

# Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 29th November, 1923.

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

## QUESTION—PEMBERTON TOWNSITE.

Mr. J. H. SMITH asked the Premier: Will he state a definite time when, in accordance with the promise made, a townsite will be proclaimed at Pemberton?

The PREMIER replied: I have given instructions that a townsite is to be located.

## QUESTION—RAILWAY, JARNADUP-PEMBERTON.

Mr. J. H. SMITH asked the Premier: When do the Government propose to take over the railway from Jarnadup to Pemberton?

The PREMIER replied: I cannot name the date, but the Railway Department will take over the line.

## MOTION—STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.34]: I move—

*That for the remainder of the session the Standing Orders be suspended so far as to enable Bills to be passed through all their stages in one day, and Messages from the Legislative Council to be taken into consideration on the day on which they are received.*

It is usual at this stage of the session to move for the suspension of the Standing Orders. Hon. members know that the suspension of the Standing Orders will not mean that they will not have ample time in which to deal with the business of the House. It is convenient at this stage to have the advantage of the suspension so that Bills that can be passed without much discussion, may be taken through their re-

maintaining stages and transmitted to the Legislative Council on the same day. There is but little business on the Notice Paper and I promise members, as I have always done, that if it is the wish of the Leader of the Opposition, or any other member, that the consideration of any matter shall be postponed for any reasonable cause, I will meet those wishes. The House knows that that has always been my attitude when the Standing Orders have been suspended. I have no desire to rush business through the House merely because the Standing Orders have been suspended.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.36]: I am sorry that the Premier did not indicate when he expects the session to close. I know it is customary to suspend the Standing Orders when the session is about to close, but it is not altogether desirable to suspend them if the business is to carry on for another two or three weeks.

The Premier: I hope the session will be concluded next week.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We may hope that the session will close then, but often our anticipations are not realised. Although there is a fairly extensive list of business on the Notice Paper most of it is not of great importance. While I am prepared to accept the assurance the Premier has given that he will not use, in any arbitrary fashion, the powers conferred upon him by the suspension of the Standing Orders, there are one or two important matters yet to be dealt with. The Premier is asking too much of the House in seeking the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable him to pass Bills through all stages at one sitting, while we have the axe of redistribution over our heads, clouding the position in uncertainty.

The Premier: I wish I could be certain about it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: With the suspension of the Standing Orders, the Premier might force the Redistribution of Seats Bill through at one sitting.

The Premier: I promise the suspension will not apply to that Bill, unless you agree.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That removes some of the objection I have to the motion. I would not agree to it while there was any uncertainty regarding that Bill. I hope the Premier will arrive at a decision in connection with the Bill at an early date, so that we may know where we are. He cannot delay the matter much longer if he desires to close the session next week.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam—in reply) [4.39]: I readily give the promise sought by the Leader of the Opposition. It would be unthinkable in any circumstances to apply the suspension of the Standing Orders to the consideration of the Redistribution of Seats Bill.

Mr. Hughes: What about private members' business?

The PREMIER: I have already promised that ample time will be given for the con-

sideration of private members' business. The Government business will not require much time now, and next week will be largely devoted to that brought forward by private members. That is to say, if the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) does not stonewall his own motion.

Mr. Hughes: The Control of Rents Bill is the only important matter. You can cut out the rest.

Mrs. COWAN: May I ask the Premier if an opportunity will be given—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has already replied, and I cannot allow any further debate. I made it clear that the Premier was replying when he rose.

Mrs. COWAN: I rose before the Premier, but you did not permit me to speak. I wished to ask a question.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the member for West Perth rose before the Premier replied, I did not see her. If she desires to ask a question I will permit her to do so.

Mrs. COWAN: Will the Premier see that an opportunity is given for the consideration of the Women's Legal Status Bill so that it may be sent to another place and dealt with before the end of the session?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Question put and passed.

#### BILL—LOAN (£3,763,000).

##### *All Stages.*

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

##### *Second Reading.*

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.44] in moving the second reading said: With the exception of one clause, to which I will refer, the Bill authorises the raising of money for the construction of works already agreed to by Parliament. It merely asks the House to say that the money may be borrowed. Clause 7 is the one I will specially refer to. During the war period, in 1914-15 a sum of £3,100,000 was borrowed by the State from the Commonwealth Government. The rate of interest was fixed at 4½ per cent., but it was agreed at the time that if the money cost the Commonwealth Government more than that, the amount would be paid by the State. It seems a long time, since 1914-15, to wait for a claim to be made. At any rate this State, and every other State, undertook to pay the cost of the money. We are now asked to pay at the rate of £4 14s. 5d. per cent., and this means a very large sum—£128,000 up to March last. The Commonwealth Government have told the States that the payment may be spread. The other States are spreading their payments over a term, but how long the term is I do not know. It will be necessary for this State to do likewise. I am asking authority to spread the payment of this amount over any period on which we can agree up to 10 years. I have not been

able to ascertain how long the Commonwealth will grant. The clause will authorise the payment of the money and the charging of a proportionate amount to Consolidated Revenue each year. I hope the House will accept this settlement of a long outstanding debt.

Hon. P. Collier: Will the increased interest be payable from the commencement of the loan?

The PREMIER: Yes: it was agreed that whatever the money cost, we were to pay. I move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

##### *In Committee.*

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

Clauses 1 to 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Power to issue Treasury bills in respect of interest payable under a certain debt to the Commonwealth:

Mr. WILLCOCK: Will the State have to pay compound interest?

The PREMIER: I am afraid the interest will carry interest in the same way as the debt. The Commonwealth have incurred the debt.

Mr. Willecock: That seems hardly fair.

Clause put and passed.

##### *First Schedule:*

Mr. HUGHES: We ought to have an assurance how the item "Agricultural Group Settlement, £800,000" will be spent. At the week end I visited Group 37. The idea of group settlement is excellent and does the Premier credit. It appeals to me because it is communal in its essence. It is a practical demonstration of communism, and the Premier deserves credit for leading the way.

The Premier: Surely you do not accuse me of that!

Mr. HUGHES: I do. On each group are 20 men working together for their collective good.

Mr. Teesdale: Thank God there are other interpretations of communism!

Hon. P. Collier: It is one of those happy terms that everyone can interpret for himself.

Mr. HUGHES: At Group 37 the settlers want to know the policy of the Government.

The Premier: What do they want to know?

Hon. P. Collier: It sounds as if that had been prompted by the P.P.A. executive. That caused all the trouble in their ranks.

Mr. Pickering: It seems to have come from your executive.

Mr. HUGHES: The settlers want to know what will be the capitalisation of their blocks. No one knows.

The Premier: Everybody does.

Mr. HUGHES: I do not.

The Premier: Then you ought to.

Mr. Munsie: I do not think any of the group settlers know. They are always asking.

Mr. HUGHES: Those settlers are working for 10s. a day, a poor wage, struggling to

establish themselves and their families on the land. They do not know how much money is being spent on their groups. One man asked me "What is the capitalisation of my block to be? Is there to be any limit? If it is to be heavy, there is no need for the Government to wait three years to tell me. If I am told a certain figure, I shall walk off to-morrow, because I cannot make a do of it."

The Premier: Whatever the place costs, he must pay.

Mr. HUGHES: If these blocks cost a prohibitive sum, the settlers cannot make good. Although groups have been in existence two and a half years, I understand none has yet been launched on its own. The Government should render the people on each group a monthly statement of accounts.

Mr. Harrison: I think it is done weekly.

Mr. HUGHES: The people I refer to have been on the group for some months and have not seen such a statement.

The Premier: We cannot have an army of clerks going around.

The CHAIRMAN: Why was not this point raised during the discussion on the Loan Estimates?

Mr. HUGHES: It was due to no fault of mine that it was not raised. An army of clerks would not be required. The money has to be paid from the Treasury periodically, and I suppose one clerk could do all that was necessary.

The Premier: I believe a statement is forwarded once a month and posted up. If you had raised the point earlier, I could have ascertained definitely.

Mr. HUGHES: If the capitalisation is too high, the settlers will have no alternative to walking off their blocks.

Mr. Latham: You do not suggest the settlers are not earning 10s. a day, surely!

Mr. HUGHES: What sinister interpretation does the hon. member wish to place on my remarks?

Mr. Latham: There is not much other expense on the blocks.

The Premier: Yes, there is.

Mr. HUGHES: I do not suggest the settlers are not earning the 10s. a day. I do not wish to misjudge the member for York, but what other object had he in making a remark like that?

Mr. Latham: You were anticipating additional expense that will not be incurred.

Mr. HUGHES: I am asking a reasonable question regarding the man who undertakes the proposition from which he hopes to make a living. He naturally says, "What will my capitalisation be when I take over my block, and shall I be able to pay?" Is there any limit to a man's capitalisation? Is there a maximum? On the same subject there is another matter to which I desire to refer. I visited Group 37 and out of the 18 blocks I learned that there were six holders who had no first-class swamp land. That statement was made to me at an assemblage of the settlers. I do not wish it to be thought that I am posing as an authority on land.

The Premier: Did they say so?

Mr. HUGHES: It was the statement of the settlers to me, and agreed to by everybody present. They pointed out that the possibilities of failure were great owing to that fact.

The CHAIRMAN: This matter was discussed on the Loan Estimates. The hon. member asked the Premier a question on Item 17 in the schedule now before us, and he is now introducing the subject of the quality of the land. The hon. member is not entitled to discuss the subject of first or second-class land at this stage. He may ask a question as to how the money is to be repaid, but I will not permit a general discussion on the quality of the land.

Mr. HUGHES: It is rather an important question, and I request you, Mr. Chairman, to reconsider your decision. We are asked to borrow £800,000 and on the capacity of these people to repay depends our ability to repay. Their capacity to repay is bound up in the production from their land.

The CHAIRMAN: The argument should have been advanced at the time the money was voted, not now.

Mr. HUGHES: Then I have no alternative but to move to disagree with your ruling. I regret having to do so, but the matter is of sufficient importance to warrant it.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will put his disagreement in writing.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

#### *Dissent from Ruling.*

The Chairman stated the dissent.

Mr. Hughes: I regret, Mr. Speaker, the necessity for calling you to the Chair. I pointed out that under the item we were discussing, we were asked to authorise a loan of £800,000. That money would be borrowed for the purpose of lending it to a third party—the group settlers, and on the capacity of the group settlers to repay it, will depend the capacity of the State to repay it to the people from whom it was borrowed. I take it that an hon. member is not justified in voting for the borrowing of money unless he can see a reasonable chance of the State being able to repay it. Therefore the capacity of the State to repay is bound up in the prospect of the land being able to produce that which is expected of it. I was proceeding to develop an argument on those lines and to show that it would not be possible to repay the money borrowed owing to the poor quality of the land, when I was called to order. I submit that my argument was entirely relevant to the position. The whole thing is bound up in the possibility of the settlers earning enough to repay the Government so that the Government may repay the lenders.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is in order in asking a question as to the manner in which the money to be borrowed is likely to be repaid. But unfortunately for him there is a proper time for discussing that matter, together with the subject of the classification

of the land and the ramifications of the group settlements. That should have been done on the Loan Estimates when the money was being voted. Just now the Committee is discussing the raising of the money which the House has decided shall be expended. The hon. member is not in order in referring to the quality of land and dealing generally with group settlements. Therefore I uphold the ruling of the Chairman of Committees.

*Committee resumed.*

Mr. HUGHES: Will the capitalisation to be levied on each block be that which the settler can repay with the possibility of earning a living?

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. HUGHES: Is the land given to all group settlers such as will enable them to fulfil their obligations to the Government?

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. HUGHES: I shall send those answers to my friends, and let them contest them.

The PREMIER: I shall be very pleased to give the hon. member the fullest possible information, and to instruct the department to show him exactly what has happened in connection with land selected for the scheme. The land was selected by careful and experienced men. I cannot give the hon. member information about every one of the 1,600 blocks, but we are doing the best we possibly can for the settlers. The capitalisation will be upon the amount expended on the block. The house is cheap. We all have a desire to say to the settlers, "Here is the whole thing free," but of course we cannot do that. Whatever is spent on a block must be repaid.

Mr. Hughes: If the settler has to walk off the block, the debt will not be repaid.

The PREMIER: If my friend had experience of these matters, he would know that in America whole countrysides have been deserted and then re-settled. In this State what are now flourishing farms were previously abandoned. I shall instruct the department to show the hon. member everything connected with the scheme, and I trust that will satisfy him. I hope the capitalisation will be such as to enable the settler to repay, and repay comfortably.

Mr. MUNSIE: Take a group settlement of 20. I know generally what the conditions are—that so much land is absolutely cleared on each block and so much partly cleared, that a house is built, and that stock is provided. What I want to know is, do the Government keep an account of the actual cost of clearing each block, and is that cost debited to the block, or is the average cost of clearing all the blocks debited against each block?

The PREMIER: The costs are kept separately as far as possible.

Mr. Munsie: And the cost incurred in connection with each block is debited to each block?

The PREMIER: The costs are kept very carefully, but the agreement which every settler signs also provides that the adjustment is to be subject to the general manager, Mr. McLarty. Of course for the first month the work of men coming to a group settlement from, say, the mining industry is more costly.

Mr. PICKERING: Has a site for the agricultural college been selected?

The Premier: No.

Schedule put and passed.

Second and Third Schedules, Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

*Message.*

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation in connection with the Bill.

*Third Reading.*

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

**BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.**

Received from the Council.

*First Reading.*

Mr. MANN (Perth) [5.24]: I move—  
That the Bill be now read a first time.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	25
Noes	..	..	..	..	15

Majority for .. .. 10

**AYES.**

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Money
Mr. Brown	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Carter	Mr. Plesse
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Durack	Mr. Sampson
Mr. George	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Latham	Mr. A. Thomson
Mr. C. C. Maley	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. H. K. Maley	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Mann	Mr. Mullaney
Sir James Mitchell	(Teller.)

**NOES.**

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Chesson	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Collier	Mr. Troy
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Walker
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Heron	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Lutey	(Teller.)

Question thus passed.  
Bill read a first time.

*As to Second Reading.*

Mr. MANN: I move—

*That the second reading of the Bill be made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.*

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I move an amendment—

*That "next sitting of the House" be struck out and "this day two weeks" be inserted in lieu.*

Mr. Mann: Why not make it six months?

Hon. P. Collier: That would do as well.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We have already passed a Scaffolding Bill this session. In that Bill as it left here, was a clause giving the Minister power to exempt from the operations of the measure certain portions of the State if so desired. The Bill before us is quite different from the earlier one. I think we could well do without it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I support the amendment. We cannot possibly deal with this Bill at the next sitting, having regard to the condition of the Notice Paper, and to the statement by the Premier earlier this afternoon that it is intended to close the session next week. How, then, does the hon. member expect to have the Bill dealt with earlier than a fortnight hence?

Mr. Mann: It is only a one-clause Bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But we cannot judge of its importance by its length. The hon. member ought to be content if the House gives him an opportunity to deal with the Bill in a fortnight's time when, probably, we shall have cleared off the Notice Paper. Unless we fix a definite date for the second reading, there is no guarantee that the Bill will not be given preference over all the other Bills on the Notice Paper, some of which have been before us for three months, Bills mostly in charge of members on this side of the House. With the influence of the hon. member behind this Bill, we have no guarantee that it will not be the first on the Notice Paper to-morrow; if so the Bills already there, that should have priority, will instead have a greater chance of being lost at the end of the session than will this one-clause bantling that has just come down. I should not have agreed to the motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders to-day had I known that this Bill was going to be sneaked in on us immediately afterwards. The Premier's promise that opportunity shall be given for dealing with the orders on the Notice Paper cannot apply to this Bill, because he did not know of it when he made that promise. It will be sufficient if the hon. member who moved the motion be given an opportunity to move the second reading this day two weeks.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In ordinary circumstances I might be inclined to agree with members opposite. But I regard

this Bill from a different standpoint. I am deeply disappointed at the defeat of the earlier Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think I can allow discussion on that at this stage.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This Bill applies the provisions of the proposed Act to Perth alone.

Mr. HUGHES: On a point of order. Can the hon. member discuss the Bill?

Mr. SPEAKER: No, I cannot allow discussion on the merits of the Bill at this stage.

Hon. P. Collier: It is unfair, because the Minister's remarks may result in withdrawing support from our amendment.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Well, at all events, let us get the Bill on the statute-book for the sake of the men whose lives and limbs are in jeopardy.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member should not have said such a thing.

Hon. P. Collier: He is taking a mean advantage of the House. We are not allowed to discuss the Bill or its merits.

Mr. McCALLUM: I am surprised at the Government's readiness to give the Bill a place on the Notice Paper at all. Are the Government agreed that their policy is to be taken out of their hands, remoulded, and laid down by a private member in another place? The Minister had a definite policy when the previous Bill was before us, but that policy has been thrown out by a private member of another place. This Bill should not be given a place on the Notice Paper at all. If the Government wanted to control the business, they would be voting against this Bill going on the Notice Paper at all. Are we to understand from the attitude of the Government that they are throwing their own policy to the four winds?

The Minister for Works: No, we are not.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! We cannot discuss that.

Mr. McCALLUM: But, surely, that is the crux of the situation! I want to know whether we are to understand that the Government do not care what happens to their own policy, that they will facilitate private members in another place who come along with proposals to be substituted for the principles the Government say they stand for?

The Minister for Works: We certainly care for our own principles.

Mr. McCALLUM: Then why do you not tell members of another place that you will not tolerate this sort of thing? The principle in this Bill is somewhat the same as that in the Bill introduced by the Minister for Works earlier in the session.

The Minister for Works: We cannot have the other Bill at all this session.

Mr. McCALLUM: Are we to understand that the Government will allow their policy to be thrown out by interested persons, and will support the policy substituted by those interested persons?

The Premier: We cannot discuss that now.

Mr. McCALLUM: If the Government are going to allow the business of the country to be taken out of their hands, the affairs of the Government will soon come to a pretty pass. I hope the Government will assist the Opposition in the stand they are taking against the throwing out of the Government's policy. Why have the Government dropped their own policy?

The Minister for Works: We have not dropped it.

Mr. McCALLUM: We all know what is happening at the Perth Town Hall; we know of the wires that are being pulled; we know of the lobbying taking place here, and the conferences being held; we know all that is going on behind the scenes with a view to defeating the Government policy. Are the Government going to be parties to those proceedings?

The Premier: We are not.

Mr. McCALLUM: Yet you are appealing to the House to allow the Bill to go on the Notice Paper, despite all this underground engineering to defeat the Government's policy. Why should the Government support a Bill brought down by a private member of another place after his conference with the town hall? I am surprised at the attitude of the Government. They must be aware of what has been going on. I hope the House will not agree to the Bill being placed on the Notice Paper at all.

Capt. CARTER: I object to the amendment, because it does not give free play to discussion of the measure. I have not seen anything contained in the Bill, nor have I been lobbying, nor am I aware of any underground engineering in respect of the Bill; but I do not like the application of the gag, which is really what the amendment amounts to. It is common knowledge that the session will not last very long. Therefore if the amendment means anything at all, it means the elimination of all discussion on the Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: But if the session is not to last very long, surely there will be no time to discuss new Bills.

Capt. CARTER: It is not the Premier's desire to cut out anything that ought to be dealt with. I object to the amendment, just as on a previous occasion I objected to another motion by the member for North-East Fremantle that, in effect, was nothing more nor less than the application of the gag.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not know that the hon. member is in order in accusing another hon. member of ulterior motives.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Oh, he can accuse me of whatever he likes.

Capt. CARTER: If the amendment be carried, there will be no further opportunity to discuss the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is in order in placing his views before the House in that language, but not in the language he was previously using when he referred to the application of the gag.

Capt. CARTER: I withdraw the word "gag." In effect the amendment means we

shall not see this Bill again. I do not know what is in it, but we should have an opportunity to deal with it. It may contain all or part of that which was contained in the Scaffolding Bill that left this Chamber. Until it comes before us at the second reading stage I shall withhold my vote from the amendment. When we do get it in the proper way we shall be able to express our opinion as to whether we shall pass it or not.

Mr. HUGHES: The member for Leederville (Capt. Carter) opposes the amendment on the ground that it will not allow free discussion upon this Bill. If he wants an intelligent discussion upon it, surely a fortnight is not too long to give to members. The rushing of the Bill through would be the very antithesis of his object. But the Bill has been slipped on to us in the dying hours of the session, and members will have no time in which to discuss it. Members of the Opposition sat here all night on Tuesday to help the Premier with his business. We have his assurance that motions on the Notice Paper in the name of private members will be discussed. What opportunity shall we have of discussing them if this private Bill is slipped on to the Notice Paper from another Chamber?

The Premier: It will not be slipped in ahead of other business.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The municipalities should have an opportunity of seeing what it is.

Mr. HUGHES: It will take a fortnight to get through the Notice Paper.

The Premier: You can take a fortnight showing the items on it.

Mr. HUGHES: If the Premier is going to reward our efforts by doing this, we will be justified in taking a fortnight. We have a right to expect some consideration from him for what we have done. The discussion on the Redistribution of Seats Bill might last three or four months.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot discuss the merits of that Bill.

Mr. HUGHES: There is one Bill we have already discussed and sent on to another place.

The Premier: Are you going to consider this Bill or not?

Mr. Corboy: We are not.

Mr. HUGHES: No, because we had an assurance from the Premier, in return for the way in which we helped him, that we would have an opportunity to discuss our own private Bills. We shall be denied that right if this new Bill is placed upon the Notice Paper. This Bill will come in at the expense of ours.

The Premier: Not unless you take up all the time in talking.

Mr. HUGHES: Will the Premier assure us that this new Bill will be placed at the bottom of the Notice Paper?

The Premier: I will not. You will have a chance of considering your 6 per cent. Bill long before that.

Mr. HUGHES: It is 8 per cent. Will the Premier adhere to his pledge? He refuses, however, to give us an assurance that this new Bill will be placed at the end of the Notice Paper.

The Premier: I will give you an assurance that yours will be ahead of it.

Mr. HUGHES: I do not want special treatment. The Premier has assured us that all business on the Notice Paper will be discussed, but if this Bill is allowed to come before us now, it will take precedence over the other items, and will constitute a violation of the Premier's pledge.

The Premier: It will take years to discuss everything on the Notice Paper.

Mr. HUGHES: And yet the Premier says we shall have an opportunity of doing so. He is very unfair. We agreed to everything he wanted in the way of helping on the business of the House.

The Premier: You can talk all night and to-morrow night as well.

Mr. HUGHES: The Premier should treat the Opposition fairly. Many members have waited for months to have their Bills discussed, and we have seen the Notice Paper re-arranged from time to time. We are told there will be three more sittings of the House, and yet an attempt is being made to bring this Bill from another place before us. The Legislative Council is not entitled to any rights ahead of the rights of members of this Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not the question under discussion.

Mr. HUGHES: The object of the amendment is to conserve the rights of members here. There is no personal animosity towards the member for Perth (Mr. Mann). The desire of the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) was to ensure that the items now on the Notice Paper would be discussed. Any new matter that is placed there now will limit the time that is available for the discussion of the subjects already there. The Premier had hardly given the assurance I refer to when the member for Perth slipped in with this Bill. By this act he violates the promise of the Premier. I suggest he should withdraw the Bill and, taking advantage of the suspension of the Standing Orders, bring it forward again at a later stage.

The Premier: It is unbecoming in a youthful member to make a suggestion of such import.

Mr. HUGHES: Age has always looked suspiciously upon youth when it has been going along the track of life.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must deal with the question before the Chair.

Mr. HUGHES: The Premier ought to profit by the new ideas of new members. Apparently it is nothing for the member for Perth to violate the pledge given by his Leader.

Hon. P. Collier: It did not occur to him or he would not have done this.

Mr. HUGHES: I appeal to him to honour the pledge given by the Premier, and withdraw the Bill. We have done all we could to assist the Premier.

Hon. P. Collier: We even had to fight the rebels.

Mr. HUGHES: We even voted against his enemies to assist him. What objection could there be to first dealing with the items on the Notice Paper and then allowing the member for Perth to bring along his Bill?

The Premier: Then you are going to put it through?

Mr. HUGHES: At the proper time.

Hon. P. Collier: According to our judgment.

Mr. HUGHES: We will give him all he asks provided he temporarily withdraws the Bill. The attitude of the Premier is a poor return for the courtesy extended to him by this side of the House.

Hon. P. Collier: But the Bill is only a little one.

Mr. HUGHES: The fact that the Bill is a small one is of no importance, for the contentious matter of a Bill containing 100 clauses may be confined to one of them.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must not discuss the Bill. He must confine himself to the amendment. I do not wish to rule his out of order on the ground of tedious repetition.

Mr. HUGHES: May I not reply to the arguments advanced against the amendment? The reasoning adopted by the Government supporters is fallacious. The Bill may be small but contentious. Should it prove to be within that category, it will make the position worse for hon. members who have business on the Notice Paper, for, with the suspension of the Standing Orders, the Bill will take precedence over business which has already been before the House. To proceed with the Bill in the circumstances would be a negation of the Premier's promise.

The SPEAKER: I shall have to rule the hon. member out of order if he continues along these lines. I have already given him considerable latitude. He must not persist in advising the member for Perth.

Mr. HUGHES: I had finished when you, Mr. Speaker, interrupted me.

The PREMIER: The House might reasonably agree to the motion and see what is contained in the Bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Don't you think the local authorities, too, should have some chance of knowing what is in it?

The PREMIER: I do not know what is in the Bill. If we refuse to accept the motion now, it will be the first time we have refused to receive a message from another place. I can assure the hon. member for East Perth that my word will be kept and that full opportunity will be given to consider the business on the Notice Paper. The motion is not a violation of the pledge I gave to the House.

Mr. Hughes: That is my interpretation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Premier will not have time to communicate with the Northam Municipal Council to ascertain their views regarding the Bill.

The PREMIER: It may be, as has been stated, that on two occasions this session another place has refused to accept proposals from this House. One emanated, it was said, from the Opposition and the other was introduced by the Minister for Works.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot discuss that question.

Hon. T. WALKER: The seriousness of the position does not seem to strike hon. members sitting on the Government side of the House. If we adhered strictly to the Standing Orders, the Bill should be ruled out of order because, in substance, it is the same as a Bill already dealt with this session by this House. I judge that is the position from the discussion that took place in another place.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have not had time to look into that question.

Hon. T. WALKER: I am aware of that fact. That is why the amendment is justified. Because hon. members will not have an opportunity of adequately considering and analysing the Bill, the consideration of it should be adjourned. There is another reason why we should not proceed with the measure with undue haste. It is that the Bill affects the municipalities throughout the State.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is different from what the member for North-East Fremantle stated.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is not.

Hon. T. WALKER: Let us suppose that the Bill only applies to the municipality of Perth. If that be so, then the Perth Municipal Council will enjoy privileges which will not be extended to other municipalities throughout the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It affects all municipalities.

Hon. P. Collier: That is so.

Hon. T. WALKER: If this privilege were extended to Perth alone, it would be unjust. It has been the invariable rule of this Chamber, whenever measures affecting the vital interests of local governing authorities are introduced, to afford local bodies ample time to consider them. There is no time to place the Bill before municipal authorities in outlying centres. In five minutes we are asked to rush the Bill through. I cannot understand the spirit actuating hon. members. Is it because the author of the Bill in another place may be able to show that, in the event of the Bill not passing here he is master of the situation when other measures reach another place? Is it a sop to Cerberus? Is it to facilitate the passage of other measures when they go to the Legislative Council? I cannot say; I offer no opinion. The Opposition have asked for an adjournment for a fortnight or three weeks and if the measure is a good one, no hardship will be inflicted upon anyone concerned, not even if

it were left for consideration by the incoming Parliament. There is no reason for the Bill being brought forward on the spur of the moment. We require some time to make the Bill worthy of our legislature.

Amendment put.

Mr. SPEAKER: The amendment is agreed to. Notice of Motion, No. 3!

Mr. Mann: I called for a division, Mr. Speaker!

Opposition members: You did not.

Mr. Hughes: You called the next item, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Mann: I am sorry if you did not hear my voice, Mr. Speaker, but I certainly called for a division.

Hon. T. Walker: There was only one voice against the amendment.

The Minister for Agriculture: There were three or four.

Mr. SPEAKER: I certainly heard three or four voices against the amendment, but a far greater number in favour of it. I did not hear the hon. member for Perth call for a division although I waited for a little while before I called on the next item. If the member for Perth assures me that he did call for a division I will allow the division to proceed.

Mr. Mann: I did so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I wish I were as sure of receiving £1,000 as I am that you did not!

Mr. Hughes: I protest. Mr. Speaker had called on the next business.

Mr. SPEAKER: In the circumstances I will allow the division to proceed.

Division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	20
Noes	..	..	18

Majority for .. .. 2

#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munster
Mr. Collier	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Davies	Mr. Troy
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Heron

(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. H. K. Maley
Mr. Brown	Mr. Mann
Mr. Carter	Sir James Mitchell
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Money
Mr. Durack	Mr. Piessie
Mr. George	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Harrison	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Johnston	Mr. A. Thomson
Mr. Latham	Mr. Mullany

(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.



# **BILL—GERALDTON HARBOUR WORKS RAILWAY.**

Introduced by the Premier (for the Minister for Works) and read a first time.

# **BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.**

Report of Committee adopted.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

# **BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. H. K. Maley—Greenough) [7.33] in moving the second reading said: For some time road board conferences, the Pastoralists' Association and others have expressed a desire for an amendment of the Vermin Act to make a uniform rate throughout the State so that the dingo pest may be more effectively coped with. While rabbits have not increased to a noticeable degree during the last two years or more, dingoes have, and because of that increase and the expansion of the pastoral industry to portions of the State that always have been fairly badly infested, an amendment of the Act is needed. This Bill will bring the whole of the State under the operation of one Act. The 1918 Act applies to the South-West division only. In that division we pay a bonus of 10s., and the road boards are compelled to constitute themselves vermin boards. The 1909 Act applies to that portion of the State outside the South-West division and provides for a bonus of 5s. There the constitution of the boards differs; the road boards do not automatically become vermin boards, and thus the cost of administration is heavier. The line of division is the rabbit-proof fence. Difficulty has been experienced in the administration and payment of bonuses by boards whose boundaries are partly within the South-West division and partly outside. By applying the Act to the whole of the State that difficulty will be overcome. The total amount paid by the Government for bonuses during the year ended 30th June, 1923, was £2,560, representing the rates of 10s. and 5s. in the respective areas. The total amount paid by the vermin boards was £5,286. In the pastoral areas it was £2,535, and in the agricultural areas, £2,451. The number of dogs caught during the year was 6,692. Slight amendments are proposed to give power to charge interest on overdue rates. This is only in keeping with the powers given to road districts in regard to arrears of rates and it will be an incentive to land holders to pay their rates to time.

Mr. Underwood: What about the destruction of euros?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Marsupials are protected under the Game Act. There is some conflict between the administration of the Vermin Act and that of the

Game Act because it has been thought undesirable to encourage the wholesale destruction of kangaroos, emus and other distinctive fauna. We cannot accede to the requests that come from all quarters. Black cockatoos are a pest in the South-West during the apple season; emus are a pest in the north midlands during harvest time, and euros are said to be a nuisance in some of the northern districts. The Government cannot provide bonuses to promote the destruction of all those creatures.

Mr. Underwood: A function of Government should be to do whatever will assist the production of the State.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Quite so. Under the Bill the basis of rating will be the same for pastoral leaseholds outside the South-West division as for holdings in the South-West division under the existing Act. The Pastoralists' Association have informed me they are prepared to find a large sum of money to assist in the destruction of the dingo. If they are genuine, this will give them power under their own local government machinery to strike a rate for the purpose. We shall provide by regulation for the vermin boards to declare a uniform bonus of 20s. a scalp throughout the South-West division and of 10s. in the rest of the State. The Government bonus will be 10s. throughout the State. This represents double the bonus being paid at present in the area outside the South-West division.

Hon. P. Collier: A pound a head is a pretty high bonus.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That applies to the agricultural districts where the dingo is not so prevalent. It is also a fairly high bonus in the North-East Coolgardie country bordering on the Nullabor Plains, which is a breeding place for the pest. The Government often have to assist a district to maintain its roads when the burden becomes too great, and it might be necessary to assist districts bordering on the Nullabor Plains if the vermin bonus proves too heavy. The amount provided will not be too heavy in the South-West division. The department have no doubt there has been trafficking in dingo scalps. Where one board is paying £3 in addition to the Government bonus, and an adjoining board is paying nothing extra, the consequence is—

Hon. P. Collier: The scalps trek across the border.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Although every precaution is taken to get a declaration from the person presenting the scalps as to the locality where they were obtained, doubtless there has been trafficking. Another amendment provides that in each vermin district a record shall be kept at the office of the actual work done by the local inspector so that it may be possible to see at a glance, how it is being carried out, and just whether the board is fulfilling the obligations required of it. The present position in regard to vermin districts is that they are on a distinctly better footing than has been the case for some years back. Vermin dis-

tricts are carrying out their work fairly satisfactorily. Let me give some examples of what has been done in the way of dingo destruction by the various boards. The Kellerberrin Road Board for the year ended June 30, 1923, paid a bonus of £3 for each of 58 dogs, the total payment amounting to £174. The Meekering board paid a bonus of £2, and even as high as £4, for 28 dogs, the total payment being £72. The Merredin board paid a bonus of £1 and received 119 dogs, their payment being £119. The Ninghan board received 32 scalps and paid £1 each for them. The Bruce Rock and Quairading boards paid a bonus of £1 and received 117 scalps. The Williams board paid a bonus of £3 3s. and received only seven dogs, paying £22 1s. The West Arthur board paid £3 per scalp and received only four dogs. The Marradong board paid a bonus of £2 and received 50 scalps. The Cuballing board received no claims at all. The Narrogin board did not receive any claims. The South-West Vermin Board, paying £2 per scalp, received 147, and on a payment of 30s. received 137 scalps. The next is an instance of where one board is paying a higher bonus than the board adjoining it. The Mullewa board paid £5 per scalp, received 81 dogs and disbursed £405, while the Yalgoo board alongside did not pay any bonus in addition to that offered by the Government, viz., 5s., and they received only 37 scalps. The Geraldton, Upper Chapman and Greenough boards had no claims at all. The inference is that there are no dogs in those districts.

Mr. C. C. Maley: There should be more dogs caught around Yalgoo.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The Mingenew board paid a bonus of 10s. per scalp and received 40 dogs. For the benefit of members for Pilbara and Gascoyne I may mention that the Upper Gascoyne Road Board paid 5s. per scalp for 106 scalps in the first portion of the financial year. Then the board were created a vermin board and paid £1 per scalp on 214 dogs. The Ashburton board paid a bonus of £2 per scalp on 267 dogs. The Meekatharra board paid 10s. per scalp on 325 dogs, and the Nullagine board paid £1 per scalp on 350 dogs. The outer gold-fields pastoral areas are being developed, but it is said that that development is only possible if the Government will assist the pastoralists by letting them have wire netting on long terms. The country is similar to that of the lower Murchison and is just as well watered. Pastoral development should be easily possible in some of those districts, particularly in that of Malcolm-Leonora. Let me give a few opinions expressed at the several deputations that waited on the Premier on the occasion of his trip to Wiluna.

Hon. P. Collier: We had direct representations made all along that trip.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** Some of the statements that were made served to show that the dogs can be combatted with little more than the Government bonus, which it is claimed, will encourage

trappers to go out after the pest. The deputation at Leonora said that the only thing to do was to fence a huge area of country. The actual fencing of that territory, however, will not keep out the dingoes.

Mr. Angelo: They said that the dingoes were coming in from the desert.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** There was never a time in the history of Australia when the pastoral industry was at such a high pitch of prosperity.

Mr. Angelo: The cattle men are not doing well.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** In many places sheep are being substituted for cattle. At the present price of wool that should be an attractive enough proposition for private institutions to finance. If we carry our minds back to the period of the development of the lower Murchison country, which is no better watered, we find that sheep were at that time worth about 2s. 6d. per head, while wool was fetching about a fifth of its present price. Yet that territory was assisted by private establishments. No one thought of beseeching the Government to chase the dogs away or to provide netting or anything else. The industry to-day is so flourishing that assistance could legitimately be given by firms like Dalgetys and Elder, Smith.

Mr. Angelo: They always want a margin.

Hon. P. Collier: The Government cannot stand the whole racket.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** Let me quote a contrast in opinions expressed on the occasion of the Wiluna trip, when deputations waited on the Premier. Here is the opinion of a pastoralist at Wiluna, Mr. Paterson of Yandil station—

The country is more suited to sheep than cattle. The dingo is a serious problem. I have been three years at Yandil. Last July twelve months we started fencing. By December next we will have enclosed 180,000 acres, and have 10,000 sheep. Losses have not been great because we fight the dingo. Last winter we got 25 out of 27 which came in. I paid £1 per head for 53 scalps from the back area. We have collected 495 scalps in three years, and we lay poison everywhere. I estimate one more for every scalp, making a total of about 1,000. Dingoes have increased 20 times in the last 20 years with the rabbit invasion.

That is to say rabbits provide a plentiful supply of food for the dingo, particularly in the spinifex country, where the increase in the number of the pest has been abnormal.

Mr. Heron: Water has had something to do with it too.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** Mr. Paterson's opinion continues—

I have found them to have litters from five to eight. I have put up a proposal to declare the whole State a vermin area, and pay a flat rate of £1 per head, the Government and the pastoralists each to pay half. This would induce experienced bushmen to destroy dogs in the back country. In five

years we would have a reduction and in ten years would have the problem in hand.

Hon. P. Collier: I heard that statement; Mr. Paterson knew what he was talking about.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** Here is a statement made at Meekatharra, which place is to-day a vermin district. Mr. Dalton, the secretary of the board, said in the course of his remarks at the deputation to the Premier—

We have an immense area, mostly Crown lands, breeding grounds for dingos. The board is 15 months old; and has met with success so far. Dogs come in from more distant parts, and newer stations can stock up with sheep and are free from the pest. No one is responsible for Crown lands outside and the dogs breed there and invade the settled districts. Vermin boards have been working independently and not systematically, the bonus varying considerably. Boards paying a high bonus get all the scalps. The Government should compel them to fix a limit as a fair reward, and make it uniform. Administrative action and more adequate assistance by way of bonus are necessary. The Government could spend a few extra thousands in increased bonus to encourage men to go out. The bonus system is the best—fencing areas will not deal with the pest. A large area will be as bad as outside. The Government should give £1 per head until extinction is approaching. The £3,000 paid last year is not a fleabite.

Resolutions have been passed by the various boards in the South-West Division asking for a uniform bonus to be declared, the amount suggested being approximately 30s. or £2. There is a difficulty in the Malcolm-Leonora area in that Leonora is not a vermin district, while the adjoining districts have constituted themselves vermin districts, and unless we establish uniformity we shall have dogs that are caught in one district taken to an adjoining district and in that way create a burden on the district that has come under the Vermin Act. The purpose of the Bill is to make the application of the Act uniform throughout the State. The extra cost involved to the Government will be considerable, though I cannot state at the moment how much it will be. An indication is afforded by the fact that altogether 6,692 dogs were destroyed last year.

Hon. P. Collier: You will have more than double that number destroyed under the higher rate.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** A desire has been expressed to establish a common fund for the purpose of helping outback districts. The districts towards the coast have had their battle in the past. We should now assist where the fight is rendered too heavy by adverse circumstances. For instance, there are the districts adjacent to the Nullarbor Plain, which is a breeding ground for wild dogs. For years there has been a difficulty between this State and South Australia regarding the destruction

of wild dogs on the border. Just how we are to overcome that difficulty I cannot at the moment determine. We shall have to draw a line, as before, well back from the border if we cannot induce South Australia to come to terms with us regarding payment for destruction of wild dogs.

Hon. P. Collier: I believe wild dogs are pretty bad in the Eucla district.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** They are pretty bad all through those districts.

Mr. Underwood: If you kill the dogs off, you get the kangaroos. I don't see that the wild dogs are not worth breeding.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The Bill aims at establishing uniformity in payments and also in administration. Another object of the measure is to protect the district which is doing its work, by forcing other districts to do their work. I move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

On motion by Mr. Underwood, debate adjourned.

## BILL—FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. S. Sampson—Swan) [8.7] in moving the second reading said: The Bill now before hon. members represents considered requirements of the friendly societies. The memorandum prefaced to the measure gives a full explanation, and is equivalent to a first class second reading speech. In the main this is a consolidating measure. The effect of passing it will be that seven of our present Acts will have become one. It is unnecessary to point out how important a part friendly societies play in our community life. Since the principal Act was passed, in 1894, friendly societies have grown in strength and importance. The number of branches has increased from 37 to 272, the membership from 2,587 to approximately 30,000, and the accumulated funds from £24,000 to £331,000. The principal amendments proposed by the Bill embrace increase of the sick pay maximum from £2 to £3 per week, and power for a majority of trustees, but in no case less than three, to sign a total or partial discharge of mortgage. If, for instance, there are five trustees, three would be sufficient to sign a total or a partial discharge of a mortgage. If, however, the number of trustees did not exceed three, the full number would have to sign. Signature by any number less than three would be invalid. As to the increase in the maximum of sick pay, when the £2 maximum was fixed the purchasing power of the sovereign was very much higher than is the case to-day. It will therefore be admitted that the proposed increase is well justified. The provision in the existing Act with regard to mortgages

requires that all trustees must sign discharges, and that has proved very hampering. Mortgages constitute a great factor in the business of a friendly society, and have proved splendidly advantageous to the society and the members alike. It is proper that reasonable facilities should be given in this connection. The Bill also contains several minor amendments. One has reference to changing the financial year, which is in future to end on the 30th June, instead of ending, as now, with the calendar year. It is represented that this change will facilitate the making of annual returns as required by the principal Act. In this connection it is also proposed that if the Registrar of Friendly Societies is satisfied that the branches of a society are completely consolidated, returns from branches may be dispensed with, and one return may be accepted from the society to cover all the branches. The Bill also provides for the admission of members from birth. Previously the youngest age at which membership was accepted was 16 years. There is an age limitation in respect to the holding of office. Except as chairman or vice-chairman of a branch, no one under 18 years is eligible to hold office. This restriction, however, does not apply to juvenile lodges. The original intention in connection with this measure was to compel the registration of all benefit funds. On that point there has been a good deal of controversy. It has been decided to omit the clause which rendered necessary the registration of all benefit funds. The later proposal is that these funds should be subject to the furnishing of annual statements of members and disbursements, copies of rules, balance sheets, and a few minor details to the Registrar of Friendly Societies. That proposal is included in the Bill. The alteration is an acceptable one. We feel it is only right and proper that those who belong to these funds should at least have the protection afforded by the annual supply of the information in question to the registrar, whereby it will be possible to exercise some supervision. Beyond that it is not intended to go. I move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [8.12]: This Bill amends the Friendly Societies Act passed in 1894. It is almost a Committee Bill. I notice, however, that the measure proposes to appoint the registrar permanently, the power to remove him from office having been omitted. I do not see the necessity for that omission. There should always be power to remove an officer if that course is thought desirable. Next I may refer to the clause which deals with societies not registered. I believe another place struck out the Government's original proposal. What is the necessity for sending returns and so forth to the registrar in regard to societies which do not concern him? The only reason I can see is that the Government will be enabled to employ two

or three extra clerks to examine the accounts and rules of such societies. Nothing is to be gained by it. The funds are managed by committees, and everything is subject to the closest scrutiny.

The Colonial Secretary: There is no power to supervise unless those returns are furnished.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Why do the Government want that power? The matter does not concern them at all. I hope that obnoxious provision will be removed from the Bill. There is a special fund in connection with the Railway Department which has done wonderful work. There is another fund in connection with the Government Printing Office, and yet another in connection with the Commonwealth departments. They are funds to which persons subscribe for the purpose of assisting each other in case of sickness or death. The original intention was to bring those funds under the Act with a view to compelling their members to contribute considerably more than they do at the present time in order to obtain certain benefits. I am glad that that objectionable provision has disappeared from the Bill. The only demand made now is for annual returns. I see no necessity for the furnishing of those returns, since the only result can be to build up a department.

The Colonial Secretary: No additional staff will be required.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In a Government department nothing additional can be done unless someone additional be appointed to do it. Again, it is not at all necessary to remove from the trustees of friendly societies full discretion in point of lending money. The Bill provides that they shall be allowed to lend not more than two-thirds of the value of security.

The Colonial Secretary: To lend more would be unsafe.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But no losses have been suffered on the investments made, so surely full discretion can be left to the friendly societies' officers. I hope to secure necessary amendments in Committee.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [8.17]: The Bill will affect funds administered by people who are doing exceedingly good work, and will entail a serious financial burden on those funds. Some of those funds have a membership of 5,000 or 6,000 persons, all of whom will have to be registered.

The Colonial Secretary: Do you mean to say that these little funds have a membership of 5,000 or 6,000?

Mr. WILLCOCK: What is known as the W.A. Railways Provident Fund is contributed to by 4,000 or 5,000 persons, and the membership of the Death Benefit Fund in the Railways is about the same. The administration of those two funds has been undertaken by the Railway Department, and so it costs the funds virtually nothing. From 80 to 90 per cent. of the railway employees are in either or both of those funds.

The Colonial Secretary: But the names of the subscribers have not to be registered.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Their ages have to be registered, so their names must be given also.

Mr. WILLCOCK: That is what I thought. In any event, there is no necessity for placing those funds under the control of the Registrar of Friendly Societies. The people administering them have been performing excellent work for many years past. The railway funds are splendidly run. One has distributed £165,000 amongst its members, so it is no tinpot fund.

The Colonial Secretary: But the Bill will not reduce their usefulness.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Perhaps not, but once the registrar gets control he will make provision for reserve funds, and impose many other conditions.

The Colonial Secretary: No such power is asked for.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I have not heard any argument advanced in support of the alleged necessity for the Bill.

The Colonial Secretary: There will be in Committee.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I will be prepared to debate the matter in Committee. But at this juncture I wish to enter a protest against the Bill, particularly that portion of it that proposes to give control of these funds to the Registrar of Friendly Societies.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 5:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The clause provides that all words after "registrar" in Section 5 of the Act be struck out and other words be inserted. Personally I cannot see any reason for it. Section 5 provides, amongst other things, that the Governor may remove the registrar and appoint some person in his place. Surely it is not proposed to make the registrar permanent! If the clause goes through there will be no power to remove him. The clause provides also for the appointment of a deputy registrar. That power is already given in Section 5 of the Act.

The Colonial Secretary: The clause means that an officer of the department may be appointed deputy registrar during the temporary absence of the registrar.

Hon. T. Walker: But you are striking out too much from Section 5 of the Act; you are taking away the power to remove the registrar.

The Colonial Secretary: If that be so I have no objection to the power being retained.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I move an amendment—

*That in line 2 the words "the registrar" in line 3 be struck out, and that "place" in line 5 be inserted in lieu.*

Apparently the Colonial Secretary wants to appoint a permanent deputy registrar.

The Colonial Secretary: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, the Minister does not want to have to keep on appointing a deputy every time the registrar is absent. But the Minister should be careful as to what titles he gives his officers, because these days they are paid, not according to the work they do, but according to the titles they carry. Section 5 of the Act provides everything necessary.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 4 to 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Amendment to Section 14:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: A clerical error occurs in the first line of subclause 2. To rectify this I move an amendment—

*That in subclause 2, line 1, the figure "7" be struck out and "8" inserted in lieu.*

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 9—Amendment of Section 15:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Subclause 6 brings in something quite new, for it prevents the trustees from making an advance of more than two-thirds of the value of a property. This question could be left to their discretion.

The Premier: This is the usual procedure in the case of trust funds.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The money is usually advanced for the purpose of allowing members to build their own homes. In every instance the member must own his land, and generally has to put up some of the money for the building. To restrict the trustees in this way will cause injury to members.

Mr. Money: Is it the same principle as in connection with a building society?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. The money is advanced on mortgage.

Mr. Money: The money is invested.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes. The societies do not build houses to let. The money is invested chiefly in the homes of members, and I know of no loss that has ever occurred in this direction. I move an amendment—

*That Subclause 6 be struck out.*

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I hope the amendment will not be agreed to. If more than a two-thirds advance was made on the value of a property, the trustees would be going beyond the bounds of security.

Mr. Angelo: Who are the valuers?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The trustees. The work is done at a minimum of expense.

Mr. Davies: Have the friendly societies raised any objection to this subclause?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes, they have.

Mr. Hughes: Has there been any loss under existing conditions?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Only on the goldfields, where there has been a big drop in values.

Mr. CORBOY: This subclause places an unnecessary restriction upon friendly societies. It is not a matter in which Parliament should interfere.

The Colonial Secretary: It is the duty of Parliament to protect the people.

Mr. CORBOY: It is the duty of the trustees to protect the interests of society members. For many years the bulk of the savings of these societies has been invested in the way indicated, and no trouble has ever occurred. At times the trustees have advanced more than two-thirds of the value of a property, but the members have always met their obligations.

Mr. McCALLUM: For this subclause to be effective, we must rely upon the honesty of the trustees. Who is to say what is the value of a property? If a member wants to borrow \$400 on a property, the question of the value of the security comes in. The money required could be made available by the simple process of increasing the valuation.

Mr. Mann: That would be by design, not error.

Mr. McCALLUM: It merely resolves itself into a question of the trustees' belief and knowledge of the ability and honesty of the client to pay.

Mr. Richardson: The subclause will remove the personal equation altogether.

Mr. McCALLUM: Of course it will. It says in effect that we cannot trust these people in the handling of their own funds. In relation to other matters when we have asked for something to be done, the Minister has always said: "You are asking for something for which there is no necessity. Prove to me that there is some necessity for it." The Minister has always stood for the maintenance of old crusty ideas. Let us turn the position upon the Minister this time and ask him to quote one instance where it has been proved that the trustees have acted in a dishonest or corrupt way.

Mr. Johnston: As a matter of fact the trustees of friendly societies are most careful in their dealings.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Of course they are.

Mr. McCALLUM: The subclause, in effect, casts doubt on the honesty of the trustees, yet they could, should they desire to do so, easily overcome it by placing a high valuation on property, thus enabling them to grant a larger advance.

Mr. Richardson: And who could question it?

Mr. McCALLUM: No one. The whole subclause is useless.

Mr. ANGELO: I agree with the member for South Fremantle. If the subclause is necessary, it does not go far enough. It should make provision for the appointment of sworn valuers.

Mr. Johnston: And that would simply build up expense.

Mr. ANGELO: That is so. I support the amendment.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: During the last nine years, the friendly societies, through the exercise of care in their investments, have increased their capital by £112,000, and 73.56 per cent. of their funds has been invested in mortgages. This demonstrates that in the past the actions of the trustees have been satisfactory. There is no instance recorded where the investments have been unsatisfactory. On the other hand, the departmental report refers to the investments as having been at a good rate of interest. The question was raised as to whether the societies objected to the Bill. The fact is that they do object to it. To take the subclause under discussion, the friendly societies state:—

The societies take the strongest objection to this proposal. They have never been consulted about it, nor have they received the slightest hint that such a proposal was to be in the Bill. It has been sprung on them in a very unfair manner.

Then this document, which gives expression to the opinions of the United Friendly Societies, contains the following statement—

There is no valid reason why the present method should be altered. The societies have not asked for it, and have not experienced any difficulty in safeguarding their investments.

The document proceeds to refer to the fact that the annual reports of the Registrar of Friendly Societies show that no society has ever made any material losses on its investments. Another portion of the statement contains the following:—

The methods adopted by the societies provide every safeguard. The trustees are men of experience and of high rank in their societies. They hold office for years and in general vacate their office (being eligible for re-election) in rotation. Loans are only on titles.

No necessity for such legislation has been shown in the past. The funds of the friendly societies have increased to such an extent that—

Hon. P. Collier: They will soon be able to take over the deficit.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: To-day they are actually discussing the question of what they shall do with their money.

Mr. Heron: Right through the war their funds increased.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The capital of the United Friendly Societies in 1913 was £219,098, and in 1922 it was £331,154, or an increase of £112,056. This shows that there

is no necessity for worrying about safeguarding the interests of these people.

Mr. MONEY: There is not so much in the argument as would appear. I have no doubt that every effort has been made in the past on the part of the trustees of the friendly societies to carry out their duties properly. The subclause does not contain new law; it is merely declaratory. Trust funds, if properly invested, should not exceed two-thirds of the value of mortgageable property.

The Colonial Secretary: That is in the Trustees Act now.

Mr. MONEY: That has been the law for many years past. It amounts to a simple and wise business precaution. In legislation governing road boards, for instance, we have a number of provisions that might just as well be left out, for the position is governed by commonsense.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We want commonsense to govern this position.

Mr. Underwood: For years the people got on very well without any laws at all.

The Colonial Secretary: The member for South Fremantle suggested that the trustees would knowingly make false valuations in order to advance money to clients.

Mr. Underwood: He merely said they could do so.

Mr. McCallum: If you were dealing with dishonest men they could do so.

The Colonial Secretary: But we are not dealing with dishonest men.

Mr. McCallum: Then why this provision?

The Colonial Secretary: I recognise that trustees of friendly societies are carefully selected by the lodges. The subclause merely determines to what extent they may lend the funds of the lodges.

Mr. Heron: But the societies have never asked for this.

The Colonial Secretary: They have. I have discussed this matter with the officers of the United Friendly Societies.

Mr. Corboy: And they have asked me to oppose this!

The Colonial Secretary: I cannot understand that. The main objection they raised was to Clause 18. They wanted to see the original Clause 18 inserted. They also raised one or two other objections. I am satisfied that the trustees are thoroughly reputable officers who are carefully selected.

Mr. Munsie: Who will say that the advance they make is more than two-thirds of the value of the property?

The Colonial Secretary: No one. The societies will appoint men in whose ability to value property they have every confidence.

Mr. McCallum: Do they not do that now?

The Colonial Secretary: Yes. I do not believe they would make any false valuations. The subclause merely binds them to two-thirds of the value. If hon. members think this is insufficient, I would like to have

an indication as to what they think should be included in the Bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I would leave it to their discretion.

The Colonial Secretary: We must not do that. Large funds are at stake, which belong to other people. It is only right that the protection afforded by the Trustees Act of 1900 should apply.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But they are dealing with their own funds.

The Colonial Secretary: The trustees are regarded by the lodges as competent valuers, but it is doubtful whether a court would so regard them. The Government do not intend to insist upon qualified valuers being employed. The system has worked well up to the present but a limit should be fixed.

Mr. Munsie: The Colonial Secretary has not said one word in support of the subclause. The friendly societies have been doing good work and their funds have accumulated. This measure will give the registrar greater powers and the subclause will cause endless trouble with friendly societies' mortgages.

Mr. Mann: It is the law of the land to-day.

Mr. Munsie: It is not. At present a lodge could lend up to the full value. The subclause will merely provide an opportunity for a busybody to interfere.

Mr. Corboy: The Minister has convinced me that the subclause should be deleted. One of the greatest recommendations the friendly societies possess is that the whole of their operations are conducted as cheaply as possible. They are able to effect loans without the burdensome costs that are incurred elsewhere. If the subclause is to be worth anything, it will necessitate the employment of a competent valuer for every transaction.

Mr. Underwood: When an alteration is sought, the Minister should be able to show that something has gone wrong and thus justify the alteration. Has anything gone wrong?

Mr. Munsie: Perhaps the societies have accumulated too much money.

Mr. Underwood: And the Government now want to collect some of it? I was a member of a friendly society for many years. These bodies have done good work without any such restriction. Unless the Minister can show something has gone wrong, he had no right to introduce the measure.

Mr. MONEY: There is a duty on trustees to have securities and assets valued every five years by a valuer appointed by the society. It may be due to such valuations that friendly societies' securities have been kept safe.

Mr. Corboy: Then why ask for a further check?

Mr. MONEY: The supervision is being exercised to-day. The societies appoint valuers for the purpose.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I support the amendment. The societies exist to assist their members and this matter might well be left to their discretion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Evidently my assurance that this provision is desired by the Friendly Societies Council is not accepted. If progress be reported—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Finish the Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If the Friendly Societies' Council desire this provision, it is our duty to give it to them.

Hon. P. Collier: We are here to decide that.

Mr. McCallum: Another of those outside junctus!

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It has been argued that the friendly societies do not want this provision.

Hon. P. Collier: If you postponed every Bill to find out what someone else had to say about it, where would we be?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The criticism has been wholly destructive. No one has suggested to what extent the societies should lend money. There is no objection to trustees of the lodges making the valuations. They have behaved properly and have not made inflated valuations as the member for South Fremantle suggested.

Mr. Corboy: He merely said they could.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: They are honourable men and will make proper valuations, but they want guidance as to the extent to which they may lend on securities. Two-thirds is as far as they should go.

Mr. A. Thomson: The Workers' Homes Act allows the Government to go further than that.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member would not go further than that.

Mr. A. Thomson: I have done so.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Then he must be a philanthropist.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	24
Noes	...	...	...	14
				—
Majority for			...	10
				—

# AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Angwin	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Broun	Mr. Munzie
Mr. Carter	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. A. Thomson
Mr. Collier	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Troy
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Walker
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Heron

(Teller.)

# NORR.

Mrs. Cowan	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Davies	Mr. Money
Mr. Durack	Mr. Piesse
Mr. George	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Harrison	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. H. K. Maley	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Mann	Mr. Mullany

(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 10 to 17—agreed to.

Clause 18—Compulsory registration of friendly or benefit societies:

Mr. MANN: I move an amendment—

*That the following be added to stand as sub-clause 4:—"Nothing in this section shall apply to any association or society consisting of employees of the Government of the Commonwealth formed or carrying out its objects with the approval of the Treasurer of the Commonwealth."*

This association has a very good fund and it was suggested that their efforts could be directed towards inducing the members joining a friendly society. That however, is not possible, as many of the members of the association would not be able to pass the medical test. There are other reasons also which would prevent the members joining a friendly society. The fund in question is controlled for the use of the members of that body.

Hon. P. Collier: Why not make it apply to the State as well?

Mr. MANN: I am interested only in this one association. If the hon. member desires he can include any other.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I move an amendment on the amendment—

*That in line 3 after "Commonwealth" the words "and/or the State" be added.*

That will permit of the inclusion of the funds about which I spoke on the second reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: We have met the desire of the funds to the extent of about 95 per cent. I caused the Bill to be distributed amongst the various societies and the objection was general to the original clause dealing with this matter. Eventually this moderate clause was accepted and included in the Bill. There is justification for the registration of the smaller funds. If we are to remove these essential parts of the Bill we might just as well abandon it. The friendly societies are particularly anxious that the Bill should go through.

Mr. McCALLUM: I shall vote for the amendment with the view of getting that much made secure and will then vote against the whole clause. Can the Minister tell us what good this will do? What does he propose to do with the information that will be sent along?

The Colonial Secretary: It will be a check on their operations.

Mr. McCALLUM: What are you going to do with the return when you get it? This will just create work for a few more clerks in the office. The desire is merely to poke their noses into the voluntary funds and to impose such obligations and restrictions that will eventually



drive those funds out of existence. Why should there be any interference with the scores of funds operating now from one end of the country to the other?

Mr. Teesdale: Because every month you see a secretary bolting with funds.

Mr. McCALLUM: These are funds that are controlled by the men interested themselves. I have been associated with them ever since I was a boy and I have never known of a secretary having bolted with anything. I have, however heard of bank and insurance managers having bolted with money. Take the railways. They have a fund controlled from the Commissioner's office and administered by the staff. Why should there be any desire to interfere with that? At the Government Printing Office there has been a fund in existence for 20 years.

The CHAIRMAN: We are now dealing with the amendment moved by the member for Geraldton.

Mr. McCALLUM: The object of that amendment is to exempt men in Government service from the operation of the clause. But the arguments in favour of that apply equally well to the exemption of men in private employ. I myself paid into the fund at the Government Printing Office for 13 years. Some of the subscribers to that fund could not get into a lodge, because they could not pass a doctor. The fund has been of material assistance in time of sickness, frequently keeping the wolf from the door. It is administered by men in their spare time, and is controlled by a committee. There is no charge at all for the work. But the Bill proposes to ask every private fund for all kinds of information.

The Colonial Secretary: Not so. The information which can be asked for is specified.

Mr. McCALLUM: Any information can be asked for by regulation. Why not let the funds go on as they have been going? The funds will go on, if not within the law, then without the law.

The Premier: I cannot understand people running these funds not being willing to give this information.

Mr. McCALLUM: They give all this information to their members. Particulars are posted up every month in the various offices. I hope the Minister will not press this matter. We have been bombarded with protests against the clause as it stands. Why not let men help one another without restriction? I shall vote for the amendment on the amendment, and then shall hope to see the whole proposal rejected.

Mr. TEESDALE: According to the last speaker the Government should never take the slightest precaution to protect funds collected by certain bodies, in this case unregistered and uncontrolled bodies. In reading the clause the last speaker omitted the words—

together with a statement of receipts and expenditure of the association, and also a balance sheet.

The Government's desire is to prevent the scandalous spoliation with which some of these bodies have had to put up lately. The Government desire this provision in order that they may exercise a check, say as to their being 500 members, and as to the 500 members being financial. There is nothing oppressive about that. The secretary already has the information

in his book, and has merely to copy it out for the registrar. Something should be done to stop the scandalous embezzlement which has been taking place.

Mr. Lambert: Give us one instance.

Mr. TEESDALE: Does the hon. member want me to give names?

Mr. Lambert: Yes.

Mr. TEESDALE: I am rather surprised at that.

Mr. McCallum: Give one instance in connection with these funds.

Mr. TEESDALE: I am talking about institutions generally. We have lately had instances of secretaries bolting.

Hon. P. Collier: But that does not apply to these funds.

Mr. TEESDALE: I am referring to societies where there is no check on the finances.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move—

*That progress be reported.*

Mr. HUGHES: I was on my feet before the Minister, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: Both hon. members rose together.

Mr. HUGHES: I submit I was on my feet first, Sir.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for East Perth assures me that he rose before the Minister. I will allow the hon. member to speak.

Mr. Teesdale: That man would say anything.

Mr. HUGHES: I ask for a withdrawal of that statement, which is a distinct reflection on my veracity.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for East Perth asks for a withdrawal of the statement made by the member for Roebourne.

Mr. Teesdale: I am in a state of coma at the idea of our friend opposite asking for a withdrawal.

Hon. P. Collier: We must have some semblance of order. The member for Roebourne must either withdraw, or take exception to your ruling, Mr. Chairman. He cannot make a speech when asked to withdraw.

Mr. Teesdale: Cannot I explain?

Opposition members: No.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must withdraw the statement objected to.

Mr. Teesdale: I was going to do so, Sir, if you had allowed me to recover from my surprise. I withdraw, Sir.

Mr. HUGHES: The case put up by the member for Roebourne is that the Government are trying to protect these funds, trying to prevent fraudulent secretaries from absconding with money. How will the making of returns to the Registrar of Friendly Societies prevent that?

Mr. Teesdale: It will prevent a fraudulent man from juggling accounts for months.

Mr. HUGHES: Not if he desires to do so. The furnishing of returns is no protection against the juggling of accounts. The juggler would make his returns fit in with his accounts. The funds are audited regularly. The hon. member referred to an institution which had the misfortune to be defrauded of some of its money. We all know the institution in question. That institution had a qualified and competent auditor regularly examining its accounts. Every one of these funds known to me is all in and all out. No money is carried forward. The procedure in

connection with the fund referred to by the member for Perth is as follows: when an officer dies, the Commonwealth paymaster, by arrangement, deducts so much from each member's salary, and as soon as the deductions have been made the amount is paid to the beneficiary. The same thing obtains in connection with the railway officers' fund. The operation of these funds is managed by committees, and competent auditors are engaged to audit the books. But even the employment of a competent auditor will not necessarily prevent fraud. A competent auditor will discover fraud, but not prevent it. We cannot prevent crime of any description, though we can discover and punish all descriptions of crime. No matter how ingenious the checks, there is always a man with sufficient ingenuity to get past them. It would be a serious blow to the means of livelihood of a large section of the community if those people did not exist. The effect of this measure will be extra clerical work for the Public Service and an increased printing bill.

The Premier: What has that to do with the amendment?

Mr. HUGHES: The provision is a useless one. Not only will it not prevent fraud, but it will not even discover it.

The CHAIRMAN: We are dealing, not with the clause, but with the amendment on Mr. Mann's amendment.

Mr. HUGHES: I hope the amendment will be agreed to. I hope also that, later, the whole provision will be struck out.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move—

*That progress be reported.*

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	17
Noes	...	...	...	19

Majority against ... 2

#### AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Mann
Mr. Broun	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Carter	Mr. Mosey
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Davies	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Dursak	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. George	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Munnis
Mr. H. K. Maley	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Collier	Mr. A. Thomson
Mr. Corboy	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Troy
Mr. Heron	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Walker
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Wilcock
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Munnis
Mr. Marshall	(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. LAMBERT: Surely this division will convince the Minister in charge of the Bill that

the Committee have made up their minds that certain people controlling voluntary funds are quite capable of looking after their own business. It is nearly time Parliament showed that it is not prepared to go on building up the importance of Government departments.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is disregarding the amendment and dealing with the principles of the clause.

Mr. LAMBERT: I have in mind the voluntary funds in the Railways and in the Government Printing Office. We should, as far as possible, curtail the unnecessary returns to be sent in to various officials.

The CHAIRMAN: You must stick to the amendment.

Mr. LAMBERT: How stupid it would be if every voluntary effort were compelled to submit balance sheets.

The CHAIRMAN: That is not the question. If the hon. member continues on those lines I will have to ask him to resume his seat.

Mr. CORBOY: On a point of order. Is not the hon. member in order in showing reasons why State employees should be exempt from the clause?

The CHAIRMAN: If the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) thinks I am wrong, it is for him to disagree with my ruling, not for another member to interrupt.

Mr. LAMBERT: I will endeavour to keep within the four corners of the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: I admit it is difficult.

Mr. LAMBERT: It would be nonsensical to apply this provision to certain funds controlled by employees of the State Government. Under the provision there will be no end to the army of public servants required.

The CHAIRMAN: After we have dealt with this amendment, the hon. member can bring forward all these arguments. He cannot do so now.

Mr. LAMBERT: My concern is for the employees in our departments controlling certain funds. I submit that these two funds should not be interfered with by the registrar. The furnishing of returns would not have any bearing upon their administration.

Amendment on the amendment put and passed; the amendment as amended agreed to.

Mr. McCALLUM: I hope the clause will be defeated, so that all funds of this description may be exempt from the Bill. By the amendment, we have excluded funds connected with Government employees, and it seems illogical not to extend the same privilege to funds connected with private employees.

The Premier: No one should come under this. The Bill should go out altogether, of course.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Don't get angry. We have done very well.

Mr. McCALLUM: No case has been made out in support of the clause. The Committee is entirely opposed to an inquisitorial investigation into these funds.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I regret the opposition to this. All who contribute to these funds should have the satisfaction of knowing that a balance-sheet is submitted to the registrar.

Since, however, the funds connected with Government employees are excluded from the operations of the clause, it would perhaps be improper that other funds should be brought within its scope.

The Clause, as amended, put and negatived  
Clauses 19 to 24—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

## BILL—PERMANENT RESERVES.

*In Committee, etc.*

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

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

## BILL—YARRAMONY—NEWCARNIE RAILWAY.

*In Committee.*

Mr. Angelo in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Authority to construct:

Mr. JOHNSTON: During the second reading debate the Minister stated he would give us some information as to why Newcarnie was chosen as the terminus for the line instead of Merredin, which is an important junction.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I placed the file on the Table this afternoon and hon. members will, no doubt, have perused it by now. The question as to whether the junction should be made at Merredin or at some other point was thrashed out between the Engineer-in-Chief and the officers of the Working Railways.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is nothing on the file to show that the Working Railways were ever consulted.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member is wrong.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am not, I have been through the file twice.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member goes through it a third time he will see that what I say is correct. If he looks at page 222a he will see there is a letter from the Chief Engineer for Ways and Works reporting on the junction at Newcarnie and agreeing to where it should be.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is a letter from the Engineer-in-Chief.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is also a letter from Mr. Cresswell, the Engineer for Ways and Works at the Railway Department.

Hon. P. Collier: This is a matter for the Traffic Branch and not for the Working Railways.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The matter was gone into with the railway officials.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This matter was decided before the letter you refer to was written.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think that is so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I know it is so. I know what is on the file.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member will find it there. He need not get so cross.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not like the suggestion that I am lying when I am telling the truth.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have not suggested that.

Hon. P. Collier: You did not give us any information when you moved the second reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have said only half a dozen words and you are all barking at me. You are getting the information now.

Hon. P. Collier: What is the use of it to us now?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If it is of no use, I shall sit down.

Hon. P. Collier: It is of little use because we cannot check it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The file has been on the Table for several hours.

Hon. P. Collier: For the convenience of 50 members! It would take a week for every member to look through it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If reference is made to page 146 hon. members will see that the Engineer-in-Chief, recommended that the junction should be at Newcarnie as he considered taking the line to Merredin would give over-service in some directions. On page 203 it will be seen that the matter was discussed by the Premier and myself, and it was decided that in the interests of the State the line should go to Newcarnie. This was because if the line were taken further north it would have to swerve round to join the goldfields line later on. It is considered that the engineers who know their work—

Mr. Underwood: That is questionable. They did not know much about their work at Herdman's Lake.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We are dealing with another set of engineers altogether. If hon. members do not wish to have this information I will sit down.

Mr. Underwood: Well, sit down.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On page 213 of the file it will be seen that on the 26th July the Assistant Engineer-in-Chief wrote a memorandum in which he advocated the line joining up at Newcarnie enabling traffic to go on to Merredin along the existing line, and thus save some distance in construction. On page 215 there is an opinion from Mr. Oliver who surveyed the line. He states that the line would "go for 1½ miles through lake country with the last ten miles to Newcarnie practically surface forming." He points out that to swerve the line round to Merredin would result in some difficulties. This morning I discussed the matter with Mr. Tindale, the Assistant Engineer-in-Chief, and I asked him to go into this matter with Mr. Darker, the Engineer for Railway Construction. The information I am giving members is the result of what they went through. So far as the deviation is concerned, this question has been discussed with the Working Railways and I think there is a letter from the Commissioner of Railways on the file regarding the matter. I think I am right in saying that but,

I am not positive. At any rate there is one from the engineer, Mr. Cresswell, which shows that the question was discussed with the Railway Department. Unless it had been discussed the letter appearing on page 222a would not be included in the file. He referred to the distance he wanted the line to go from the present line, and mentioned 13 feet. Finally he accepted a distance of 12 feet. There has been no hole and corner business about this question. It does not matter to the engineers, any more than to me, where the line junctions. If I had thought any question would be raised on that point, I would have given the necessary information when I introduced the Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: Surely the Minister would realise that in asking the House to agree to 90 miles of railway involving the expenditure of half a million of money, members would require the fullest information.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Quite so.

Hon. P. Collier: Has the House got into the habit of authorising the expenditure of half a million without requiring information?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think so, nor does the hon. member. However, had I known that the question of the junction would have been raised, I would have been prepared to give the fullest information to members. That is all the information I can find in the department on the point. The file is before members and if the member for North-East Fremantle has ascertained anything from those documents, I am satisfied he will be fair enough to give the information to hon. members. I know he has not raised this point merely from prejudice. I went through the file this morning with the Assistant-Engineer-in-Chief, and I have given hon. members the information.

Mr. Underwood: Did you not go through the file before?

Hon. P. Collier: Apparently not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Throughout the file the intention was to make the terminus at Merredin. Votes were granted for the survey of a line to that centre. On the 21st July, 1922, after a request had been received from people in the district concerned for an alteration in the route, the Minister wrote the following minute:—

Inform inquirers that route surveyed is considered the best to serve all concerned and that I am not prepared to pull a line southward which, while it might serve some people better, would not so well serve others. The surveyor has his instructions and I will carry them out.

The result was that a Bill was drafted last year for presentation to Parliament. The Bill contained the following schedule, portion of which is inserted in the present Bill:—

Commencing at a point in or near the Yarramony station yard on the Northam-Goomalling railway and proceeding thence in a generally east-north-easterly direction for about 29 miles; thence in a generally easterly direction for about 33 miles; thence in a generally north-easterly direction for about nine miles; thence in a generally easterly direction for about 13 miles; thence in a generally east-south-easterly direction for about 14 miles and terminating at a point in or near the Merredin railway yard on the Eastern

Goldfields Railway, as more particularly delineated and coloured red on map marked P.W.D., W.A., 22270, deposited pursuant to 2 Edw. VII., No. 47, Section 96. Total length about 98 miles.

The total length of that line was 98 miles or about 1½ miles longer than the line authorised by the Bill. That Bill is on the file which shows that last year it was the intention to terminate it at Merredin. On the 23rd February, 1923, the Minister minuted as follows:—

This will now have to wait until next session. Hon. members will see by this Bill that proper surveys had been made and everything was ready for the presentation of the Bill to Parliament. I challenge anyone to find anything in the file to show that the Commissioner of Railways had ever been consulted. I have searched through the file carefully to see if there is any indication of the views of the Commissioner of Railways or his engineers regarding the terminal point of the railway. There is nothing there. It is true that Mr. Cresswell was asked where the yard should be at Newcarrie.

The Minister for Works: Had they not been consulted about the railway they would have protested against it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It was settled beforehand. It is true that on the 14th May, 1923, the Engineer-in-Chief recommended Newcarrie as the terminus. It is strange, however, that there is nothing whatever leading up to that point. Why was the alteration made? Everything was ready for presentation to Parliament and then, without anything leading up to it, three months later Newcarrie is recommended as the terminus. What led to it?

Hon. P. Collier: That ought to be on the file.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Is it not strange the engineering department should go to the extent of recommending a certain line and then suddenly alter their views? When the Bill was introduced I thought it strange that Merredin was not made the terminus. The depot is at Merredin and to have the terminus there would make for economy. I expected to find in the file some reason for the change.

Mr. Teesdale: It is not unique to swing a line around.

Hon. P. Collier: This is not a deviation; it is a different terminus.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Railway Department have always been anxious to have as few depots as possible.

The Minister for Works: That is right.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Why have they departed from that practice?

Mr. Piesse: It means a shorter line.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Shorter by one and a-half miles!

Mr. Harrison: When was that survey made?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I cannot say. On the 6th October, 1922, the principal assistant to the Engineer-in-Chief wrote to the Government Printer: "Draft Bill for Yarramony to Merredin railway has been perused, found correct, and is returned to you herewith."

The Minister for Works: There is no dispute about that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Then why was the change made?

The Minister for Works: Since last year there has been a change.

Hon. P. Collier: The file ought to disclose the reason for the change, but it does not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: After the Bill was settled, after everything had been prepared, and after the surveys had been made, a change was decided upon. Why?

Mr. Teesdale: What do you suggest?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: A change should not be made unless the Commissioner of Railways shows the necessity for it.

Hon. P. Collier: We do not know, but the file should tell us.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Does the engineer say he was wrong before?

The Minister for Works: Read what he says in his letter of the 14th April.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: What led to the change?

Hon. P. Collier: He did not undertake to alter the route without consulting someone.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is nothing to show why the change was made. The letter of the 14th April begins:—

The survey of this line has reached such a stage as to necessitate a decision as to where it will junction with the existing line.

That was on the 14th April, 1923. Yet on the 22nd October, 1922, a Bill was printed showing the terminus of the line at Merredin.

You will remember that the report of the Advisory Board was for a railway from Yarramony to North Baandee, but it is advisable that the survey should be continued in order, as I say, to junction with the existing line.

It is true the Advisory Board recommended that this line should finish at a dead end, and that it should be constructed of 25-lb. rails.

The Minister for Works: Seventy-five miles of it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: After that, the Engineering Department recommended that the lightest rails should be 45-lb. The Minister now proposes 60-lb. rails. Instructions were issued that the Bill be printed, providing for the terminus at Merredin. Those two opening paragraphs are only camouflage.

The Premier: What right have you to say that?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I can judge from the file.

Last session a Bill was prepared for this railway to be styled "Yarramony-Merredin Railway" but it was not presented to Parliament.

The Minister for Works: That is correct.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Of course. Yet in the first paragraph the engineer said it was necessary to have a decision as to where the line should join the existing railway.

Mr. Mann interjected.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Let the hon. member shut up. He has land in the district. Does that account for it?

The Premier: It does not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not too sure about it.

The Minister for Works: Thank God I have no land in the district!

Capt. Carter: A worthy remark! The member for North-East Fremantle ought to be proud of himself.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am as worthy as is the hon. member any day and anywhere. I am out to see fair play, and to get it. I do not care whether it suits members or not.

Hon. P. Collier: The file justifies the hon. member's remarks.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The file shows there has been some influence to get this decision altered.

Mr. Mann: The file does not justify that remark in any circumstances.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If I were interested I would shut my mouth.

It seems to me there are weighty arguments against running this new line into Merredin, particularly on account of the fact that by so doing the land approaching Merredin would be over-served by railways—

The Minister for Works: That is so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The report continues:—

and as a natural corollary a length of line would have to be built beyond what is necessary. This can be obviated by running the line eastward to junction somewhere about Newcarrie on the Dowerin-Merredin loop.

That is the first reference to running the line to Newcarrie.

Mr. Piesse: It has its advantages.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It has not any advantage from a railway point of view. One or two matters coming under my notice of late have made me suspicious of these reports.

Mr. Piesse: One can find ground for suspicion in most things.

Mr. Harrison: I assure you I have never attempted to influence it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I believe that.

The Premier: What is wrong about it?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Merredin should be the terminus, because the depot is there. I have never before seen a file built up in this way. Here is a frank minute from the Minister, "I do not know the locality, so can only send the above minute from the Engineer-in-Chief for your consideration and decision."

The Minister for Works: I did not know the land.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: After that there was a discussion, and Newcarrie was decided upon three months after the Bill had been laid by! There was no intention to alter the terminus until after the session closed. Then a change was made.

The Premier: What was the reason for the change?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not know. Never before have I seen a file like this, although I have looked into many in years gone by and probably will look into many more before long.

The Premier: Don't you be too sure about that.

Hon. P. Collier: Well, we have had three victories to-night.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In years gone by any Government would have resigned on to-night's experience. Of course I know it would take dynamite to shift some of those who follow the present Government. Until May of this year it

was the wish of the department that Merredin should be the terminus. On most of the files I have previously seen there has been an expression of opinion from the Railway Department as to where the terminal point of a railway should be, or where it should junction with an existing line. Take as an instance the Dwarda-Narrogin railway. There were many opinions as to the terminus of that line, but the Railway Department declared for Narrogin, as the place where they had their depot, and their advice was acted upon.

Mr. Piesse: Then, according to that, settlement would not be given prior consideration?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It will make no difference to the settlers whether this railway goes to Newearnie or to Merredin.

Mr. Mann: Apparently you know nothing whatever about the district.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I know the map. It makes no difference to the convenience of the settlers which way the line goes.

Mr. Mann: If it goes to Merredin it will go through salt lake country all the way.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It does not say so on the file.

Hon. P. Collier: Which only shows the class of ability we are paying for.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The convenience to the settlers will be the same whether the line goes to Newearnie or to Merredin, but taking the line into Merredin will mean economy in working. I do not like to contradict the Minister, but there is nothing on the file to show whether or not the Railway Department favoured the change to Newearnie.

The Minister for Works: It is a difference of opinion, that is all.

Hon. P. Collier: But there is nothing to show that the department were consulted about the change.

The Minister for Works: The Working Railways do not settle the route.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Here is a minute on the file—

To the Engineer, Railway Construction, Public Works Department. Yours of the 5th inst. The junction at Newearnie should be at the northern end of the yard. The distance from the present line to be 13 ft. (Signed) H. A. Cresswell, Chief Engineer, Ways and Works.

The Premier: Do you think it ought to be put where they suggest?

Hon. P. Collier: Certainly they ought to have been consulted.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I cannot see the letter of the 5th instant. There is one dated the 5th asking that an authority for £1,000 should be given.

The Minister for Works: There are two letters from Mr. Cresswell.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This is a reply to the letter of the 5th.

The Minister for Works: This is the file that came to me from Mr. Tindale this morning.

Mr. Lutey: Silverfish again.

The Minister for Works: I do not think so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If there is any letter which Mr. Cresswell answered, written on the 5th of July, it is nowhere on the file between May and July.

The Minister for Works: I suppose it is on the Working Railways file.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: A copy of it should be here. The file does not appear to be mixed, because the pages are properly numbered.

Mr. A. Thomson: What are you suggesting?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I want to know the reason for the change. The junction is in the wrong place; it should be at Merredin where the railway depot is. All the officers up to July of this year considered Merredin to be the proper junction.

The Premier: We will get the other file.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I feel confident that this alteration was not made by the Engineer-in-Chief unless he was prompted to make it.

Mr. A. Thomson: Who prompted him?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is what I want to know. There is nothing on the file to show that the Railway Department suggested the alteration. There is only a mile and a half of railway saved. The alteration means an increase in cost of working on account of the watering at the terminus. This will be a permanent increase. Something has happened to cause this alteration in the route. It will mean an increased cost to the State for all time if the line goes to Newearnie.

The PREMIER: I am surprised that the member for North-East Fremantle should have spoken in this way. He appears to think there has been some strange influence at work to bring about this alteration in the terminus. I think it should be at Newearnie. The hon. member suggests that letters are missing from the file. He says one to Mr. Cresswell is missing. He can have all the letters and files he wants. There should be a copy of the missing letter on the railway file, and I will get that for him.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You had a Bill drafted for the terminus at Merredin last year.

The Minister for Works: Circumstances may alter.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But not in a few weeks.

The PREMIER: It was not introduced here. The hon. member should not insinuate that there is some reason not mentioned on the file for the change in the junction.

Hon. P. Collier: He complains there is no reason disclosed on the file.

The PREMIER: The minute of the Engineer-in-Chief is there.

Hon. P. Collier: He did not make the change on his own account.

The PREMIER: I have always favoured the junction at Newearnie, and have said so. In the circumstances I have no objection to progress being reported.

Progress reported.

# BILLS (4) RETURNED FROM THE COUNCIL.

1. Insurance Companies Act Amendment.
2. Merredin Racecourse.
3. Anzac Day.
4. Busselton-Margaret River Railway Deviation (No. 2).

Without amendment.

*House adjourned at 11.1 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 4th December, 1923.*

railway, Dwarda-Narrogin railway extension, Albany-Denmark railway extension, Bridgetown-Jarnadup railway extension. 2, Busselton-Margaret River, miles of railway laid, 25; miles of railway to be laid, 16½. Narembeen-Merredin, miles of railway laid, 1¼; miles of railway to be laid, 52. Esperance Northwards, miles of railway laid, 66½. Piawaning Northwards, miles of railway to be laid, 23. Dwarda-Narrogin, miles of railway to be laid, 25. Albany-Denmark extension, miles of railway to be laid, 35. Bridgetown-Jarnadup extension, miles of railway laid, 16½; miles of railway to be laid, 28.

## BILL—APPROPRIATION.

*Second Reading.*

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. J. Ewing—South-West) [4.38] in moving the second reading said: This is the first time I have had the honour of moving the Appropriation Bill in this Chamber. Seeing how ably the task has been done in the past, and the fulness of the information that has been given to hon. members, and the great care always exercised by the Leader of the House to go fully into details so that hon. members should have a full knowledge of the financial position of the State and of its industries, I shall endeavour on this occasion to give all the information I can. I do trust hon. members will not think the information too much. It is indeed difficult really to analyse the position so as to satisfy all parties. Some hon. members, not of this House, have said to me, "All you have to do is to put the Appropriation Bill on the Table, and that will be all right." Others have said to me, "If you speak for ten minutes it will be sufficient." But I have come to the conclusion that it is my bounden duty to speak as long as I think is necessary in the interests of the State, and also to speak in the manner that seems to me to be best. I have endeavoured to compile on those lines what I have to say. The last Appropriation Bill was moved on the 23rd January of this year. The delay was brought about by several factors over which the then Leader of the House had no control. He submitted the Appropriation Bill as early as it was possible for him to do so. Although in an unfavourable position from one aspect, he was favourably circumstanced from another point of view, because he possessed the knowledge of what had happened during the first half of the financial year, and from that knowledge was able to deduce the likelihood of the revenue estimated for 1922-23 being equal to or less than the receipts. On the present occasion I have the opportunity of discussing that position as applied to a period of five months, and I shall take advantage of the opportunity. The finances of the State, at any rate so far as I am able to judge, are in a buoyant condition, and are continuing to improve. The results so far of the public utilities, as they will be disclosed this after-

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

## QUESTION—FORESTS ACT, FINANCE.

Hon. H. STEWART asked the Minister for Education: 1, With reference to the Forests Act, 1918, what was the net revenue of the Forests Department in each of the last three financial years? 2, What amounts have been placed at the Treasury to the credit of a special account for re-afforestation and the development of forestry?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, 1920-21, £55,117; 1921-22, £68,623; 1922-23, £68,302. 2, 1920-21, £33,070; 1921-22, £41,174; 1922-23, £40,981.

## QUESTION—RAILWAY AUTHORISATIONS.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN asked the Minister for Education: 1, What railways have been authorised, the construction of which has not yet been completed? 2, In the case of each authorisation, how many miles of railway have been laid, if any, and how many miles remain to be laid?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Busselton-Margaret River railway, Narembeen-Merredin railway, Esperance Northwards railway, Piawaning Northwards