 10. Clause 21, Subclause 2, paragraph (u).—Delete the words "laden with material projecting beyond the side of the vehicle," and insert the words "exceeding seven feet six inches in width or containing a load exceeding such width."

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

This provides that the load and the lorry shall not exceed 7ft. 6in. in width. We already have power under the regulations to provide that lights shall be displayed at night time upon the load when the overlap exceeds a certain distance. The officers of the department think that 7ft. 6in. is not an excessive width.

Mr. PANTON: I am surprised at the Council's amendment. The danger is in the overlap of the load on the lorry. The body of the lorry may measure 5ft. in width, but the load may project 1ft. 3in. on either side. The danger exists at night when a lorry has the lights in the usual

position in front and the load projects over the side. A motor car might easily run into the overhanging load. We might, of course, pass a regulation that there should be no such projection between sunset and sunrise; then it would be all right. If the projection is the width of the lorry, well and good, but lorries are not made 7ft. 6in. wide.

The Minister for Lands: Lorries have been carrying loads with an overhang of 3ft. or 4ft. and no accident has happened yet.

Mr. PANTON: Then why did we spend hours discussing the question the other night? There must have been some reason for it?

Mr. SAMPSON: If a lorry carries a load extending unduly over the sides, that load becomes a danger to other road users, particularly when such a load is being taken over a narrow bridge. Apart from that, the width of 7ft. 6in. is not unduly great. The Council's proposal is very fair and should receive our support.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I cannot support the Council's amendment. It has been suggested that no accident has happened yet, but we should not wait for a catastrophe before making an alteration. The average width of a motor lorry would be 4ft. 6in. or 5ft. That would give 15 inches of projection on each side, which is far too much. Only the day before yesterday on the Fremantle-road I passed a lorry that was 7ft. 6in. wide, and it seemed to take up the whole of the road. We should do something to prevent accidents happening, and not wait for them to occur before taking action.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The argument advanced by the Minister for Works was that the overhang was too great, and that at night time, whilst it was possible to see the lights, it would not be possible to see the projecting load, and there was the risk of running into it. The Minister agreed that the overhang should be 9 inches. The difficulty will always be at night time, and unless the lights are on the outer sides of the vehicle, there will be difficulty.

Mr. BROWN: The width of the wagon should be defined. I have had experience in wagon building, and I know that we are now building wagons up to 7ft. 6in. wide. Any number of tabletop wagons to-day are 6ft. 6in. wide. The amendment is fair, and the member for Menzies does not understand the position. The whole question at night time is as to where the lights are.

Mr. WITHERS: It would be safer to carry the Council's amendment providing for the overhang of 7ft. 6in. covering lorry load, and projection.

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH: It is about time we defined the width of lorries. The loads should be the width of the wagon, and if we make the width 7ft. 6in. we should insist on the lights being on the outside.

Mr. DAVY: When the clause left this House there was no regulation as to the width of lorry. We know definitely that no vehicle which is more than 7ft. 6in. wide may go along a road. Drivers of motor cars will be able to train themselves to realise that the gross width is 7ft. 6in. There is nothing to fear if we accept the amendment.

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

No. 11. Clause 21.—Add a subclause to stand as Subclause (10) as follows:—(10) By inserting in paragraph (xiv.) of Subsection (1), after the word "regulate," the words "the driving or leading of cattle (with-in the meaning of that word in the Municipal Corporations Act, 1906), on roads, and."

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Already we have power under the Municipal and Roads Acts to make regulations, but it is considered that the proper thing to do is to provide power in the Traffic Act as well.

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

No. 12. Clause 22, paragraph (c).—Insert after "the," in first line, the word "maximum" and delete the words "including maximum and minimum."

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

The effect of the Council's amendment is to prevent the Minister from making a regulation to govern minimum fares. So long as we can control the maximum fares we can leave the fixing of the minimum fares to the bus owners.

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

No. 13. Clause 22.—Delete the words "may confer with the Commissioner of Railways," in sub-paragraph (ii.).

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Even when the words are deleted there will be nothing to prevent the Minister from conferring with the Commissioner of Railways.

Mr. Sampson: The word "and" should be deleted.

The Premier: That is consequential.

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

No. 14. Clause 22, Subclause (3), paragraph (g).—Insert after "shall," in line two, the word "not."

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: This amendment is necessary to correct an omission. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 15. Clause 28, Subclause (1).—Delete the words "and approved by the Minister," in lines five and six, and insert "which has complied with the provisions of the Insurance Companies Act, 1918."

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

If a company complies with the provisions of the Insurance Companies Act, the approval of the Minister is not necessary.

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

No. 16. Clause 36.—Insert after "Act," in line two, the words "as amended by the Traffic Act Amendment Act, 1924."

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

These words were inserted in another place at the request of the Government.

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

No. 17. Clause 37.—Insert after "Act," in line two, the words "as amended by the Traffic Act Amendment Act, 1924."

No. 18. New Clause.—Insert a new clause, to stand as Clause 23, as follows:—"Any license granted in respect of an omnibus or passenger vehicle shall, during such time or times as such omnibus or vehicle is under repair, authorise the holder of such license, with the previous consent in writing of the Commissioner of Police or any officer acting for him, to substitute another omnibus or vehicle for the bus or vehicle under repair, and to ply for hire therewith without being required to pay a further license fee, during only such period or periods as the first-mentioned omnibus or vehicle is under repair and not plying for hire or otherwise being used for profit."

On motions by the Hon. J. Cunningham, the foregoing consequential amendments were agreed to.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

A committee consisting of the Minister for Lands, Hon. J. Cunningham and Mr. Davy drew up reasons for disagreeing to two of the Council's amendments.

Reasons adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1926-27.

### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Lutey in the Chair.

Department of Justice and Police (Hon. J. C. Willecock, Minister).

*Note—Crown Law Offices, £10,580:*

**THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE** (Hon. J. C. Willecock—Geraldton) [9.2]: It is not necessary to make a long speech on the Estimates of the Crown Law Department. The department carry out the legal business of the State year after year. Owing to the increase of population there is more work, and consequently increased expenditure. Members will recollect that last year legislation was passed dealing with transfers of land. In consequence of this a reorganisation of the Crown Law Department has been carried out. Dr. Stow now occupies the position of Commissioner of Titles as well as that of Parliamentary Draftsman. Last session most of us agreed that the Solicitor General, Mr. Sayer, had altogether too much work to do. The Government have now relieved him of all the work he had as Commissioner of Titles, and also of the work of parliamentary drafting, except that part which relates to Government Bills. Most members have, I think, received the circular impressing on them that Dr. Stow is entirely at their disposal for the purpose of drafting private Bills and amendments to any Bills brought forward. The Government desire members to be considerate. Mr. Sayer has always been most willing to do anything he could to assist members, but we do not think it fair that members should continue to consult him, particularly after he has discussed the drafting of measures with the Government. Dr. Stow, whose office is at the Land Titles Office, is at the disposal of members for that purpose. The rearrangement is regarded as highly suitable for members, for the Government, for Dr. Stow, and also for Mr. Sayer, who in the past has had too much work for one

man to do. Everyone will agree that the increase in the Solicitor General's salary is richly deserved. It is one of the largest increases in the Public Service Commissioner's recent classification, but I do not think it will be cavilled at by any section of the Chamber. The increase is given to an efficient and able servant.

Mr. Davy: You have acquired merit by granting it.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: There was no opposition to the proposal submitted by the Public Service Commissioner. We recognise that good officers, especially in the professional division, must be paid good salaries; otherwise we cannot expect to secure the best men when vacancies occur; and there is no reason why, when we have an excellent man performing the duties of an office, he should not receive an appropriate salary. We have made another appointment in the person of Mr. J. L. Walker to act as assistant to the Solicitor General. I expect that the appointment will prove very successful. Mr. Walker was a Rhodes scholar, has had a brilliant career, and is well known. I regard him as a distinct acquisition to the department.

Hon. G. Taylor: How did he get on in private practice?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not wish to discuss Mr. Walker's personal affairs, but I believe—

Hon. G. Taylor: That is the test of a man's ability.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: If the hon. member wants to know—I am not aware that he is entitled to the information—Mr. Walker has made a financial sacrifice by entering the Government service. That is the information I have received. It was not given to me as confidential.

The Premier: He is a very good man.

Hon. G. Taylor: I am not saying anything against the gentleman. I remember him as one of our first Rhodes scholars.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: He was very successful at the Bar, and worked up a considerable practice.

Mr. Teesdale: And the aim of his ambition was to enter the Government service.

The Premier: Several of our judges have been drawn from the Crown Law Department.

Hon. G. Taylor: Only one, Mr. Justice Burnside.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I think it will be generally admitted by people who

have knowledge of Mr. Walker that his ability makes him an acquisition to the Public Service. Mr. Parker has resigned the Crown Prosecutors'hip and taken up private practice. He had a very successful career in the Public Service, and it was with regret the Government learnt of his decision to retire. However, officers can exercise their own discretion in that regard. Mr. Parker has left us, and I hope he will be highly successful. Certainly, during the time he was in the Crown Law Department he did exceptionally good work. His duties were performed in the public eye, and members have an idea of the ability he brought to bear on the performance of his tasks.

Hon. G. Taylor: In my opinion he is a very capable man.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, and he decided that his capabilities were not sufficiently recognised in the Public Service, or that he could do better outside. Now that he is gone we wish him every success in his new sphere. Mr. Woolf has been appointed to the vacancy. As the result of a scrutiny of applicants Mr. Woolf was selected as the most capable man offering at the time. People who are qualified to form an intelligent judgment consider that in him we have a worthy successor to Mr. Parker.

Hon. G. Taylor: He has to follow a very capable man.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Turning now to the work of the department, there has been an increase in probates and letters of administration. The receipts from probate duties were very high last year, owing to one or two large estates falling in. Therefore, whilst most sources of revenue are increasing, we do not expect an increase in probate duties during the present year. The progress of the State is reflected in the number of companies registered in the Supreme Court. The capital increase last year amounted to £291,000. The declared capital of companies now existing in Western Australia is £2,353,610, against last year's total of some £2,062,000. There has also been a fairly large increase in the number of foreign companies registered here. However, their capital has not been stated. Bills of sale showed an increase last year of 3,000 over the number registered during the previous year. The respective figures are 10,000 and 7,000. The increase is largely due to the expansion of the motor industry. Unfortunately from an economic standpoint, the business emanates entirely from foreign

sources, mostly American. It is a pity, but the fact remains that this business is increasing largely. Last year's increase over the figures of the previous year is approximately 40 per cent. Now I turn to bankruptcies. While some people told a doleful tale that the advent of Labour to office meant decreased prosperity, that prediction has not been borne out. Bankruptcies, bankruptcy proceedings, deeds of assignment and so forth are all on the down grade. This is pleasing evidence of the fact that the State is progressing and that everybody is doing well.

Mr. Davy: People will not give credit nowadays.

Hon. G. Taylor: Yes, that is the reason.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The banking returns show that loans are being made from somewhere. There is also the large number of overdrafts to be considered.

Mr. Davy: They are all fully secured.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: All the development that has taken place shows that money must have come in from somewhere.

Mr. Davy: Of course that is so.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That development is not entirely represented by the capital of the people. It is largely the result of investment of capital by financial institutions. The prosperity of the State is reflected in the business done by the Land Titles Office. When trade and commerce are brisk, considerable dealing takes place in land. Last year there were 11,000 transfers registered, as against 9,900 in the previous year. The increase was between 1,100 and 1,200. Mortgages have also increased by about 1,200. The increased business in the Land Titles Office has made the limited accommodation altogether inadequate, and it is imperatively necessary to obtain increased accommodation. The matter is being seriously considered by the Government, and it is proposed to erect up-to-date offices on a new site. The final decision depends upon the amount of money the Treasurer can make available for public buildings. Certainly, the Government do not desire to spend money on unnecessary public buildings. Still, the Land Titles Office is an important department, holding the titles of all properties in the State. Therefore it should have an up-to-date office in which the danger of destruction by fire or otherwise will be obviated. If the department is

housed in a building which does not afford sufficient accommodation, there is a probability of something happening that will have a serious effect on our commercial life. An additional magistrate has been appointed in the metropolitan area. This appointment was necessary by reason of the increased business, mostly in connection with traffic prosecutions. Further, one of the magistrates has to some extent been engaged on industrial work, having been appointed an industrial magistrate. A new local court was established at Mullewa last year. At Merredin a permanent court official has been appointed; the work was previously done by a member of the police force. At Shark Bay the work has increased and an increased salary has been granted. It is proposed to establish a court this year at Bruce Rock and also another at some centre along the Dowerin loop. There are four or five towns there that have laid claims to a court.

Mr. Latham: We want one too.

Mr. Lindsay: There are towns more important than Bruce Rock.

Mr. Latham: Not at all.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The Bruce Rock people think their town is more important. A court is also to be established at Dalwallinu. It is not very easy to establish courts in new towns because it probably means the appointment of a new magistrate towards the end of this year. Members will notice that £100 was provided last year for assistance to indigent persons in connection with legal work. Half that amount was expended last year, but I think the vote will be exceeded this year. I do not know of any other information that I need supply to the Committee, but if further particulars are required respecting any of the items mentioned in the vote, I shall be prepared to give them. I do not think it necessary to go into the details of the administration of a department that does so much work in connection with the affairs of the State.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [9.17]: The Government have exhibited wisdom in realising the importance of paying adequately for onerous and valuable duties such as those rendered by the Solicitor General, Mr. Sayer. Certainly a salary of £1,500 is not one farthing more than should be paid for that particular office. Mr. Sayer is a byword for industry and efficiency. Departments would do much better if they habitually took his



advice, but they do not always do that. Mr. Sayer is an extremely sound and capable lawyer.

Hon. G. Taylor: And most obliging.

Mr. DAVY: When he gives a considered opinion on a question, it can be taken for granted as highly probable that his opinion is correct. Sometimes he has given opinions, but they have been ignored because some permanent official thinks he knows better than Mr. Sayer, or at any rate is pig-headed and obstinate concerning the view he has formed. Mr. Walker's name was mentioned and someone asked a question about him. I have had the privilege of knowing Mr. Walker since we were boys at school together. I consider the Government were extremely fortunate in being able to secure his services for the position he holds. It is not one that is attractive from the financial point of view to a man with any chance of success in the legal profession. But there are other considerations. Mr. Walker has met with considerable success in his profession and has accumulated a reputation for soundness of judgment amongst people with whom he has come in contact. The Government would have had no chance of securing him had it not been that his health has not been very satisfactory. He felt that a position such as he holds now, which is a highly interesting one, would lift him out of the hurly-burly of a general practitioner's life and allow him to enjoy the intellectual pleasure of exercising his profession without the somewhat sordid struggle for costs. If the Government are compelled to always remunerate at a low figure the occupant of such an important position, they will always be lucky if they secure the services of a man like Mr. Walker. Mr. Woolf is a very young man in his profession, but I believe he has marked ability. I have no doubt that, with experience in his position, he will carry out his highly important duties as Crown Prosecutor with efficiency and restraint that is so necessary in such a position. I wish to refer to our stipendiary magistrates. We have two such officers in Perth and they can be dismissed at the pleasure of the Government. That, to my mind, is a sorry state of affairs. There was one stipendiary magistrate in that position last year. I refer to Mr. Kidson.

The Premier: This was mentioned last year.

Mr. DAVY: But there was only one officer in that position then.

The Premier: I am not objecting at all to what you are saying, but was merely explaining to the Minister for Justice what happened respecting that officer.

Mr. DAVY: The Premier will agree with me that, particularly in these days when stipendiary magistrates are exercising all sorts of highly important jurisdictions, no man should hold such a position in an acting capacity for two minutes.

Hon. G. Taylor: Unless he is appointed to relieve some other magistrate.

Mr. DAVY: I admit that occasions may arise when an officer may be called upon to act temporarily, just as it becomes necessary now and again to appoint a special commissioner to act as a judge. I urge upon the Government the importance of immediately appointing the officers to their positions permanently. Both the gentlemen I refer to are exercising the functions of their offices in a proper manner. I do not suggest any criticism of them at all. Mr. Kidson is a man well advanced in years and, in the ordinary course of events, cannot be expected to carry on for very long. Mr. Horgan was Clerk of Courts at Perth for many years and was sent to relieve the magistrate at Geraldton in an acting capacity. Subsequently he was brought back to Perth. I believe he does his work very well indeed, and I would like to see him permanently appointed to the position of magistrate. It is absolutely essential that anyone exercising judicial functions shall have security of tenure and proper remuneration so that he may exercise his judgment without fear or favour, one way or the other.

The Premier: I agree with you.

Mr. DAVY: I believe the Premier does, and I hope he will act accordingly and promptly.

The Premier: The matter is not in my hands. If it had been, I would have acted long ago. It is for the Public Service Commissioner to deal with. When the matter was referred to last session, the discussion was brought under his notice and representations were made to him accordingly.

Mr. DAVY: I realise that what the Premier says is true, but I ask him if it is right that such matters should be in the hands of the Public Service Commissioner. Is it right that our principal magistrates should be civil servants under the same conditions as the office boy in the Titles Office?

The Premier: But it is so. Whether it is right or wrong, is another matter about which a good deal could be said.

Mr. DAVY: I believe the Premier is right, but I suggest that in a case like this, where it is purely a matter of policy, the Public Service Commissioner might not act on the suggestion, but might be influenced by representation from the Premier in the right direction.

The Premier: Representations have been made to him.

Mr. DAVY: Then I suggest that the representations be made to him again, and in a stronger manner.

Mr. Latham: This House could make such representations.

The Premier: I have no authority to influence the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. DAVY: Of course I know we are a poor community and cannot splash money around rashly, but if we do not pay more, we will not get good men. unless exceptional circumstances arise.

The Premier: I agree with that, too.

Mr. DAVY: Whether anything can be done at the moment, I cannot say. I do not suggest that we should boost the salaries of the magistrates upwards in one swoop, but we must bear in mind that if we are to get good men to carry out most important duties, we should be prepared to pay them well. We should be in a position to get for the position of principal magistrate in Perth a man of 40 or 45 years, who has demonstrated in his profession his capacity and judicial temperament.

The Minister for Justice: You know that under the new re-classification the salary of the principal magistrate has gone up to £900.

Mr. DAVY: Yes. The amount may be all right for that particular magistrate, but if we were to call for applications for the position of magistrate in Perth at a salary of £708, we would find very few men of the age and experience I mention, who have been successful in their profession, who would apply for the position. I also wish to refer to the State Children's Court. The idea of the court is, in essence, absolutely sound.

The Minister for Justice: It does not come under these Estimates.

Mr. DAVY: Is it not relevant to the department controlled by the Minister?

The Minister for Justice: No; that comes under the Chief Secretary's Department.

Mr. DAVY: Then I will deal with it later on. There are some matters of law reform that should be attended to. It is too late to deal with them this session. If I have the honour to be returned to the House next

session, I will bring up those matters which come within the purview of the Minister's authority.

MR. CHESSON (Cue) [9.27]: I am sorry that no amendment has been made to our electoral laws so that we shall not have the sorry spectacle that we had in the Murchison during the last Legislative Council election. On that occasion hundreds of persons whose names were objected to had not an opportunity to be present at a revision court to show cause why their names should not be removed from the electoral rolls.

The Minister for Justice: That does not require an amendment of the law.

Mr. CHESSON: Then some provision should be made to overcome the difficulty.

The Minister for Justice: That has been done. Definite instructions have been issued.

Mr. CHESSON: What happened was that throughout the Murchison district many people were disfranchised. It appears that by the payment of 2s. 6d. an objection can be lodged against the name of an individual on the Council rolls. The revision court was held at Geraldton and many people residing at Meekatharra and other outback centres, as well as many on stations hundreds of miles away, did not receive their notices, intimating that their names had been objected to, until after the revision court had sat and their names had been removed from the rolls. Revision courts could have been held at Meekatharra, Cue and other centres in the Murchison district and that would have enabled people to attend the courts.

The Minister for Justice: Definite instructions have been issued that the revision courts are to be held at those centres.

Mr. CHESSON: I am glad to know that in future revision courts will be held at centres in the outback areas so that people will have an opportunity to attend without incurring great expense, as is the case at present.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [9.30]: I have not seen any reference made to the provision of a police station at Kondinin.

The Premier: That is in the next division.

Mr. BROWN: Well, I wish to say a word about the electoral laws. Our system is altogether wrong. I do not know whether it is that not sufficient money has

been allocated to the administration of this department. One can find on the rolls names of men who have been dead for years and of others who have long since left the State. If the department rely on voluntary effort to maintain the rolls, the system is not a good one.

The Minister for Justice: They do not. They collect their own information from many sources.

Mr. BROWN: Well, in one small locality I can point to a number of names that ought not to be on the roll, and can mention other names that ought to be on it. It seems to me to be left to private persons to point out amendments to the roll. That is not right. Apparently our enrolling machinery is not efficient. The registrar, of course, is in a position to know of a young person coming of age, and so can put him on the roll.

The Premier: That is the one thing the department do not know anything about.

Mr. BROWN: A larger grant ought to be made available to the Chief Electoral Officer, so that he could bring the rolls up to date.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [9.33]: I am pleased the Government have realised the necessity for extra accommodation in the Titles Office. Last year I brought this matter before the Committee. I see that Dr. Stow, in his report, has stressed the necessity for better accommodation in the department and has pointed to several other disabilities, such as the limited capacity of the strongroom. I do not know that the importance of this has been sufficiently stressed. Just imagine what would happen if a fire occurred and all the titles were destroyed! It would entail endless litigation, running to hundreds of thousands of pounds. Not only that, but consider the inconvenience caused to the public who have business with the office! Several times when I have gone to search a title it has been found that the documents are lodged away down in the Supreme Court and an officer of the department is sent off to get those documents in order that the searcher may look into them. Frequently it means an hour's delay. It is not fair to the public. Nor is it safe to have valuable documents passing like that from one building to another. I hope the Minister will pester the Treasurer until he gets the money necessary for this work. The building of

new offices in this department is the most important business of its kind the Government have to look into at the present time.

MR. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [9.35]: Unlike the member for Pingelly, I consider we have a first-class Chief Electoral Officer. I say that, although I have not spoken to him more than twice. I have a good deal to do with the department and I recognise that the staff is painstaking and considerate. I have had every possible help from them whenever I have had to go there. There is no difficulty whatever in getting postal vote officers appointed, and applications for cards or envelopes are immediately responded to. I think the member for Pingelly was distinctly unfair in saying the whole system was wrong. We have just as good an Electoral Department in this State as is to be found in any other State.

Mr. Brown: I did not say that.

Mr. TEESDALE: The hon. member's remark was that the whole system was wrong. I say the staff of the Electoral Department is a most efficient one.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [9.36]: I should like to hear out what the member for Roebourne has said. During the last 12 months nearly 800 names have been taken off the roll for Avon which, I think, shows that the department is looking after its work very well, at any rate in my electorate. As to receiving attention from the department, I can say that every courtesy is shown to members who have business to do down there. Compulsory enrolment should save the department a great deal of work, for without it the average man leaves his enrolment until the last moment and even then fails to make his application. However, when a fine is hanging to it he is brought up to the mark. That in itself should serve to keep our rolls in better condition. When first I was elected for Avon I found on the roll the name of a person who had been out of the State for 14 years. However, I agree that the Chief Electoral Officer is doing very fine work.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [9.37]: Provision is made here for the general elections, but I heard no reference by the Minister to a redistribution of seats Bill.

The Premier: You cannot discuss that on this Vote.

**Mr. SAMPSON:** I wanted to ask the Premier whether he recalls the promise he made to the House that, at the right time, he would make a statement concerning a redistribution of seats.

**The Premier:** That promise will be kept, but I am the judge of the right time.

**Mr. SAMPSON:** I thought the Premier might at this juncture feel disposed to make a statement touching a redistribution of seats, particularly in view of his promise.

**The Premier:** I will keep that promise.

**The Minister for Mines:** You are only wasting time.

**Mr. SAMPSON:** I am not wasting time.

**The Premier:** You are distinctly out of order.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The hon. member cannot discuss a redistribution of seats under this Vote.

**Mr. SAMPSON:** Is there any other Vote on which I can?

**The Premier:** Yes, later on. I will watch the progress of the Estimates and let you know.

**Mr. SAMPSON:** I have no complaint to make of the work of the Electoral Department. At election time there are always many complaints touching those who are on the roll and those who are off it. I am sorry it is not possible at this stage to discuss the question of a general election in a comprehensive way.

**HON. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret)** [9.43] I am not going to press the Minister for a reply, but I wish to emphasise the question of acting magistrates in Perth. I speak without any feeling, but I must say that three years is a long period over which to have an officer sitting in an acting capacity. I think something should be done. I am sorry the Public Service Commissioner took no action about filling the position.

**The Minister for Justice:** There is something to be said for him.

**Hon. G. TAYLOR:** I am not making any attack on him, but I am sorry he did not act more promptly.

**The Premier:** One of his objects was to wait for the reclassification, for the salary would be increased and, perhaps, he would be able to get a more highly qualified man.

**Hon. G. TAYLOR:** That is a very reasonable explanation. While the member for Swan was quite out of order in attempting to discuss on this Vote a redistribution of seats Bill, I should like to know whether the Minister would accept from me later an

amendment to delete the item general election £4,200. I think that could be done away with from an economic point of view. Moreover, it would remove quite a lot of anxiety.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The hon. member will have an opportunity of moving in that direction at a later stage.

Item, Extra assistance in preparation of electoral rolls, etc., £2,000:

**Mr. LATHAM:** What is being done to bring the rolls up to date, and what is being done in the newly settled areas? It is difficult to get out cards to the outlying districts.

**The Minister for Justice:** Every public body is given a supply of cards.

**Mr. LATHAM:** In many parts of the State there are no organised public bodies. Could not more honorary agents be appointed in the outlying districts? Has a house to house canvass been made in the city?

**The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE:** It is proposed to thoroughly check the rolls in the cities and large towns. The Federal rolls are kept up to date by means of the checking system by postal officials. Every possible means is adopted for getting people on the roll. We find that when half a dozen people are fined for not getting on the roll it tends to awaken everybody. The responsibility for getting on the roll lies with the individual, but we assist in every possible way. The electoral officers intend to launch prosecutions in certain cases with the object of waking people up to the necessity for getting on the roll.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Police, £211,512:

**THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton)** [9.50]: There is nothing startling in the way of an alteration regarding the policy guiding the Police Department. After the comprehensive report and valuable statistical information laid on the Table of the House by the Commissioner of Police, there is very little left to add. The report is an extremely informative document and probably contains all that members require to know about the Police Force. The cost of administering the police force was raised last year to the extent of £25,000 represented by an increase of 14 per cent. in wages, together with increased allowances of 25 per cent. The Government have recognised that the police were not adequately re-

munerated, and they have been given this large increase. The police now come under the Arbitration Act. Any further consideration they may desire will be given or withheld by the court. This is in conformity with the Government policy with respect to all departments. Every employee in the Government service will, if possible, be given an opportunity to have his industrial conditions settled by that tribunal. The police, and some members of Parliament, have interviewed me upon the subject of introducing a Bill to deal with appeals against punishment. I have had an interview with the Police Association, and I have agreed to introduce a Bill this session, if possible, to deal with the question.

Hon. G. Taylor: You mean a police appeal board?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, on almost identical lines with the procedure followed in connection with the Railway Department.

Hon. G. Taylor: There is one in New South Wales.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. I can hardly submit these Estimates without paying a tribute to the efficiency of our force. It will be generally recognised that we have a force which compares more than favourably with the police forces anywhere in Australia. Parliament and the public are satisfied with its efficiency, both as regards the C.I.D. branch and the uniform branch. Excellent work has been done during the past 12 months.

Mr. Sampson: Splendid work has been performed.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: A few members of the force were not up to the standard, but they have been weeded out during the past 12 months. The remaining members of the force are men of whom the State can be thoroughly proud. The traffic regulations have been carried out satisfactorily by the police, though they have occupied a considerable amount of the time of members of the force. We have not increased the personnel of the force to any extent, so that the task of conducting the traffic side of the department has led to a considerable amount of work. The police will also administer the Weights and Measures Act. If the Bill is passed we hope to proclaim the Act and bring it under the administration of the force early in the new year. Members will be interested to hear about the establish-

ment of police stations in the metropolitan district and country districts. In the case of a non-remunerative department it is seldom that a Treasurer is very ready to make money available for it.

Mr. Teesdale: I gave up my little lot.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It will be seen from the Commissioner's report that the work done in the Roebourne area has been more satisfactorily carried out than was the case two or three years ago. The local officer now has a side-car, and moves from place to place in quick time. There are some arrears to be overtaken in the matter of police stations. During the parlous times through which the State passed, no Treasurer desired to spend money on new police stations. The policy has now been laid down that at least four new stations shall be established annually, so that gradually the arrears will be caught up. Last year new stations were established at Dalwallinu, Pemberton, and Narembene. One was established this year at Bassendean, and another will be established at Perenjori just before Christmas. Early in the New Year a station will be erected at Bencubbine and there will be stations at Margaret River, Kondinin and possibly at Northcliffe this year. I and has been purchased at Palmyra and Mt. Hawthorn, and sites are being considered at Belmont and Hamilton Hill. Considerable capital cost is involved in establishing these stations, which apart from the salary of the local officer will involve an expenditure of £1,500 or £1,600 each. Authority has been given for the police patrol to be placed in communication with the central station by wireless. This system has been adopted in Victoria with conspicuous success. By this means officers in outlying parts can immediately be brought into touch with the central station. We have had considerable experience of this system in our forest country, where the rangers are by means of wireless, kept closely in touch with the centre of communication. I hope the system will be adopted with equal success in the Police Department. The estimated expenditure for this year is about £2,000 greater than was the case last year. There has been a small increase in the revenue due to increased traffic fees. With the increased prosperity and progress of the State it will be necessary to establish more police stations. This, however, is an unremunerative department, and it is not easy to get money from the Treasury for expenditure upon it.

Nevertheless, all the urgent needs of the department will be met.

**MR. SLEEMAN** (Fremantle) [10.0] : The Minister rightly said that the regulation of the traffic has created a great deal more work for the police, but he did not say anything about the machinery that is required to enable the police to carry out that work with greater facility. So far as the constituency I represent is concerned, the complaints are loud and long in respect of the absence of those facilities. A little while ago I introduced a deputation to the Minister and he promised to see whether additional facilities could be provided. Unfortunately he made no reference to the matter to-night. I should like to know whether it is his intention to provide the Fremantle police with a motor car. I believe provision has been made for a motor vehicle; even if we can only get a second-hand car it will be better than nothing for the present. We will be thankful for anything that is provided in the way of motor transport. It is ridiculous to send men out on horseback to endeavour to control the traffic. It is much better to send men out on foot because, if a horse shies, before you can get it into a reasonable state again the motor vehicle may be out of sight. During the summer months Fremantle and its surroundings are a very busy part of the State. Motors travel to Rockingham, to Point Walter and to South Beach in great numbers and it will amount to criminal negligence if something is not done to provide officers with the means that will assist them to carry out their duties in a proper way. I would also like to know when the appeal board is likely to be appointed. Last year, when speaking on the Address-in-reply, I mentioned the case of Sergeant Anderson, and the Minister interjected that the man would get a chance in the course of a few weeks. The man has never had his chance. Under the old appeal board he could never get that chance unless he applied for promotion. As it is not his intention to do that, he is not able to appeal. What he desired was that the scurrilous paragraph that has been placed on his file by another officer who has since left, a paragraph that had acted detrimentally to him, should be removed from the file. It is wrong that an officer, after leaving the service, should be permitted to place anything of the kind on record, and that the individual affected should not be able to

appeal. I hope the appeal board will be appointed so that it may quickly get to work and deal with questions of promotion and other grievances that members of the force may have.

**MISS HOLMAN** (Forrest) [10.5] : I merely wish to ask the Minister whether he has considered the question of providing summer uniforms for the members of the police force. The Minister will readily admit that it is unpleasant for the police to have to stand in the sweltering heat of summer clad in heavy clothing and without shelter. I would like to know that something is to be done in this direction.

Mr. Davy: For the traffic police a sort of umbrella on a stand might be provided.

**MR. MANN** (Perth) [10.6] : The Minister was good enough to mention that some members of this House had interviewed him with regard to the appeal board. I was one of those members, and I am glad the Minister has agreed to the appointment of a permanent appeal board with regard to penalties. At the present time, if a constable is charged with an offence, he has a right to ask for a board, which is appointed. That board, however, cannot possibly be as effective as a permanent board, similar to that which operates in connection with the railway service. That board consists of a member representing the department, one representing the men and a chairman. A permanent board can rapidly become au fait with the regulations controlling the service, and they acquire a knowledge of the intricacies of the department, whereas a board created merely to hear a particular charge cannot possibly be as effective. I should like to know whether it is intended to consider the question of the salary of the Commissioner. This officer has had one increase during the past 18 years and he has been given control of various other departments such as traffic, weights and measures, and liquor. Probably if his salary were apportioned to each of those departments, he would draw not more than a couple of hundred pounds a year for carrying out his police duties. Has the Minister found the Treasurer a bit hard on the question of an increase?

The Minister for Police: The whole question of salaries of officers who do not come under the Public Service Commissioner has been held up pending the reclassification of the service which has recently

been published. The matter of the increases to officers who do not come under the Public Service Commissioner will be considered in the light of that reclassification.

The Premier: The question of salaries fixed by statute will be dealt with before the session closes.

**MR. GRIFFITHS** (Avon) [10.10]: The tribute paid by the Minister to the work of the Commissioner and the members of the police force is well deserved. The Commissioner's latest annual report is the most interesting I have perused since I have been a member of the House. There is just one question I would like to ask the Minister and it deals with the courthouse accommodation at Merredin. A great improvement has been effected there, but I believe that the courthouse is being leased, and I hear that that lease is not likely to be renewed. I hope it is not intended to revert to the state of affairs that existed prior to the arrangement now in force. I regretted to note the non-committal way the Minister referred to the Tammin police station. That is a very sore point with me. The position is that a police station is provided in the towns on each side of Tammin and all the ne'er-do-wells drift from those places into Tammin; in fact, Tammin is the resort for the off-scourings of the surrounding districts.

The Premier: I suppose the town people themselves are all right.

**MR. GRIFFITHS**: Yes, but they want some protection from the wanderers.

The Premier: We shall send up some wire netting to keep those wanderers out.

**HON. G. TAYLOR** (Mt. Margaret) [10.12]: I would like to emphasise the necessity for the Minister carrying out the promise he made in regard to the appeal board.

The Minister for Police: The Bill is being drafted and will shortly be submitted.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

## **BILL—STATE CHILDREN ACT.**

Received from the Council and read a first time.

## **BILL—RESERVES.**

Returned from the Council with amendments.

## **BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.**

### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [10.15] in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is what makes it so dangerous.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It generally falls to my lot to introduce Bills of one clause.

Mr. Lindsay: We have had a similar measure each year for a long time.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The object is to extend the Act for another year. The Bill merely provides for inserting "1928" in lieu of "1927." Last year when I introduced a similar Bill I was twitted by some members with the statement that though I favoured the abolition of the Industries Assistance Board with a view to having the work carried on by the Agricultural Bank trustees as part of that institution, instead of as a separate board, I was moving for the continuance of the Act. I was chairman of a select committee that reported to this House a few years ago. The committee recommended that the board's clients should be taken over by the bank, and it was our intention to endeavour to carry that into effect. When we came to investigate the matter at a later date, we found that a large number of soldiers had since gone on the board and that we had to assist them to crop their holdings and provide stock to carry on the necessary work of their farms. Such work was outside the province of the Agricultural Bank, and the money advanced by the Commonwealth for the settlement of soldiers could not be used for that purpose. The ex-Premier, now the Leader of the Opposition, realised that it was advisable to bring the soldiers under the Industries Assistance Act. A large amount of money has been expended to assist the soldiers to crop and stock their holdings. That is one of the principal reasons why the Act has to be continued year after year. I pointed out last night that the number of civilian settlers at present receiving assistance from the board is very small indeed. In fact, the position is such that the bank trustees have under consideration a proposal to diminish the staff engaged on this work. Owing to the small number of settlers at

present receiving assistance, they consider it unnecessary to retain the full number of officers required in the past to cope with the work.

Hon. G. Taylor: I should think so, what with the good seasons and wheat at 6s. 6d. a bushel.

Mr. Lindsay: Where do they get 6s. 6d. a bushel for their wheat?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The number of civilians on the board at present is 438. I agree that when the measure was originally introduced, it was designed to assist farmers during a period of emergency and was not intended to be a permanent measure. However, it has been found necessary to continue it year after year. The original intention was to assist the farmers in their difficulties consequent upon the drought in 1914-15.

Mr. Teesdale: If they do not get off the board this year, when will they?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think it will be possible for all of them to get off the board this year, but soldiers are continually going on the board.

Mr. Teesdale: You cannot obviate the soldiers going on the board.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, we have a duty to the ex-soldiers and must carry it out.

Mr. Mann: I think some of the farmers remain on the board so that the Government will keep their books for them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That does not affect us.

Mr. Teesdale: You are not carrying any farmers who have a credit balance?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There may be a few, but not many. A few desire to continue on the board, seeing that they barely cleared themselves last year and might require assistance at a later date. They asked to be continued on the board until they got on a sound footing.

Mr. Lindsay: Once they get off, they cannot get on again.

Mr. Teesdale: When they have motor car payments falling due?

Mr. Griffiths: You talk a devil of a lot about motor cars.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The number of civilian clients is being continually reduced. Last year 208 took their clearances from the board. The 438 settlers I mentioned are men who are still being assisted by the board, but there are a number of others who have not received

their clearances, but are getting no further assistance from the board.

Hon. G. Taylor: Are they showing any desire to get off?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We hope that the excellent season this year will benefit considerably the financial position of the board. Last night I pointed out that we received £1,240,432 from clients of the board last year. There are 907 ex-soldiers on the board and we cannot think of putting them off until they are established.

Hon. G. Taylor: Cannot you hand them over to the Agricultural Bank?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. The bank cannot advance money for the growing of crops unless the Act is amended.

Hon. G. Taylor: I do not like emergency legislation lasting so long.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The amount granted by the Commonwealth for the repatriation of soldiers did not provide for cropping or stocking holdings, with the result that it has been necessary to continue the Act longer than we expected.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is peculiar to have an emergency Act lasting nine years.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot oppose that argument. There is no doubt that the measure was introduced originally as a temporary measure. I think we made a big mistake in the first place by not providing to carry the farmers on after they had got a little capital.

Mr. Angelo: To do that you would have had to alter the name.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We finance these people when they have no money and run the risk of their cropping proving successful. Even to-day the Industries Assistance Board is the largest farmer in the State. There is no other farmer that provides for the cropping of 500,000 or 600,000 acres.

The Premier: That farmer will do well this year.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: While the State runs all the risk and finds the money to provide for cropping and stocking, in addition to carrying interest in many instances, as soon as the farmers get a few hundred pounds in credit, they are handed over to a private financial institution.

The Premier: And they go without regret very often.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Any man who has a few hundred pounds to credit and asks to remain on the board may remain,



but he receives no interest on his money. The benefit he gains is the assistance rendered by the officers in the management and conduct of his farm. The board is a great protection to some farmers. Even though such a farmer has money of his own, he has to apply to the board before he can incur expenditure. Many men have asked to remain as clients because of the assistance rendered by the officers to keep their accounts and carry on their farm work.

Mr. Lindsay: That may be the reason why some have been on the board so long.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There are very few of that sort. I wish we had more of them. If they were all like that we should not have £1,974,221 outstanding now. The total proceeds from produce last year was £849,187. We hope to do better this year, but we shall not get anything like the £1,900,000. When the affairs of the board are finalised I think there will be a fairly large loss. We have no security over the property; the security is tied to the Agricultural Bank and no action can be taken to sell it.

Hon. G. Taylor: But what you do not catch on the swing boats you have a chance of getting on the merry-go-round.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The board's security depends entirely upon the produce raised from the farms. Consequently I think it will be a long time before the outstanding money is paid off, and there will be a fairly heavy loss before we have finished. There is a recorded loss to date of £356,157.

Mr. Angelo: That is from the inception of the board?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, and that amount will be increased before the board's affairs are wound up.

Hon. G. Taylor: If the farmers sold their motor cars, they could pay that amount.

The Premier: Still, the State has got the money back many times over.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In future when I want money from the Treasurer, I shall put up that proposition to him. Hitherto the Treasurer has wanted the money back almost immediately. That has been one of my difficulties. As I said last night, 1,663 settlers have withdrawn from the board. Many persons who were on the board merely got temporary assistance to tide them over a difficulty. The Industries Assistance Board has been of great help to the State by paying land rents and other charges which probably would never have

been secured from the settlers if the board had not been in existence. Undoubtedly the board has been a decided success from the State's point of view. Western Australia would not be in its present condition of prosperity but for the board. We appreciate the services rendered by private financial institutions, but there is the unfortunate fact that many of them are found wanting in times of distress. At a crisis they are more likely to put the screw on than to give further assistance—I speak from experience. In 1912 or 1913 I assisted the present Leader of the Opposition in establishing the Yorkkraine settlement. The settlers there were very favourably established under the Agricultural Bank conditions. They obtained their land for about 10s. per acre. It was splendid land, selected before survey under the system then in vogue. In the course of a year or two it was recognised that the land was worth about £1 per acre, and the result was that the private banks endeavoured to get the settlers to draw out of the Agricultural Bank and come to them. Those endeavours succeeded in some cases. Since then I have had applications for permission to return to the Agricultural Bank, who were to take over an increased liability; but I have refused all such requests. When things are flourishing, the private banks try to take the cream and leave the State nothing but skim milk. I would like to see the Agricultural Bank converted into a bank of issue, so that the institution could be used by the farmers for general banking purposes. I am sure this would prove a decided success. It has often occurred to me that if the farmers only knew of some of the statements made here by their representatives, they would be angry. Indeed I think they would be ashamed of some of the opinions expressed here in their behalf. I should say that I am not referring to the present Parliament. Members were quite safe in making statements in this Chamber, because those statements did not appear in the Press. When the "Daily News" published verbatim reports of proceedings in Parliament, statements of that kind were not made by members. There was a considerable difference in what was said about farmers in the days when the evening paper got into the country districts with the full reports of member's speeches. There is a possibility of the Industries Assistance Board and the Agricultural Bank being amalgamated in the near future. Members are aware that the two institutions are con-

trolled by the same trustees. The amalgamation would be better for the State and better for the farmers, who would be much safer in the hands of the Government than in the hands of private banks. There is not much in the Bill for members to object to. It merely extends the life of the board for another 12 months.

Mr. Davy: There is nothing in the Bill to object to.

Mr. Latham: Let the board die a natural death, and amend the Agricultural Bank Act.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I was warned that the member for York (Mr. Latham) was likely to try to defeat this Bill with a view to letting the board die a natural death. However, my reply to that warning was that probably the member for York was indulging in some leg-pulling. If the board were allowed to die, 1,435 people would immediately be prevented from carrying on.

Mr. Latham: And you would lose all your securities.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. There would then be no option but for the board to enforce the conditions under which loans have been granted. There is plenty of time for the board to do that between now and March of next year.

Hon. G. Taylor: March is a bit of a hug-bear to many of us.

Mr. Angelo: "Beware the Ides of March."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the Bill does not pass, the board will have to take steps to protect the interests of the State. However, I gave no belief to that allegation concerning the member for York. I realised that he has too much sympathy with the man on the land to oppose the measure. Hoping that members will pass the Bill right away, I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [10.38]: I have listened with great interest to the Minister for Lands, but I cannot agree with all his statements. I realise the necessity for the Bill, but I hope the necessity will soon disappear. Although I was never on the Industries Assistance Board, I know hundreds of men who are or were on the board. The board probably saved the wheat belt, and also the State. However, the institution does not tend to make the farmer independent; and independence is essential to his

success. The Minister has stated that many farmers want to remain on the board because of the advice and assistance they receive from the board. I interjected at the time that a farmer who has been on the land for some years and still wants to remain on the board for the sake of assistance and advice is not likely to prove a very successful farmer. A man who has been on the land for some years should be able to stand on his own feet. I do not agree with some of the Minister's statements about private banks. From my own experience and the experience of others I can state that the private banks did assist the farmers in their time of difficulty. Even now there is this difference between the Agricultural Bank and the private banks: a private bank, when making a loan, does not take a mortgage and a bill of sale over all the borrower's property; and it grants him an advance of, say, £800 or £1,000 for the development of his holding instead of giving him £100 now and making him apply for another £100 later. With assistance from private banks it is possible to develop a holding much more quickly. When the private banks found it necessary to call up overdrafts, it was the man in the best position whose overdraft was generally called up, because his property could always be sold. The man in a less fortunate position was carried on. Generally speaking, however, the private banks did assist clients whom they had before the drought. The great majority of settlers at that time had obtained assistance from the Agricultural Bank, which held mortgages over their property, and therefore the private banks would not assist those settlers, who consequently had to go on the Industries Assistance Board. The private banks assisted many settlers through what was called a No. 2 account.

The Minister for Lands: Admittedly the private banks assisted some settlers.

Mr. LINDSAY: They assisted those people whom they actually had on their books at the time of the drought.

The Premier: Not all of them.

Mr. LINDSAY: The advances might have been restricted, but I know of no case in which assistance was refused. I am speaking of the Wyalcatchem district.

MR. LATHAM (York) [10.45]: While it was not altogether expected that the Act would cease straight away, I thought some provision might have been made under the

Agricultural Bank Act to carry on the I.A.B. settlers concerned, particularly as, according to the statement made by the Minister, their numbers have been greatly reduced. Had it not been that the Estimates went through so quickly last night, I would have moved to reduce the amount provided for the manager of the Industries Assistance Board, so that the subject might have been ventilated. There is ample provision in the country districts, by means of district inspectors and so forth, in addition to the Agricultural Bank trustees, so that there is no necessity for the office I refer to. Thus we could save the salary of that officer, or he could be placed in some other position and perhaps earn more than he gets now. The number of Industries Assistance Board clients has been greatly reduced. I have a document that is being circulated. It refers a good deal to the Industries Assistance Board and I presume the statistics given are the latest official figures available. It states—

**Labour Established the I.A.B.**

The operations of the Industries Assistance Board, created by a Labour Government, provide indisputable evidence of Labour's interest in, and concern for, the welfare of the farmer. Labour's courage and foresight in the terribly critical 1914-15 season has resulted in a return to the State and producers, the full extent of which it is impossible to assess in terms of £ s. d. Through the agency of the I.A.B. since its inception, a sum of £10,509,120 had, up to June 30 last, been advanced to farmers, the number assisted totalling 3,865. The amount repaid to that date totalled £8,788,458. There are still 786 ex-soldier, and 365 other settlers being fully assisted, and 121 ex-soldier, and 73 other settlers being partly assisted. The number of settlers released to August 31st totalled 1,663.

Then this quotation closes with the following question:—

What would have become of the total of 3,865 assisted settlers if a Labour Government had not established the Industries Assistance Board?

Of course it is admitted that the board was established, and is now carried on, by a Labour Government. It had to be done and has still to be continued, as the Minister stated.

The Premier: Of course, we do not do things that do not require to be done.

Mr. LATHAM: I notice that this document mentions in another place that the Government have wiped off the advances made under the Industries Assistance Board. During the past year several deserving settlers had their sustenance allowances reduced

to £8 per month. The position in which those men found themselves was owing to the dry spell last year and to the fact that the rabbits had invaded their crops. If the Government are responsible for wiping off their indebtedness, they must have been responsible for cutting down the sustenance allowances as well. In the past I always blamed the manager of the Industries Assistance Board or the people in control of the financial part of the concern. I did not think that the Labour Government had control of the financial side. It was grossly unfair to reduce the sustenance payments to £8 a month in the case of men who had their wives and large families to support.

The Premier: It does not depend upon the wife and family, but upon the merits of a case.

Mr. LATHAM: I say it ought to depend upon the merits of the case.

The Premier: It is not a charitable institution.

Mr. LATHAM: I do not say it is, but some of these men were soldiers who were put on the land and were assisted in their operations. They should be given a decent sustenance allowance to provide for their requirements.

The Premier: The financial aspect must be kept in mind.

Mr. LATHAM: Of course, but have we no outlook at all? Surely to goodness a decent living allowance should be provided for these people, even though they may have experienced misfortune.

The Minister for Lands interjected.

Mr. LATHAM: I say there are several, and one of these settlers had seven young children, one under three months old.

The Premier: That has nothing to do with the question.

Mr. LATHAM: It is a jolly shame to see that sort of thing being done.

The Premier: That is not the point. The trustees do not act on the basis of family necessities, but on the merits of the case.

Mr. LATHAM: Of course that is so.

The Premier: The Charities Department deal with men with large families.

Mr. LATHAM: Were the trustees responsible for reducing the sustenance allowances to £8 a month?

The Premier: Who do you think would be responsible?

Mr. LATHAM: I do not know. If the Government are to get credit for wiping off the settlers' indebtedness, I want to know

if they are also to get the credit for the reduction of sustenance allowances.

The Minister for Lands: The Government you supported would not give the trustees power to write off the indebtedness.

Mr. LATHAM: I do not know that they would not.

The Minister for Lands: I do.

Mr. LATHAM: I know some were written down.

The Minister for Lands: No, they were not.

Mr. LATHAM: Merely because some of these settlers have met with misfortune, their sustenance has been reduced to £8 a month and it is a crying shame.

The Premier: I have gone through many of these complaints, and there has never been one where the trustees of the Agricultural Bank were not right.

Mr. LATHAM: I say it is a jolly shame, and I hope it will not occur again. Let us have a little faith in the future. This season these people will be able to wipe out twice their indebtedness to the board.

Hon. G. Taylor: But they won't do it, all the same.

Mr. LATHAM: And yet for six months or so, they have not been permitted to have decent sustenance. We can easily imagine what a row the Premier would kick up if we were to attempt to reduce the living allowance to the workers to £8 per month.

The Premier: That has nothing to do with the case. Can you not see that?

Mr. LATHAM: We put people, including ex-soldiers, on the land and refuse to give them a decent sustenance allowance, such as they ought to get.

The Premier: It all depends upon their position. If they were to go to a bank and asked for a decent sustenance allowance, the bank would want to know if the security was there.

Mr. LATHAM: Yes, and the security is all right. If any of the properties I refer to were sold, they would return much more than had been advanced against the holdings.

The Minister for Lands: Well, I say that is not so.

Mr. LATHAM: But I know the properties.

The Premier: Then it is your judgment against that of the trustees!

Mr. LATHAM: I do not know about that, but I am just as competent as anyone else to judge the value of the land there. As I noticed the statements in the document I

have quoted from, I desired to know if the Government were responsible for this, as well as the writing off of indebtedness. I do not propose to oppose the continuation of the Act as set out in the Bill, but I hope we shall soon see the end of the Industries Assistance Board. I hope the provision in the Estimates for the manager of the Industries Assistance Board will not appear much longer, and that the official will be treated as a surplus officer.

The Minister for Lands: Why, you have just agreed to increase his salary by means of an Act of Parliament.

Mr. LATHAM: At any rate, that course should be adopted.

The Minister for Lands: What would you do with the surplus officer?

The Premier: Who would deal with these cases?

Mr. LATHAM: We already have district inspectors.

The Premier: But who would be the office to decide?

Mr. LATHAM: We have the trustees. We have the officer connected with the Soldier Settlement Scheme, and also the general manager of the Industries Assistance Board. It is time we abolished the position I refer to.

MR. ANGELO (Gaseoyne) [10.54]: This time is opportune to secure the amalgamation that was recommended by a select committee some time ago.

The Premier: Co-ordination is the word.

Mr. ANGELO: It should be a simple matter, in view of the decreased number of clients on the board's books, to close those accounts and transfer the debts to the Agricultural Bank. They could be considered as accounts in excess of the Agricultural Bank's limit and dealt with as such. There is always danger in having two sets of ledgers continuing at the one time. The Minister will bear me out when I say that we had evidence concerning a number of cases where clearances were made from the Agricultural Bank and debts to the Industries Assistance Board were forgotten. In one instance we lost £300 because of the two sets of books. The whole matter could be simplified by making the transfers during the coming year. If some of the accounts were finalised, it would be found that the increased value of the land provided sufficient equity in the security to cover the debt to the Industries Assistance Board. In those

cases the Agricultural Bank would have ample security, the Industries Assistance Board indebtedness could be wiped out and the whole thing treated as one account. I do not oppose the Bill, but I hope it is the last time we shall have such a measure placed before us.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle—in reply) [10.56]: The member for York (Mr. Latham) referred to settlers whose sustenance had been reduced to £8 a month, and set his knowledge against that of the trustees of the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. Latham: The trustees do not investigate every case; they could not do so.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: There is no instance where the cases are not dealt with by the trustees themselves.

Mr. Latham: Yes, on the reports from the manager.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: No, on the reports received from district officers.

Mr. Latham: Who, every often, have never been seen there.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: The hon. member is fully aware of the position. If any settler has had his allowance reduced, he must be heavily involved with the Industries Assistance Board. I do not know to whom the hon. member referred.

The Premier: Have you investigated the cases yourself?

Mr. Latham: Yes.

Mr. Mann: I think the Industries Assistance Board has acted very well in many cases.

Mr. Latham: I will give the Minister the names of three to whom I have referred.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: Many of these men have received more than I considered was justified. I have looked through hundreds of these cases.

Mr. Latham: I am prepared to say there are some most deserving cases.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: In some instances, regarding which complaints had been received, I was surprised, after I had perused the files, to find that the board had given them anything at all.

Mr. Latham: The Minister can imagine how men can get on with such a small allowance.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: The member for York said that if the Labour Government had written off the indebtedness in respect of these settlers, they must have reduced the sustenance allowances as well.

The board could not write off anything from the indebtedness until we introduced legislation to provide the necessary power. That was done the session before last. I have been assured by hon. members sitting on the Opposition cross benches that they approached repeatedly members of the coalition Government, in which their party was represented, with requests that legislation should be introduced to enable the Agricultural Bank trustees to write down the indebtedness.

The Premier: So the member for York will see that we are responsible for one act, but not for the other.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: Under the system in operation prior to that, the settlers were simply turned out. Their land was put up to auction with the usual mortgage conditions. If the money received did not cover the mortgage, the balance of the debt went on to the man who left the land.

Mr. Latham: That is the usual law of the land.

The Premier: But we have altered it.

Mr. Latham: You have not altered that.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: We have altered that and, by legislation, given power to the board, subject to the approval of Executive Council, to write down the indebtedness of the occupant. In that way the board have written down thousands of pounds. Week after week in Executive Council we have been writing off Industries Assistance Board accounts. Previously that could not be done. The Act has been fully availed of by the trustees. Let me explain how it came about. On one occasion, when I was at the bank, the managing trustee, who is also chairman of the Industries Assistance Board, drew my attention to what he described as a hard case. He said, "Here is a man who has done his best to make a success of his farm. Through unfortunate circumstances he has failed in that. But we have advanced to him more than his assets are really worth, and so he could not possibly pay off the full amount. We cannot do any more to get him out of difficulties. The only thing now to be done is to put up his farm by tender. In all probability we shall have to write down the amount until the new man can see his way to taking over the farm and making a success of it." I asked, "Why not do that for the present occupier?" The managing trustee explained that he had not the legal power to do that; that the board could advance money, but could not write

off any indebtedness. That is why the legislation came to be put through to enable the board to write down indebtedness. Since then many accounts have been written down with a view to enabling the settlers to remain on their holdings.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Continuance of Act:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not think the Minister wishes to make the Act permanent. He indicated the possibility of amalgamating the board with the bank. I hope he will be successful in bringing that about, and that this is the last time we shall see this measure.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is now a reasonable chance of amalgamating the board with the bank, but when the soldiers were going on the land it was utterly impossible.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

*Sitting suspended from 11.10 to 11.32 p.m.*

## **BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Council's Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it did not insist upon its amendments Nos. 6 and 8 disagreed to by the Assembly, but that it disagreed to the Assembly's amendment to the Council's amendment No. 7.

*Request for Conference.*

**HON. J. CUNNINGHAM** (Honorary Minister—Kalgoorlie) [11.35]: I move—

That a conference be requested with the Council, and that at such conference the managers for the Assembly be the Hon. P. Collier, Mr. Davy, and the mover.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: We do not know whether or not the House will accept the suggestion made by another place, notwithstanding which we are appointing managers for a conference.

The Premier: If we reject this opportunity the Bill will be lost.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is a precedent for this.

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

*Sitting suspended from 11.37 to 12.6 a.m. (Friday).*

*Conference with Council.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's request for a conference, and that the Council had appointed as managers Hons. A. Burvill, J. Ewing, and J. M. Drew.

*Sitting suspended from 12.7 to 1.20 a.m.*

*Conference Managers' Report.*

**HON. J. CUNNINGHAM** (Honorary Minister) [1.20]: I have to report that the managers met, and as a result I submit the following report:—

Legislative Council Amendment No. 6 is abandoned.

Legislative Council Amendment No. 7 is amended by deleting the word "age," in line three, and substituting "amended," in line one, and by deleting all words from "thereof," to the end.

Legislative Council Amendment No. 8 is abandoned.

Clause 13 of the Bill is amended by deleting all words from "amended," in line one, to "age," in line three.

Clause 4 of the Bill is deleted.

The effect of this is that all references to ages have been struck out of the Bill, and Section 21 of the principal Act stands.

Mr. Davy: With the addition of the new Subclause (4).

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The provision regarding the buses remains as in the past, and the age of drivers who may be licensed will be fixed by regulation, as heretofore. That means that bus drivers will have to be at least 21 years of age. As to fees, the effect of the amendment agreed to makes it clear that there shall be one license fee, enabling the licensed driver to change his motor vehicles without the payment of an additional license fee. I move—

That the report be adopted.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Before you put the motion for the adoption of the report, Mr. Speaker, I would draw your attention to the

remarks I made before the managers were appointed. I then stated that we were rather out of order, and that the question should have been debated in Committee as to whether we would accept the amendments insisted upon by the Council. In support of my contention, I will read some extracts from "Hansard" showing what happened on the 22nd December, 1924, when we dealt with the Council's pressed requests in connection with the Land Tax and Income Tax Bill. The report reads as follows:—

Message from the Council pressing its requested amendments now considered.

*In Committee.*

Mr Lutey in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

The Premier: It is within the knowledge of members that the Council is pressing its requests for amendments in this Bill. I move—

That the pressed request be not made.

Then the debate proceeded. It will be seen that the proceedings took place in Committee, and that was the proper procedure. On this occasion we did not adopt that procedure, and when I drew attention to the fact you, Mr. Speaker, assured me that it was all right. According to the "Hansard" report I have referred to, the question was discussed at some length, and then the report continues—

Question passed; the Council's pressed requests not made.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

At this stage you, Mr. Speaker, were in the Chair, and that is the procedure we should have adopted to-night. The "Hansard" report proceeds—

The Premier: I move—

That the following message be transmitted to the Legislative Council: "With reference to Message No. 39 from the Legislative Council, the Legislative Assembly acquaints the Legislative Council that it has again considered the request of the Legislative Council for amendments in the Land Tax and Income Tax Bill, and has decided again to decline to make them. The Legislative Assembly, therefore, again requests the concurrence of the Legislative Council in a Bill for an Act to impose a land tax and an income tax."

Question put and passed.

The Premier: But that was at an earlier stage.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Those were the first pressed requests. I wish to draw attention again to the fact that we have not discussed the amendments insisted upon by the Legis-

lative Council the second time. The amendments came to us by message, and we refused to accept one in particular. We sent it back, and they insisted upon their amendment. We did not discuss it again. The Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill moved for the appointment of managers without members deciding in Committee whether they would accept the amendment insisted upon by the Council or not.

Mr. Corboy: But we got through all right.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: But we should not proceed in such a way. We should know where we stand.

Hon. J. Cunningham: You must have slipped on your job.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: No, I drew attention to the matter at the time.

Hon. J. Cunningham: You should have taken action.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I did so, and the Premier knows that what I say is right.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not sure as to the attitude of the hon. member. If he desired to draw attention to an irregularity, the time to do so was when the Honorary Minister's motion was moved.

Hon. G. Taylor: I did so, and you assured me there was a precedent.

Mr. SPEAKER: I said there was a precedent, and an instance is to be found in the Votes and Proceedings for Friday, 18th December, 1925.

Hon. G. Taylor: I was in hospital at that time.

The Premier: That is why we went wrong.

Mr. SPEAKER: The official record sets out that the Order of the Day for the consideration in Committee of the Legislative Council's message No. 49 relating to the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill was read. This was not done in Committee. The report proceeds—

The Minister for Works moved, that a conference be requested with the Legislative Council on the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill, and that the managers for the Legislative Assembly be Mr. Collier, Mr. Davy, and the mover.

I may inform hon. members that on the present occasion the House had already been in Committee, had considered the matter, and had done all that they could do at that stage. The House had appointed managers, as proposed by the Minister, and therefore I submit there is no point of order. The matter cannot be raised

now, and there is the precedent I have referred to governing the position.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I drew attention to the matter at the time, but you said it was all right, as there was a precedent.

Mr. Corboy: And the Speaker has quoted it.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I could not have known of that precedent, because I was in hospital. Such a thing had not been done previously within my knowledge.

Mr. SPEAKER: The discussion is out of order. The hon. member knows the position.

The Minister for Lands: There must be two precedents.

Hon. G. Taylor: I did not know of the other.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member was satisfied with my explanation, because he did not proceed further.

Mr. CORBOY: I would like some information regarding the age question. Does it mean now that a person may secure a license to drive a motor vehicle irrespective of his age, provided he can pass the tests.

The Premier: The position is just as it was.

Mr. CORBOY: There is an age limit.

The Premier: Section 21 stands and regulations can be made.

Mr. CORBOY: Parliament decides that there shall be no age restriction, but the Commissioner of Police by regulation decides that the applicant must be 18 years of age.

Mr. Davy: That is just to make a bit of work for the lawyers.

Mr. CORBOY: I want to be clear as to whether the police must issue a license for driving a private car to any competent applicant, no matter what his age, or whether the applicant must be 18 years of age.

The Premier: The point is covered by Section 21 of the Act.

Mr. CORBOY: The existing regulation is contrary to the wish of Parliament at the time the parent Act was passed. Are the police to continue to insist upon a minimum age of 18 before issuing a license to drive a private car, or will a lad of 16 be able to get a license on passing the test?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Parliament passed legislation in the belief that it would be sensibly administered. I disagree with the member for Yilgarn when he says Parliament intended that a license should be

granted irrespective of age. It is a question of public safety. Up to the present the police have administered the law in the best interests of the community. The only friction we have had has emanated from youths desirous of handling cars; youths of whom, in the interests of public safety, the police have not approved as drivers. In future the law will be administered by the police on lines similar to those adopted in the past.

Mr. SAMPSON: In amendment No. 7 there was a provision that no license to drive a motor omnibus in the metropolitan area should be issued to any person under the age of 21. Does that remain?

Member: No.

Mr. SAMPSON: Then Section 21 is the law that stands. Also in the amendment by another place there was provision that a person might drive any class of motor vehicle, and the one license would be sufficient.

Mr. Davy: That remains.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am sorry we have not something more definite, since it is alleged that the regulations framed under the section are ultra vires.

The Premier: That is for interpretation by the courts.

Mr. Corboy: The Commissioner of Police may gazette another regulation next week making the age 21 years.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: If Section 21 stands, since there are regulations gazetted under it it would be wise for the Government to lay those regulations on the Table at the next sitting, so that the House might have opportunity to discuss them and, if necessary, disallow them; otherwise we shall not be able to consider them until next session. The member for Yilgarn is not satisfied that power was given to have those regulations put into force.

Mr. Corboy: I do not dispute the power, but I say it was never the intention of Parliament.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It would be wise to let the House see what the regulations are before Parliament rises. Again, I should like to know what the managers really discussed. The only thing in dispute was the 16 years age limit. We had no opportunity to discuss the amendment insisted upon by another place, but we understood it was the 16 year age limit. The managers apparently discussed other things to which the House had agreed, and actually altered them. I do not know that the managers had authority



for so doing. Certainly we did not instruct them.

The Premier: We could not instruct them. You are raising a point that has been already decided.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The managers discussed things the House did not intend them to discuss, things to which both Houses had already agreed.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Many members have sons and daughters who can drive motor cars just as well as can their parents. I have a daughter, aged 17, but I cannot get a license for her, because the police quote the regulation framed under Section 21 of the Act. We do not seem to have gained anything at all by appointing managers to deal with the 16 year age limit. They have simply brought us back to where we were. Where are we now? What is the use of accepting the report? If a child of 16 or 17 $\frac{3}{4}$  wants a license he cannot get one owing to the police regulation. Yet under an Act of Parliament, which is supposed to be supreme, he would be entitled, if competent, to receive a license even if he was only nine years of age. The managers have not done their job too well. They have agreed to something that has left us in a maze and we do not know where we are. Because a few individuals in another place have said, "I have a son or daughter of 15 or 16 who I desire should be able to drive my motor truck to the station," our managers have agreed to it. Yet the police regulation insists upon a driver being 18 years of age.

Mr. Panton: I think that was the opinion of this House.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not know where we stand. I have always understood that Parliament was the supreme authority that laid down the law for everyone else in the State, and yet we have the present unsatisfactory position. As the member for West Perth remarked, it will be a good thing for the lawyers.

Hon. G. Taylor: But he did not take that view as a manager.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not know whether the Honorary Minister proposed him as a manager for some ulterior motive.

Mr. Corboy: Do you think he has a sleeping partner?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We do not know where we are.

Mr. Teesdale: I know where we ought to be at this hour of the morning.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Honorary Minister should let us know the exact position. Are we under the police regulations or under an Act of Parliament?

The Premier: You ought to be under the police regulations.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It appears to me that the police have power to supersede the authority of Parliament.

Mr. DAVY: I think the proverbial slings and arrows of outrageous fortune are nothing to the member for Yilgarn and Mr. Smith.

Mr. J. H. Smith: The member for Nelson, please, one arm and one eye.

Mr. DAVY: What they complain of is that their daughters, cousins, sisters and aunts under 17 years of age so far have been unable to get a license. The Minister introduced the statutory age presumably because he realised that the regulations fixing the age were probably ultra vires. The managers, to help the members for Yilgarn and Nelson, have refused to adopt a statutory age and so we are in the same position as we were before.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Yet we have a police regulation limiting the age.

Mr. DAVY: Parliament did not make any police regulation.

Mr. J. H. Smith: But it is in force.

Mr. DAVY: The courts of law are provided to prevent Governments or Ministers from stepping outside the limits of Acts of Parliament.

Mr. J. H. Smith: You are camouflaging now.

Mr. DAVY: I am not. Probably the regulation is ultra vires; the Minister has more or less admitted the possibility.

Mr. Mann: It has never been tested.

Mr. DAVY: No; I suggest that the member for Nelson test it. It is absurd to talk about Acts of Parliament overruling regulations. We cannot provide in a Bill that a regulation already made by the police shall be deemed to be ultra vires.

Hon. G. Taylor: What did the managers discuss?

Mr. DAVY: I understand that what happened between the managers is more or less confidential. We certainly went to the conference to discuss whether the proviso to amendment No. 7 should be inserted.

Mr. Latham: And that was all.

Mr. DAVY: In discussing that we worked our way into an almost impossible position.

Hon. G. Taylor: You should have come back to the House and reported.

Mr. DAVY: The only way to get back to satisfactory ground was the way we took. After being advised by persons qualified to advise us, we concluded that what we have done was legitimate, proper and necessary.

Hon. G. Taylor: Both Houses agreed to certain things and you altered them.

Mr. DAVY: But if both sides had agreed to A and B and one side also wanted C, we could not agree to or refuse C and leave A and B out of consideration.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is what you should have done.

The Premier: It has been done in dozens of conferences. The conference on the Arbitration Act Amendment Bill last year re-drafted clauses that had never been disputed.

Hon. G. Taylor: That was different, because that Bill contained a number of things. Here there was only one proposition for the conference to consider.

The Premier: That was an occasion when the hon. member was not here.

Mr. DAVY: It was better to do what we have done than to wrangle about the point and lose the Bill, which contains a vast amount of important matter.

Hon. G. Taylor: We fought it pretty hard in this House and the Government would not adopt anything but the age of 18, and now they have come down to this.

Mr. J. H. Smith: To any age—nine or six.

Mr. DAVY: We had reached a certain point and had agreed on all things except the proviso. In the circumstances I think we did the proper thing.

Mr. Sampson: Has amendment No. 8 been agreed to?

Mr. DAVY: No.

Mr. MANN: I have no fault to find with the action of the conference managers. The difficulty would be solved if the suggestion of the member for Mt. Margaret were adopted and the regulations were placed on the Table prior to the close of the session. Then if the regulations were found to contain anything objectionable or outside the scope of the Act, exception could be taken to it. It is not fair to permit regulations outside the scope of the Act to be enforced and to compel an aggrieved person to test them in the court. If it is intended to control the age of drivers by means of regulations, the regulations should be placed on the Table so that members might understand them.

Mr. Chesson: Have not they been laid on the Table?

Mr. MANN: They cannot be tabled until the Bill has become an Act.

Mr. Chesson: The existing regulations have been tabled.

Mr. MANN: If they had been contested it is questionable whether they could not have been quashed.

Mr. Clydesdale: Your suggestion would not make things any better.

Mr. MANN: I think it would.

Mr. Clydesdale: Not at all.

Hon. G. Taylor: It would at least provide an opportunity to discuss the regulations.

Mr. MANN: Suppose a regulation was framed providing that no person under the age of 21 should drive a car, that would not meet with the wishes of this House because we desire the age to be 18. If it is intended to frame regulations let them be put up by the department before the House rises. The Government are well aware of the feeling of the House.

The Premier: And, of course, knowing the feeling of the House we are likely to fix the age at 21! An Act is generally administered with judgment and common sense. If the police all go mad anything may happen.

Mr. MANN: I think the regulations should be laid on the Table before the House rises, so that members may see whether they come within the Act or not.

The Premier: The regulations that are in existence will continue. They already exist and they will go on. They have been laid on the Table. This Bill does not affect that part of the Act now. New regulations are not necessary.

Mr. MANN: I am not sure that new regulations will not be required.

The Premier: If it is required to make new regulations such new regulations would be placed on the Table.

Mr. MANN: Will new regulations be laid on the Table of the House?

The Premier: If new regulations are required they will be laid on the Table.

Mr. MANN: I am satisfied.

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

#### *Council's Further Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the recommendations of the Conference managers.

*House adjourned at 1.57 a.m. (Friday).*