

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 21st August, 1913.

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ment stood. But the furnishing of this information will not be expensive. An accountant at the office could take it down within an hour if the books are written up and I take it the books must be written up, as 30th June has some time passed. I think the least the Premier might have done was to give me the information asked for, as it easily obtained.

The Premier: I will give it to you in due course.

Mr. MALE: The only satisfaction we have is the knowledge that the Premier refuses to give us any information respecting our trading concerns, and the shareholders in these particular concerns can wait.

The Premier: The shipping companies' agents can wait.

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

Ayes	7
Noes	20

Majority against 13

AYES.

Mr. Harper	Mr. A. E. Plesse
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. A. N. Plesse
Mr. Male	Mr. Layman
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Collier	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Foley	Mr. Price
Mr. Green	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Holman	Mr. Swan
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Lander	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Underwood
Mr. McDonald	Mr. A. A. Willson
Mr. McDowall	Mr. Johnston
Mr. Mullaney	(Teller).
Mr. Munste	

Question thus negatived.

House adjourned at 11 p.m.

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

QUESTION—COLLIE COAL AND RAILWAY TESTS.

Mr. A. A. WILSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Were the papers asked for by the Hon. R. J. Lynn, M.L.C., on 19th September, 1912, in the Legislative Council relating to the railway tests of Collie coal made by the department in March and April, 1912, ordered to be laid on the Table of the House? 2, Were the papers referred to laid on the Table of the House or given privately into the hands of the Hon. R. J. Lynn, M.L.C., by the Hon. the Colonial Secretary 3, Was the Railway Commissioner averse to allowing such papers to be laid on the Table of the House? 4, Did the Railway Commissioner contend, and voice his contention by a written minute, "that as the Hon. R. J. Lynn, M.L.C. was an agent for selling coal for one of the coal companies concerned, it would be unfair for the Hon. R. J. Lynn, M.L.C., to have access to such papers, as those papers could be unfairly used for trade purposes," or words to that effect?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, On the 3rd October, 1912, the Hon. Colonial Secretary explained to the House that as the file contained papers of a confidential character, it was undesirable that it should be laid on the Table, but that it would be made available to Mr. Lynn or other hon. members. I understand that the papers were subsequently perused by the Hon. Mr. Lynn. 3, Yes. 4, Yes, practically so.

**QUESTION—RAILWAY SERVICE,
PINJARRA-HOTHAM.**

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that consequent on the Railway Department taking over the whole of the Pinjarra-Hotham line, the train service on that line has been entirely altered? 2, Is he aware that this line up to the present has been the best paying line in the State? 3, Seeing that there is a population of several thousands between Marrinup and Axeville, would it not be possible to station an engine at Dwellingup, so as to render something approaching a decent service to these people?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. 3, The extension has only recently been taken over. The traffic is being closely watched, and, if necessary, an increased service will be given.

**QUESTION—RAILWAY PLATFORM,
WORSLEY.**

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Who drew up the estimate of cost for a railway platform at Worsley? 2, Why has not the promise to have this platform carried out been given effect to? 3, If lack of funds is the reason, why have other centres, with only a quarter of the population, been granted those facilities?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, The estimate was prepared by the Engineering Branch of the Railway Department. 2, This work, with others of a much more urgent nature, has had to stand over for the present. 3, I am not aware that this is the case.

QUESTION—OPOSSUM FARMING.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Has his attention been drawn to an article in a country journal to the effect that Mr. LeSouef has been granted a monopoly and an exclusive right in the establishment of an opossum farm? 2, Will he place a copy of the

agreement with Mr. LeSouef on the Table of the House?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Lands) replied: 1, Yes; but the article is incorrect inasmuch as it is not intended to grant Mr. LeSouef a monopoly. 2, A lease of 4,300 acres of land, for the purpose of opossum farming, has been promised to Mr. LeSouef, subject to approval of Parliament, and a Bill for the purpose will be introduced at an early date.

**BILL—RIGHTS IN WATER AND
IRRIGATION.**

Recommittal.

On motion by Minister for Works Bill recommitted for the purpose of further considering Clauses 3, 15, and 31.

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

Clause 3—The Minister and Advisory Commissioners:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In Committee objection had been raised by the member for Murray-Wellington in regard to the operation of Clause 50, which provided that a board would have the power of borrowing money outside the authorisation of Parliament for the purpose of irrigation works. The hon. member had raised the point that if that and certain other clauses which provided that the Minister would have all the rights conferred on a board were passed as printed, the Minister would also have the right to borrow money under Clause 50. That, of course, would be wrong. The Minister should only spend money which Parliament had the right of criticising. He had consulted the Parliamentary Draftsman and the Crown Law Department, and they were of opinion that if the Bill was passed as drafted the Minister would have the right to borrow money outside of Parliamentary authorisation. Therefore, he had framed an amendment which allowed the Minister all the powers of a board with the exception of the borrowing powers conferred by Clause 50. He moved an amendment—

That in Clause 3, after "authorities" in line 2 of Subclause 3, the following

words be inserted, "except the power to borrow money conferred by Section 50."

Amendment passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 15—Certain riparian owners may apply for special licenses to divert and use water:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This clause provided that where a license was granted it could be revoked if it was desirable to do so in the public interests. If a license was cancelled compensation must be paid. The member for Murray-Wellington had pointed out that compensation was to be paid from revenue or from moneys appropriated by Parliament, but the licensee had no right to appeal against the compensation granted by the Minister. It was therefore proposed to give the licensee an opportunity of appealing against the decision of the Minister if he thought such decision unjust. He moved an amendment—

That the last paragraph of Clause 15 be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—"If such order is made in the interests of the public it shall direct such amount by way of compensation to be paid to the licensee out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund as may be agreed upon between the Minister and the licensee or determined by arbitration."

Amendment passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 31—Construction and maintenance of works:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved an amendment—

That the following words be added at the end of the clause, "except the power to borrow money conferred by section fifty. Provided that any moneys borrowed by a board for the construction of works within its district may be applied by the board to expenditure by the Minister in the construction of such works."

The first portion of this amendment was consequential upon that made in Clause 3. In regard to the proviso, Clause 50 gave the board the right to borrow money

and the works were the security for the amount borrowed. The board might, however, desire the Minister to carry out the work for them. Instead of getting an organisation together for the purpose of construction, they could, under this amendment, borrow the money, hand it over to the Minister for Works so that he might do the constructional portion, and then assume control of the completed work. In other words, if the board so desired the Minister became the contractor to carry out the required work. It was desirable to insert this because, if matters progressed as was hoped, considerable irrigation works would be constructed, and the Government would get a staff and organisation of competent men who would be able to do the work cheaper and more expeditiously than it would be possible for a board to get it done under contract. It would be a special line, and while the board would not have to hand the money to the Minister to construct the works, they would be able to do so in order to permit the Minister to do the work out of money already borrowed. While the Minister could not take advantage of the right to borrow he could utilise the money if the board desired for the purpose of constructing the works for them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The amendment certainly improved the clause considerably. The other night the Minister said that the provision regarding resumptions would not apply where the board undertook the work. It must apply to the extent that the Minister must have power to resume land for the construction of drains and headworks. The Minister said he did not propose to put Clause 60 into operation except in that connection. It was to be hoped this was his intention still although he was being empowered to do all things in connection with the irrigation works which he himself established. It was difficult to suggest any safeguard, but the Minister should remember his statement that he did not intend to interfere where boards undertook to face the responsibility of providing irrigation schemes. The idea that the Minister should have power to do the work, if requested by a board, had his approval.

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

Bill again reported with further amendments.

BILL—ROADS CLOSURE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 12th August.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): I am sorry the leader of the Opposition, who secured the adjournment, is unable to be present to-day. Under this Bill it is proposed to close certain roads in connection with the purchase of the Henty estate. I understand the Government have been advised by the Solicitor General that these roads must be closed in order to enable them to carry out their propositions in connection with the estate. The reason why members of the Opposition have taken some trouble about the matter is because we understand from some of the neighbouring landowners that if the roads proposed to be closed are closed, they may experience some difficulty in getting access to their holdings. The Premier has informed me that, although it is proposed to close these roads nominally, practically the roads will not be closed, and when the estate is cut up and dealt with by the department, due regard will be paid to the representations of neighbouring landowners, and they will be given every necessary facility to get access to their homes. I would like to say that this country is fairly rugged, and a plan, such as the Premier has before him, hardly gives hon. members any idea of any particular road. I am quite satisfied that, although some of the roads are shown on the plan as being straight, the practice is to contour around the hills. As I have the assurance of the Premier that due regard will be paid to neighbouring landowners, I do not propose to offer any further opposition to the Bill. I believe the hon. member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) has held some communication with the landowners, and I feel sure from what the Premier has said that both the hon. member's anxiety and my own may be considered to be allayed.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan): The point raised by the hon. member for Murray-Wellington was brought under the notice of the Minister for Lands by the hon. member for Bunbury, and I am in a position to say that, while we are taking power to close these roads under this Bill, from a practical point of view they will be as open after this measure is passed as they are to-day. The Solicitor General advised that the Government were unable to revest the Henty estate in His Majesty as of his former estate unless these roads were closed. That is necessary under the Agricultural Lands Repurchase Act. These roads are not public roads; if they were we could close them under the Roads Act, but not being public roads they have to be closed by Act of Parliament before the estate can be revested in His Majesty as of his former estate, and we cannot cut up the estate under the Agricultural Lands Repurchase Act until the land has been revested in His Majesty as of his former estate. The roads, however, will be as open as ever they were, and as I pointed out privately to the hon. member for Murray-Wellington, the settlers beyond the Henty estate will be able to use them in future as they have done in the past without any interference whatever, and the chances are that when the estate is cut up there will be more roads than there are at present, and the additional roads will be available to the settlers, not only on the Henty estate, but also to those beyond. Under the circumstances, I think the hon. member opposite will agree that the Bill is necessary.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam):
When the Minister for Lands—

Mr. SPEAKER: The Hon. the Premier has replied.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Closure of certain roads:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Persons who had bought other subdivisions of this estate now had a right of way over these roads.

When the Bill was passed, that right of way would cease. The Premier had given the House to understand that there was no intention of denying people the use of the roads until the estate was subdivided, but that the roads were closed in order that the estate might be subdivided to the best advantage. It would be necessary to see that people who had other subdivisions on the estate were not inconvenienced, and that the Government roads joined with those which now led on to the subdivision. The Premier ought to make a note of this to ensure that the people who were now losing a right were not inconvenienced later on in the manner suggested.

The PREMIER: The object of the measure was not to close the roads to assist the subdivision of the estate; it was absolutely essential to close the roads before the estate could be subdivided because they were part of the original estate, and before the estate could be subdivided under the Agricultural Lands Repurchase Act it must be revested in His Majesty as of his former estate inclusive of the roads, and the department could not proceed unless the Bill was passed. The hon. member could accept his assurance on behalf of the Minister for Lands that when subdivisions were made, the roads would be constructed in the first instance to the advantage of those who took up land under the subdivision, but proper roads would also be provided for those who already occupied portions of the Henty estate.

Mr. GEORGE: The Premier's assurance satisfied him that what was required by the people already settled there would be done.

Clause put and passed.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL.—TRAFFIC.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending the Bill.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson), in moving the second reading said: This Bill is practically the same as that passed by the Legislative Assembly last year, and embraces the provisions dealing with the traffic and roads throughout the State which are now contained in six different Acts. The Bill proposes to repeal those six Acts or portions of them and to embrace the whole of the provisions relating to traffic in this one measure. The six Acts referred to are: 1, The Cart and Carriage Licensing Act, the whole of which will be repealed; 2, the Tramways Act, a portion of which will be repealed; 3, the Width of Tyres Act, the whole of which will be repealed; 4, the Municipal Corporations Act, a portion of which will be repealed; 5, the Public Works Act, a portion of which will be repealed; and 6, the Roads Act, of which also a portion will be repealed. The Bill now before the Chamber comprises all the principal features contained in the six Acts I have just mentioned. Those provisions are amended and brought up to date to fit in with the altered conditions that now prevail with regard to local government and the licensing of vehicles, and to deal with motor traffic. The chief alterations so far as principle is concerned contained in the measure are those affecting the width of tyres, and the other main principle of the Bill is the question of the maintenance of main roads. Under the existing Width of Tyres Act, the width of the tyre is regulated by the diameter of the axle, whereas under this Bill we propose to decide the width of the tyre on the weight that is to be carried by the vehicle. In regard to the maintenance of main roads, it is proposed that the license fees that are now collected shall continue to be collected, with, of course, some alteration of the conditions and provisions that now prevail with regard to these licenses, but the license fees have got to be ear marked for the special purpose—after being subsidised by the Government—of the maintenance of main roads. The fees in the metropolitan area have got to be pooled and distributed over the whole of the metropolitan area, instead of permit-

ting the present system to continue, by which one or two local bodies get the whole of the license fees and the vehicles that are licensed are using the roads that are maintained by outside bodies. The main details of this Bill were explained at very great length last year and I do not propose to go into a lot of detail in regard to the measure. It received very fair consideration at the hands of members of this Chamber and a good deal of attention was given to the various clauses; consequently its provisions must be fairly fresh in the minds of hon. members.

Mr. George: Does this measure embody the amendments made last year?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. I will try in a few remarks I propose to make to remove some of the misconception which seems to exist in the minds of a lot of people in regard to this particular measure. As I pointed out on the previous occasion, the necessity for the Bill is easily demonstrated by the fact that we have to-day six different Acts of Parliament dealing with traffic, and we also have each local body, having the power under the particular Act of Parliament which gives it the right to exist, making regulations dealing with the control of traffic. We propose under the Bill to take away from the local authorities the power of making regulations in regard to traffic, and these regulations are to be made by the Minister in control of the statute for the purposes of the State generally. Hon. members must know the difficulty to-day existing in every part of the State—and, of course, it is more pronounced in the metropolitan area—where one leaves Perth driving in a buggy, or in a motor car, and passes over the boundaries of various local bodies, each of which has a different regulation in regard to the method of driving and the speed at which one shall drive, with the result that it is utterly impossible for the driver of a vehicle clearly to understand what is expected of him when he gets into various areas controlled by different local bodies. Then, again, it becomes very difficult now for the local authorities to administer their regulations and by-laws, which necessarily occasion continual argument from those in charge of licensed vehicles, who become

acquainted with the regulations existing in the district where they reside themselves, and when they go into another district and find the regulations there are different an argument takes place, and it is difficult indeed for the local authorities to convince the persons referred to that because they have gone a mile or so further on their journey, they have to comply with different conditions. The differences are not very great, I admit, but they are sufficiently irritating to cause a considerable amount of discussion and dissatisfaction on the part of those in charge of vehicles. It is also difficult indeed for police officers to regulate traffic, where police regulation of traffic takes place. Therefore, from that point of view, it must appeal to hon. members that a Bill of this description is absolutely essential. The Width of Tyres Act to-day provides the right to local authorities to impose a wheel tax on the farmer's cart, on the farmer's wagon, and on any vehicle the farmer uses. It is exactly the same with trading delivery vans in Perth, but passenger vehicles are exempted, with the result that all these big passenger vehicles plying for hire, these heavy buses and coaches which usually carry passengers, are exempt from wheel tax. This is distinctly unfair. If there is one class of vehicle which should pay a wheel tax, it is, of course the passenger vehicle of this type. While possibly under certain roads boards they do impose this tax, they have absolutely no control at all so far as the width of tyres is concerned. On further reflection I am inclined to think I am wrong in saying there is not power to make them pay a license fee. The point I should have made is that there is absolutely no power to control the width of the tyres, and if there is one class of vehicle more than another over which we should have control, it is the vehicle that plies for hire and carries passengers; but I find that they do pay wheel tax. Another big point that is causing a great deal of discussion at the present time is the fact that the motors that are licensed are mainly licensed in the city of Perth, with the result that the City Council collect all the

fees while the roads that are used by these same motors are mainly those outside the City boundary. Then, again, it is possible—I do not know whether it is actually practised—that a municipality can compel a motor owner to take out a license inside that municipal boundary, irrespective of the fact that he may have paid a license to the roads board in the district where he resides. That, at any rate is the condition prevailing to-day, that a double tax could be imposed if a municipality so desired.

Member: It has been imposed.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The regulations in regard to motor traffic particularly have been so conflicting that recently under the Roads Act the officers controlling the Act—the administrative officers of the Public Works Department—issued uniform by-laws regulating motor traffic, and more particularly dealing with the lights to be carried by vehicles. The necessity for these has been demonstrated by the fact that not only have the major portion of the roads boards adopted these by-laws, but municipalities have adopted them. We have, of course, no power to compel municipalities to adopt them, but they find the necessity so great that two-thirds of them have adopted the special by-laws framed by the Public Works Department. To-day, under the various Acts controlling traffic there is no one really specially empowered to deal with the regulation of traffic. In the City of Perth they have a traffic inspector who has certain authority and certain powers, but, speaking generally, the secretary of a roads board and the town clerk of a municipality have little or no powers. The object of this measure is to give them powers and enable them to become inspectors of traffic, so that they can exercise all the powers under regulations which will be framed if this Bill becomes law. I want to deal with the opposition that has been raised to the measure, and it has been more particularly, if not almost wholly, confined to those clauses dealing with the fees from the licensing of vehicles for the whole of the metropolitan area being taken by the Minister, subsidised by funds to be pro-

vided by Parliament, and then divided out among the various local bodies in the metropolitan area in proportion to the length of main road which they have in their district, taking into consideration, also, the width of road. Contrary to what has been sometimes stated, and accepted as correct by a number of people, that the Minister for Works was responsible for the introduction of this Bill, I want to point out that the measure was practically introduced, or its introduction mainly urged, by a conference that sat in Perth some considerable time ago, and shortly after the present Government took office.

Mr. Allen: Was the Perth City Council represented?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. I was present myself as the Minister in control of the local government Acts. Delegates were present from the following municipalities: Perth, Subiaco, Guildford, Queen's Park, Midland Junction, Leederville, Victoria Park, East Fremantle, Fremantle, and North Fremantle. The roads boards represented were Perth, Armadale-Kelmscott, Bayswater, Cottesloe Beach, Claremont, West Guildford, Swan, and Fremantle. This very subject was debated and, as a matter of fact, the object of the conference was to go into the question of main roads, and particular attention was devoted to the fact that license fees were collected by one authority, while the others had to maintain the roads which were used by the vehicles. After a fairly good discussion it was decided by 18 votes to 4 that the license fees should be pooled, and that they should be distributed then in proportion to the length of main road a particular local authority had to maintain.

Mr. Allen: That is what you would expect from a conference of that nature.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is true that the Perth delegates were opposed to this proposal and the four votes which were recorded against it were the votes, two of Perth, and two of Fremantle. Perth desires to retain that which they are not justly entitled to, and because of that we are expected to say to the other authorities that they must not have a look in at all. Is it not the duty of

Parliament to take into consideration the representations of all who are interested and then be guided by the views of the majority? After all, Perth does little for the maintenance of the main thoroughfares. It is true that they have main thoroughfares and big expense in consequence, but they also have big rating powers, whereas outside the municipal boundaries we go on to main roads which produces no rates, and which are used to a great extent by vehicles licensed inside Perth. Take the Karrakatta-road as an instance. On one side of it is the railway line, and on the other side the cemetery. No rates are derived from either side, yet the local authorities will have to maintain that road, and the vehicles using it, or it might be said 95 per cent. of them, are licensed in Perth.

Mr. George: And what about the Perth-Fremantle-road, which is knocked about by motor lorries.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is another instance. The licenses received by the Fremantle municipality are small in comparison to those received in Perth.

Mr. George: Instead of sending stuff up by rail it is now sent up by motor lorries over the Perth-Fremantle-road.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A fair quantity also comes up by river. The Bill before the House was drafted as the result of the conference to which I have referred, and the proposals were then submitted to the roads board conference which sat in Perth 12 months ago, and they gave the Bill very serious consideration. It is true that they suggested certain amendments, but everything was debated thoroughly and the conference approved of the Bill. Therefore, all the local authorities with the exception of Perth and Fremantle—and as Fremantle has practically withdrawn its opposition, Perth may now be said to be alone—have agreed to the provisions of the Bill which, as it appears before members, is practically the same, if not the same in every word, as that which was submitted to the conference.

Mr. Allen: It was a foregone conclusion.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Bill is divided into two parts. In the metropolitan area all the license fees are to be collected by a central authority, and then distributed in proportion to the number of roads the local authorities have to maintain. Someone has to decide which are and which are not main roads. The question has always been raised, "Why not define them." I have tried and I have failed. I admit I cannot define what is a main road. The officers of the department have been instructed to try and get a definition which would fill the bill. Last year I appealed to hon. members to assist me in this direction but no one was able to do it. Therefore, I think there is only one way of dealing with this question, and that is to take every road on its merits. If we took it on the question of the amount of traffic, we would exclude many main roads. If we made the traffic low we would make every road a main road. It will, therefore, be seen that it is almost impossible to give a definition of a main road, but it is possible for the Minister, through his officers, in every local governing district, to select those roads which are genuinely known as main roads, and declare them to be such, and subsidise them in proportion to the traffic that passes over them. The other portion of the Bill deals with country roads, and this is a matter on which there was misconception or misrepresentation last year. It was stated by quite a number of people, who ought to have known better, that it was proposed to take all license fees, and they made the provisions, which it was proposed to apply to the metropolitan area, apply to the whole State. All other local governing bodies will have the power to collect their license fees, as they do today, but those fees will be ear-marked for the special purpose of maintaining main roads, and they will earn a subsidy as outlined in the Bill, and the money will be provided on the Estimates, as was done last year. In regard to the license fees in the metropolitan area, while they will not be actually paid into the Treasury, every local body in the metropolitan area will be called upon to make a return showing the amount of license fees they have collected, and the money will be credited to a special

fund, a subsidy will be added, and the amount will then be distributed.

Mr. Male: What would be the approximate amount?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It will be anything between £8,000 and £10,000. I have not got the exact figures before me because the Estimates are not yet properly completed.

Mr. Male: I mean what amount will be collected in the way of license fees?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is difficult to get at the exact amount which is collected, because quite a number of boards do not collect fees. They have the power but they have neglected to use it. So far as Perth is concerned the amount collected is roughly £1,400.

Mr. Allen: There are those who will not take the trouble to collect and there are those who do.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In the metropolitan area the local bodies exercise the right but it is in the country districts where they are neglectful. Under this Bill we give them special encouragement to collect fees, because those fees will earn a subsidy, and we hope that the result will be that more money will be collected in the future than has been collected in the past. So far as the metropolitan area is concerned, fees have been collected for years past to the fullest extent. It has been said that the Perth Municipal Council are justified in their protest by reason of the fact that they have recently lost a considerable amount of their revenue, in the first place by a previous Government reducing their subsidy, and by other Governments and the present Government resuming land and thus depriving them of rates. They raised various other arguments in support of the revenue which they have lost, and they contended that, on account of the actions of various Governments, they should be permitted to retain the revenue they derived from licenses. I contend that that is quite unfair. Suppose there were something in the argument that the revenue of the Perth Municipal Council was not as large as it was previously, I maintain it is distinctly unfair to say to

the other municipalities which have suffered similar losses of subsidies----

Mr. Allen: Nothing like the Perth council.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The subsidies have been reduced in other municipalities, but I am prepared to admit, not to the same extent as in Perth. Nevertheless, the subsidies have been reduced and all have lost revenue, while land has also been resumed in areas outside the municipality of Perth. Therefore, other local bodies have lost the power to rate, just as Perth has done, on account of land resumptions. And they, too, have cause to complain through a falling off in their revenue. Yet Perth declare that because they have lost that revenue, they should be allowed to retain the license fees in order to make up their deficiency. But are we to tax or penalise the outside bodies, in order to assist Perth to overcome their difficulty? I contend that would be distinctly unfair. We are here to view impartially the claims of all the people of the State, and we should not know the Perth municipal boundary any more than we know the Subiaco municipal boundary. We should take into consideration the position and the condition of affairs to-day, and ask ourselves whether it is just, and if it is not, then it is the responsibility of the Government to devise other means for the equal distribution of this money. I claim that we have done that, and that the Bill provides the only equitable way of overcoming the difficulty. The Perth municipality have lost their revenue, it is true, but they have also lost the responsibility they had in regard to the maintenance of some of our main thoroughfares. Or, if they have not lost the responsibility of doing that which they were supposed to do, it is simply because they neglected to do it. Take the Causeway as an instance. Perth had to maintain a portion of it but they were able, by agitation I suppose, to rid themselves of that responsibility and to place it on the State, with the result that the Minister for Works is to-day charged with the maintenance of that thoroughfare.

Mr. Allen: Why should not Perth be relieved of that expenditure?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It seems, therefore, that if we start to take any revenue from the municipalities we are doing them an injustice, and, on the other hand, if we relieve them of expenditure we are doing what is fair and just. We cannot increase their revenue, but it is only fair that we should put them on the same basis as other municipalities or local bodies. With regard to the Perth-Fremantle-road, that thoroughfare was reconstructed in 1892-3. Then Perth, although charged with the responsibility of maintaining it, did not do anything in the way of maintenance, and the result was that in 1906 the road had to be practically remade. A guarantee was entered into then by the Perth Municipal Council that if the people of the State, through the Government of the day, took the burden again of reconstructing this road, they would see that it was maintained. I will leave it to hon. members who have travelled over that road lately to say whether it has been maintained as it should have been. It has been allowed to drift into such a state that unless something is done promptly, a good deal of it will again have to be constructed. I am only using these instances as arguments to show that the city council, while complaining of revenue having been taken away from them, have not shouldered their full responsibility so far as expenditure is concerned, regarding the maintenance of the two thoroughfares I have mentioned, the Perth-Fremantle-road—that portion of it coming into and going out of Perth—and the Causeway. Now, I just want to say a word or two in regard to some of the criticism levelled at the Bill, and more particularly in regard to some of the utterances of members representing agricultural districts. It has been stated that no provision was made in the Bill for exempting agricultural machinery, and that it was proposed under the Bill to penalise, by way of increased license fees, the farmers' implements. Hon. members know that to be incorrect. The member for Katanning (Mr. A. E. Piesse) drew attention to it. I replied that provision was already made in the Bill to exempt agricultural machinery. A doubt still remained in the mind of the hon. gentleman

as to whether the provision that farmers' implements were exempt was sufficiently clear. I again went into it with the Crown Solicitor, who stated that in his opinion it was perfectly clear. However, in order to make assurance doubly sure, the Crown Solicitor drafted an amendment for the hon. member which the hon. member moved, and which, accepted by the Government, formed part and parcel of the Bill when the measure left the Chamber, an amendment exempting beyond the shadow of doubt farmers' implements.

Mr. George: Who has made the statement?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will just give it to you. The statement was made, not in one place, but in several places. One hon. gentleman really conducted the Federal campaign by criticising the Traffic Bill, and using it as an illustration of what the Labour party would do for the agriculturists if they got the opportunity. I refer to the Hon. C. A. Piesse, a member of another place, an hon. gentleman who should have known better. As a matter of fact he did know better. His own brother moved the amendment exempting agricultural implements and making it clear that the Bill did exempt agricultural machinery. The amendment was accepted by the Government, not under pressure, but simply because we desired to do it, and because we had claimed that our Bill did do it. The Crown Solicitor had supported us in that contention, notwithstanding which he said that to put it beyond all doubt he would make the provision still more clear.

Mr. George: Mr. Piesse is not the man to make statements which he knows to be incorrect; he is an honourable gentleman.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Which only emphasises the necessity of an honourable gentleman, who has the reputation of stating only those things which he knows to be correct, being absolutely fair.

Mr. S. Stubbs: What Mr. Piesse said on several platforms was that there was a provision in the Bill which would compel farmers to pay a high rate by way of wheel tax if they went from one farm to another to assist each other to cart produce.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not going on the utterances made by the hon. gentleman on the platform. As I say, numerous statements were made, but I am going more particularly by a letter which was published in the newspapers and signed "C. A. Piesse." That letter was absolutely incorrect. In my absence it was corrected by the Minister for Lands, and was put right also by the chairman of the Roads Board Association.

Mr. Price: After which Mr. Piesse still continued to say that his letter was correct.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. gentleman stated that the Bill gave the Minister for Works full authority to run the show with inspectors of traffic. That is incorrect. It did not give the Minister for Works full authority to run the show, and all the argument raised against the Minister for Works trying to take great power was raised against the Bill itself; because it is utterly impossible to make all the regulations and bylaws uniform unless you charge somebody with the responsibility of doing it. I would not object if Mr. Piesse himself would take the responsibility, in which case we could have it inserted in the Bill that that hon. gentleman was the one appointed to see that all the bylaws were uniform. Somebody must do it, and surely to goodness it should be the Minister charged with the responsibility of administering the measure. All that the Bill said was that certain things which are now done by the local authority would have to be done with the approval of the Minister. It was not done with the idea of taking away the powers of the local authorities, but rather to secure a uniform system. Consequently, if hon. members take up the attitude that the Minister for Works should not have this power, they are declaring against the Bill. If the central authority is not to have the power of making uniform regulations and bylaws the Bill is no good, because if the central authority cannot do it, the local authority can, and we will have a continuance of the conditions existing to-day. It is because we desire to make the regulations uniform that we centralise the power. Of

course we know that all these details are not actually carried out by the Minister. While it is the Minister who is responsible to Parliament, it is his responsible officers connected with his department who have to take the responsibility of going very carefully into all the details in regard to the administration of these various matters, and also to look after the regulations and bylaws. But when framing the Bill it has to be realised that the man responsible to Parliament is the Minister who, for the time being, is charged with the administration. Another statement was made by Mr. Piesse, who is supposed to be quite fair in all that he says, and who, as I say, because he is supposed to be quite fair in all that he says, should be particularly careful in what he does say.

Mr. George: There is no supposition about it; he is a fair man.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In regard to this Bill he was not fair, and consequently, I take exception to what he said. He stated that the Minister was going to charge an extortionate amount on an engine and chaff-cutter. We know that to be distinctly incorrect. There was to be no charge at all on a chaff-cutter. The fortunate possessor of an engine and chaff-cutter, who owned also several farms, could travel from farm to farm and could use his chaff-cutter on each of them without the payment of any license or fee; but if that man, having finished his own work, started to cut for hire, his engine and chaff-cutter became licensed vehicles. What the hon. gentleman conveyed to his hearers, according to the member for Wagin, was that if one farmer desired to go and cut for his neighbour without charging anything at all for that service, he would have to pay a license fee on his chaff-cutter. That is absolute nonsense. If he was going to do the work for his neighbour without charging for it he would be exempt, and no Minister of the Crown could penalise that man for doing a good action of that description. But we know that those gentlemen do not exist. There are very few indeed who pull their chaff-cutters from their own

farms to a neighbour's farm and cut chaff for nothing.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Some do.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I wish a few would come round my way. I have no chaff-cutter, and I am pretty hard up, and in addition I am inclined to think that if I stay in those dry areas I will continue to be hard up. I sincerely wish we could get some of those gentlemen in my area. However, as a matter of fact we know this sort of thing does not exist.

Mr. S. Stubbs: That is incorrect; it does exist.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Well, I have never seen it. If it does exist no Minister would think of imposing a penalty upon the owner of the chaff-cutter. But we say, and it is specially provided in the amendment moved by the member for Katanning, that if they do this work for fee or reward then they have to pay a license fee, which is only fair. Again, there was some argument in regard to the motor traffic, and the speed limit. A lot of people were of opinion that it was wrong to abolish the speed limit. But the speed limit was abolished for the same reason as that for which we abolished the right of local authorities to make numerous regulations. If you have a speed limit, you must have one for the whole State, which is not a reasonable proposition at all. Therefore, we say that instead of having a speed limit we will give them the right to drive, but they must drive in such fashion as to guarantee safety to the public. That is the system prevailing, so far as my information goes, in London and other big cities where traffic is very much congested indeed. Therefore it is only reasonable that under a Bill of this description we should simply lay it down that they shall drive to the safety of the public. Sometimes it is necessary, from the public safety point of view, to go only three or four miles an hour, while at other times one can travel with safety at 25 miles an hour, and, when motoring from Dumbleyung to Wagiu, one is sometimes carried at 45 miles an hour, even at the risk of breaking one's neck. This sort of thing is likely to continue while the member for Wagiu takes

on these trips. Unfortunately, he sometimes has a Minister of the Crown to accompany him. Still, that rate of travel is not customary, and it is generally recognised that the motorist drives with due regard to the safety of everybody. Sometimes he may go at the rate of 25 miles an hour, while at another time he slows down when he knows it is essential to safety.

The Premier: In Melbourne the policemen bustle motors over crossings at 20 miles an hour in order to avoid blocking the traffic.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That may be necessary in certain cases. We also know that the Automobile Club erects notices where there is danger, instructing the drivers to slow down, particularly in the vicinity of schools and other places where children are likely to be on the road. Consequently, it will be seen that to-day they drive with due regard to the safety of the public. We want to make that general. To make the drivers particularly careful they require to be licensed. Their licenses can be revoked whilst they themselves can be specially penalised for carelessness.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. Dwyer: Would you make an accident *prima facie* evidence of carelessness on their part?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not prepared to enter into a legal discussion on the subject. The Bill provides powers for the traffic inspectors to take action against anybody guilty of carelessness. The penalties are sufficiently strong to make careful driving the order of the day in Western Australia. I do not want to say any more as to the Bill. A great deal spoken on the subject is already in *Hansard*, and it is essentially a Committee Bill. But I want to point out that, last year, the Bill was passed in this Chamber after some amendments as suggested by hon. members, and that it then went to another place. Members of another place, as is usual in that Chamber, led off by congratulating the Government on having introduced the Bill. They said the Bill was

absolutely necessary in the public interests. Then the second reading was agreed to, and the Bill was taken into Committee. The members of that place had hardly got going in that stage before they started mutilating the measure, and taking out its salient features. They had not gone far before they eliminated that provision dealing with the power of taking over the license fees for the whole of the metropolitan area and distributing those fees in proportion to the responsibilities of the various local bodies. The Minister in charge of another place, recognising that the Bill was absolutely destroyed, moved that it be discharged from the Notice Paper. Then there was a general protest on the part of hon. members of the Council, and they took up the attitude that the provisions left in the Bill were good ones, and that we should accept the Bill as mutilated rather than defeat it altogether. Now, I want to say that so far as the Government are concerned, we are quite prepared to receive suggestions from anyone to assist us in framing a Bill on the best possible lines to meet the conditions of the various portions of the State, but we are not going to sit down and allow another place, which is not representative of the people, which is not supposed to know the people's requirements as well as this Chamber, which is representative of only a privileged section of the community, which has large electorates that prevent its members from getting into touch with all the requirements of the various districts to the extent that members of this Chamber can—recognising all those limitations, we are not prepared to take their judgment on Bills of this description as against the judgment of members in this Chamber. In regard to another Bill in connection with which I have some comments on the attitude of another Chamber, I was told that the Government were ill-advised, and that they should have been more moderate in their tone in order to get the Bill passed. I want to lay it down right here that I am not going to be a party to going on our knees to anyone in order to get legislation through another place. We send forward legislation interpreting the de-

sires of the people as we know them; the Government have the responsibility of framing the legislation with the assistance of their expert officers; and when we submit such legislation and outline the salient features of the Bill, and the members of another place decide that one of the main principles in the measure is against their desires, why do they not defeat it on the second reading, and take the full responsibility for their action? Then the country would know that they threw out a particular Bill, and that the full responsibility rested upon them. But they do not do that. On the second reading they support the Bill, but in Committee they start to mutilate it, and to cut out the foundations of the measure, leaving practically nothing, and then they say we should accept the mutilated measure, and they enter a protest if anyone should say they are guilty of defeating the proposal. However, so far as this Bill is concerned, it is practically the same as the measure introduced last session, and it represents an honest effort on the part of the Government, assisted by their departmental officers, to frame traffic regulations that will meet the requirements of this State. Not only have we had the assistance of the expert officers, but we have consulted the local bodies who are directly interested in the country districts, as well as in the metropolitan area. In every case this Bill has met with favour, and consequently I submit it again to the Chamber, feeling sure that this House will give it the same fair consideration as it received on a previous occasion. Again let me say that I sincerely trust that members of another place will study this Bill a little more carefully, and realise that our measures are framed in the interests of the people. They must not take their own limited view of Western Australia, a view that is limited by the franchise on which they are elected. They should take the view of the people and realise that the highways and byways belong to the people, and not to any privileged section, that in dealing with roads we are dealing with what belongs to the people, and not to a few privileged property owners.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member should not reflect in any way on another place.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not reflecting on them.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The hon. member is referring to another place in terms he should not use. Such expressions may be all right outside the Chamber, but they are not permissible here.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will not repeat it, but I want just to say that I trust they will recognise that in this Chamber we have sitting on both sides of the House men who are truly representative of the whole of the people, and that when a Bill passes this Chamber we have fair justification for saying that it is framed in accordance with the desires of the whole people, and that it should receive consideration at the hands of members of another place. With those few remarks I beg to move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. Mitchell debate adjourned.

BILL—WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE, AND DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson), in moving the second reading, said: This Bill is introduced for the purpose of requesting hon. members to agree to the Act passed by Parliament last session being made perpetual, instead of being limited in its operation, as it was an amendment made in another place. It will be remembered that the Bill passed this Chamber and went to another place, and whilst it was passed into law the Council limited the operation of the measure to a period ending the 30th November, 1913. That measure, which is referred to as the principal Act in the Bill now before the Chamber, provided all the machinery necessary to bring into operation an amalgamation of the water supplies of the State under one department, and whilst it enacted that all water supplies and hydraulic under-

takings were to be concentrated in one department and controlled by one administration, provision was included which prevented any one undertaking being run to the detriment of another. In other words, it provided that every undertaking—more particularly does this apply to water supplies—should be run as a separate commercial concern, that a separate balance sheet should be drawn up for each and submitted to Parliament and the public so that the people in each locality might know the actual result of the working of their own scheme. In this way any Government was prevented from exploiting one concern for the benefit of another. It must be recognised, however, that when we produce a balance sheet for the various water supplies, as we are required to do by the principal Act, it will be impossible to make it balance. One year there may be a credit, and next year a deficit, because we know that we do not run the water supplies for the purpose of making money. They are administered so as to pay the actual costs of operation and interest and sinking fund on the capital that has been invested, so that some years we may end with a surplus and next year finish up on the wrong side of the ledger. But under the Act these balance sheets have to be prepared, and, of course, they are running accounts: that is to say, the credit this year will show as the starting point for the next year. If this year ends with a debit it will be charged up against the next year in exactly the same way, and this credit or debit is shown on the annual balance sheet so that the people may follow exactly what the operations have been. One clause in the Bill now before the House is a proposal to bring the officers in the Water Supply Department under the provisions of the Public Service Act. There is some little doubt as to whether the clauses in this Bill do not go a little bit further than we would be justified in asking Parliament to approve of, but that is a matter that can be attended to in Committee, and although the doubt exists, the Government feel that we can well leave it to the Committee to put right the wrong if there is one, as has been represented from some quarters. Clause 3 deals with the power of the Gov-

error to appoint water boards under the principal Act. It is not quite clear at present whether the Governor has power when he appoints a water board to also revoke that appointment, if needs be, and consequently this clause is inserted to make it definite that while the Governor has power to appoint a board under the Act, he also has the right to revoke the appointment, if it is necessary in the interests of the State to do so. Clause 4 repeals the section I have referred to as limiting the operation of the Act to the 30th November, 1913.

Mr. George: What was the reason given for that limitation?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member will recollect that there was some little criticism in this Chamber. I think the leader of the Opposition questioned the wisdom of the Government in taking all these water supplies and regulating them under the system outlined in the Act, but eventually we convinced the hon. member that this step was in the best interests of the State. Then when the Bill went to another place, members there seemed to have a doubt as to the wisdom of this amalgamation, and they decided that they would give the scheme a 12 months' run in order to see exactly how it operated and enable the Government to bring in another Bill to justify the continuance of the measure on the results of the year's experience. The continuance of the Act is absolutely essential if we are to continue the Water Supply Department, and I want to say that after 12 months' trial I have no hesitation in recommending to Parliament that this Bill be passed and that the time limitation be removed. Although we have been operating only for 12 months it is just worth placing on record that even during the time when we dislocated some of the water supplies through bringing about combinations and removals, there was no complaint from the public. We have been able to amalgamate, and at the same time keep things going in such a manner that there has been no complaint from the people. Also we can claim that if it is possible during the first 12 months to get through as well as we have done, it is fair to assume that as we gain experience

we will be able to do better. In order to show the extent of this department—and I do not think its extent is fully realised by hon. gentlemen—I want to point out that the capital expenditure is as follows:—On the Goldfields water supply, £3,371,000; on the Metropolitan water supply, sewerage, and drainage, £1,434,000; on water supplies in agricultural areas and on town water supplies including land drainage, £1,160,000, and, on the mines water supply as distinct from the Mundaring scheme, the expenditure has been £1,030,000, or a total capital expenditure which is now concentrated in one department of £6,995,000. Previous to the amalgamation, the goldfields water supply and the metropolitan water supply were run as separate departments—the Minister for Works administered both supplies under two different Acts of Parliament but he had a distinct staff and a separate secretary for each concern—the agricultural and town water supplies and land drainage were administered by the Public Works Department as a separate concern, and the mines water supply was controlled by the Minister for Mines; therefore we had four different organisations dealing with the various water supplies which I have outlined. The number of persons employed by the Water Supply Department totals 1,200. I want to point out that the department has now become firmly established, and if the Bill is not passed, we will get into absolute confusion; there will be the additional expense of undoing what we have done, and it will be difficult to know exactly where we will end up as the result of such dislocation. As an evidence that we have been fairly active, the under-secretary of the amalgamated water supply departments was appointed in June, 1912, and by the 1st August the amalgamation was complete and was practically working smoothly at that time. Thus, hon. members will realise that we were fairly active in getting the department established, and consequently we have had a fair opportunity since its establishment to watch its operations and results, and these, in my opinion, have been satisfactory to the people and to the State. I admit that although a good deal has been done in

the way of organisation, a good deal more remains to be done. I am not prepared to admit that our organisation is complete by any means, but I do contend, and I will give figures to prove it, that we have improved matters to a very great extent even during the past twelve months.

Mr. Male: Has it made the working more economical?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, I will give figures to prove that. As Minister for the department I can see where more economies can be effected and where greater improvements can be made to give better results and greater efficiency to the people and where economies as far as the administration is concerned can be brought about. To show the economies effected to date, I may say that we have saved £1,400 in office rents, we have saved £1,000 in office expenses and we have abolished two senior positions. We abolished the position of Chief Engineer of the goldfields water supply, the occupant of which was drawing £800 a year, and we abolished the position of secretary of the metropolitan water supply, this officer was drawing £500 a year, making a total of £1,300 a year saved in respect of these two senior officers whose positions were abolished.

Mr. George: What has become of those two officers?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot say; they are not associated with the State Government departments to-day.

Mr. George: You passed them out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, they have gone right out. In regard to the permanent and temporary staff, inspectors, field officers, foremen, and such like we have effected a saving of £8,000 a year or up to date we have saved £11,700 by the amalgamation of these departments.

Mr. Male: That is in salaries.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In salaries, office expenses and rents. The financial results of last year in regard to the various undertakings will show that a great deal of close attention has been given to the separate undertakings although they have been amalgamated. The

gross income from the Goldfields water supply was £255,020, which was £12,000 more than during the previous year. The operating expenses ran into £88,245 which was £10,000 greater than in the previous year. This increased expenditure was due to the increased cost of the maintenance of the pipe line and generally the extension of the system of water supplies into the agricultural districts and into new mining fields. The interest and sinking fund paid was £197,877 being about £6,000 more than in the previous year. This increase in the interest and sinking fund is due to the increase in the capital cost of extensions laid down more particularly in the agricultural areas. The net result was a return of £31,100, which was about £4,000 greater than in the previous year. I want to point out that in regard to the goldfields supply the 30-inch main is to-day occasioning serious concern among all who are interested in the scheme. The pipes are decaying to a very great extent, some as a result of internal corrosion and others are decaying from the outside. As a result, we have to be constantly on the alert, and I must say that the matter is causing the Government a very great deal of concern indeed, and if it were not for the enthusiasm of the officers and the sacrifices which the officers are making, we would be in a serious position. The Government are sparing no effort to overcome the difficulty and I must pay a tribute to the officers who are trying to cope with the serious condition of affairs. Realising that the pipe line was in a really dangerous condition, and that there was a danger that the people on the goldfields might run short of water through a breakage in the main, the Government decided to put down in Kalgoorlie a ten-million gallon storage reservoir which involved a cost of £26,000, so that if there was a break down, we would know that a certain amount of water was conserved in that city to keep the people going until the breakage could be repaired. In order to assist in overcoming the difficulty we are also calling for tenders for a supply of pipes. I regret to say that the previous Governments absolutely depleted the stock

of pipes and made no effort at all to get another supply in hand, and the result is that to-day we have practically no pipes in hand, but we are calling for tenders to secure supplies, a course which it is necessary for us to adopt to enable us to deal with breakages through corrosion when they occur.

Mr. Male: You have had nearly two years in which to get them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Tenders have been called for them.

Mr. Male: But why reflect on past Governments?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The difficulty has been that past Governments got right down to the very last pipe and while it is true that we might have got another contract out three or six months earlier, we were delayed in doing so because of the difficulty in ascertaining where we could get the pipes. The pipes were formerly made in this State, but there is now no plant in Western Australia and we shall have to keep in touch with the pipe-manufacturing firms so that we can constantly draw small supplies from them to cope with the decaying pipes which are now in the main.

Mr. George: Is that the big main?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. George: Hoskings have all their plant in Sydney.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have overcome the difficulty, but there was some doubt as to whether we would be able to get them in Sydney or whether we would have to go further afield to obtain them.

Mr. George: Only two firms have the plant to make them, Hoskings and Ferguson.

Mr. Male: The reflection was quite unnecessary, was it not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The reflection was not quite unnecessary. I will go further and say definitely that previous Governments did not spend as much money in repairs and maintenance to the main as they should have done, and I will go even further and say that the surplus of the previous Government was made up by starving the maintenance not only of this concern, but of all concerns

throughout the length and breadth of the State. In the district represented by the hon. member, jetties were allowed to fall down, water supplies were in a deplorable condition, buildings were falling down through being eaten out by white ants, and so one could go on enumerating instances. Instead of going too far, I could say a great deal more, and if the hon. gentleman desires I will when the Estimates are being discussed, give some figures to show what the present Government have had to pay in consequence of the neglect of previous Governments having starved the maintenance. The maintenance of the Goldfields water scheme has been starved through previous Governments and previous Ministers not giving proper attention to it. We are paying £13,000 from revenue this year which is additional to the ordinary maintenance and to what previous Governments have been paying, and this is being done to overcome past neglect in regard to the maintenance of this pipe line. Then we have to spend an extra £5,000 to overcome the difficulty in connection with the corrosive influences that are at work in the pipes and more particularly in connection with the locomotives which use the water supply. When speaking on the Estimates this year, I will have an opportunity of dealing with the matter, and I will demonstrate to hon. members and to the country that the present Government have been called upon to draw from Consolidated Revenue a considerable amount of money to make up for the neglect of previous Governments in regard to the maintenance and repairs to this and various other Government undertakings.

Mr. Turvey: The engineers in charge were crying out about it.

The Premier: And right through the Government service.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As far as the present Government are concerned, we will not neglect the maintenance of this scheme. We realise exactly what it means to the community and to a number of industries in the State. We have to bear in mind that many towns between Perth and Kalgoorlie are absolutely dependent upon this scheme for their

daily water supply, because in all these towns there is no storage and the people have to trust to the pumps being kept going and the main being kept intact in order to get their daily supply. Therefore, we could never neglect the maintenance of a scheme of such magnitude, a scheme which so directly affects so many people in Western Australia. Again, our agricultural industry is dependent upon this scheme to a very great extent and the principal parts of our gold mining areas are entirely dependent upon the scheme. The Government take up this attitude, that while the scheme is a big drain on general revenue—it was last year, and it will be a bigger drain this year—in the interests of the State we must face it and make up the leeway and give the people an opportunity of having the water supply guaranteed to them without any danger of it being cut off at any time.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Before tea I was dealing with the special sum which the Government had to provide to keep the maintenance of the 30in. main up-to-date. I also pointed out that we have contributed £5,000 as a special measure to cope with the corrosive influences of the water. I point out these amounts that the Government have been compelled to provide on this year's Estimates to overcome these difficulties, so as to bring right home to hon. members the necessity there is for economy in connection with the administration of this big undertaking. In ordinary circumstances, when we meet with large difficulties of this description, and revenue has to provide the funds to overcome those difficulties, the usual thing in a trading concern is to increase the prices to compensate for this increased expenditure, but the Government have no desire to do that. They intend to effect all the economies that present themselves so as by economy to overcome the difficulties, rather than by increasing the price of water.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Is the population increasing?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Unfortunately the population is not increasing to any great extent in the large centres where most of the water is consumed. The Goldfields Water Supply provides the goldfields principally, and the mining consumption is, of course, the principal water that is sold. I want to point out that recently it was necessary to effect economies in Boulder, and the people there protested against the Government's action, but by maintaining our attitude we eventually convinced the people that these economies were possible, and were necessary in view of the conditions prevailing. We have devoted some attention to Coolgardie, and hon. members no doubt have read of the great amount of criticism levelled against myself in particular and the Government in general, for having effected economies in that town. Although it is a matter possibly of only a few hundred pounds per annum, still those few hundreds count, and by cutting down the cost throughout the scheme to the very lowest degree possible from an administrative point of view, we have the only way of overcoming the difficulty without increasing the burden of the people generally. Therefore, I do appeal to all members, particularly those who represent the districts served by the Goldfields Water Supply, and more particularly the goldfields members, to assist the Government in their efforts to overcome these difficulties. In regard to the metropolitan undertaking, the gross revenue for last year was £93,760, being an increase of £20,000 over the previous year. The operating expenses, including administrative costs, notwithstanding the large increase in the expansion of water supply and sewerage, increased by only £3,353, the total being £30,170 for the year.

Mr. Allen: A nice profit, is it not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will deal with that directly; unfortunately there was a loss. Interest and sinking fund amounted to £71,681, as against £28,917 in the previous year. This large increase, running into something like £40,000, is due to the fact that last year, for the first time, we charged up against the sewerage and storm water capital account the in-

terest and sinking fund on the loan expenditure that had been incurred in installing the storm water branch of the sewerage. There has also been a considerable increase in the capital account of the water supply. For instance, there has been a large reservoir, 10,000,000 gallon capacity, erected at Mount Eliza to overcome the difficulties that were presenting themselves when the present Government took office in regard to the supply of water to the people of the metropolitan area. In connection with the charging of the interest and sinking fund account up against the undertakings, that is the sewerage and storm water drainage, there was absolutely no justification for delaying any further the charging up of those costs against the capital expenditure, because the storm water branch is practically in full operation, that is so far as the Government are concerned. The subsidiary drainage has to be carried out by the local bodies, and if there is any deficiency in that regard it is for those local bodies to attend to it. I would like to point out, in regard to this capital expenditure, that the money has been raised by various Governments and general revenue has been paying the interest and sinking fund charges up to last year. We have added the interest and sinking fund charges that had been provided by general revenue up against the capital cost, so that these undertakings now carry the full responsibility with regard to capital expenditure, and the increased interest and sinking fund charges that are paid on the increased capital now, as represented by the interest and sinking fund which had been met out of Consolidated Revenue previously, will eventually recoup the State for the amount the State has paid. In regard to sewerage it is interesting to know that the number of houses comprised in the scheme as we know it to-day, and that can be connected, is 12,830. Of that number 9,580 are capable of being served or connected to the scheme as completed. Practically 4,000 houses have been connected already. This number, of course, is few compared with the 9,580 that could have been connected had the matter been taken up previously, but

the 4,000 already connected have been carried out practically by the present Government. Very few connections indeed had been made prior to the Scaddan Government taking control. I want to emphasise the fact that practically the whole of these house connections have been made on the deferred payment system, and it is just a question as to whether we are justified in saddling the State with the responsibility of the whole of these house connections. It was never intended by Parliament, when it made the provision in the Bill that was passed, that the whole of these house connections were going to become a burden on the State. The object of making the provision for deferred payment was to meet cases where people in poor circumstances owned their own properties, and were unable to finance in one lump sum the cost of connection. But we find, so far as Perth is concerned, that practically the whole of the people have taken advantage of the deferred payment system, and I do not think it is a fair tax on the moneys of the State. As a large number of people in the metropolitan area are in circumstances that would permit them to undertake the expenditure themselves, I consider that it is unfair for them to draw upon the money of the Government to assist them. The money that we have should be utilised for the general development of the State, and I think an undue percentage of the people in the metropolitan area are taking advantage of this provision in the Bill. I propose, therefore, to make a recommendation to the Government that we take action to compel those people who are in a position to do it, to make the sewerage connection themselves without coming to the Government. I may point out that provision is made in the Bill for the money to be provided on these deferred payments at the rate of five per cent., and I think it is due to the small rate of interest charged, in comparison with the cost of money at the present time, that these people are taking advantage of the deferred payments. But I would point out that the conditions to-day, as far as the Government are concerned, are different from those prevailing when the Act was passed, and I think we

would be justified in asking Parliament to increase the interest on that money, as money to-day is costing us more than five per cent. taking everything into consideration. There is some justification for the Government to complain in this regard. In Sydney, where provision is made for deferred payments, only 10 per cent. of the people take advantage of the provision. In Western Australia 90 per cent. take advantage of it. In Sydney they have to pay the amount in instalments within three years, whereas in Western Australia they have six years in which to pay the money, so altogether our terms are very liberal indeed, but, although they are liberal, it was never intended that 90 per cent. of the people should take advantage of the provision.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. Lander: You could not make a distinction, could you?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, it would be possible to make a distinction. I do not think it is fair to allow people in circumstances sufficiently good to enable them to incur the expenditure themselves, to come along and ask the Government to carry the burden for them, even though it is only of a temporary character. I want also to emphasise the point that there is no intention, and nothing has been done, to penalise the metropolitan area so far as the amalgamation of these water supplies is concerned. Previously for a number of years past it has been the practice to charge large sums for depreciation, in addition to the sinking fund that must be provided under our Loan Act. For instance, in the year 1909-10 £9,447 was charged up to depreciation. In the year 1910-11 the amount of £11,219 was charged up for depreciation. This applies to water supplies, as the sewerage and storm water drains were not then under the control of the Water Works administration. During last year this has been discontinued, because we took up the attitude that it was unfair to charge up this large amount for depreciation and place the sole burden of the capital cost on the shoulders of the present people. It is a fair thing

provided we keep maintenance right and pay a one per cent. sinking fund, that that is all the present people should be called upon to pay, and that the sinking fund should go on and redeem the whole of the capital cost within a reasonable time, as anticipated when the money was raised. This depreciation fund has been built up on the proportion of an amount of profit being made out of the water supplies for the various years. Instead of giving a balance sheet showing the profits each year, this amount has been charged up for depreciation, and consequently perpetuating the conditions then prevailing, and enabling the administration to take up the attitude that there was no profit in the concern, and that the small tubes which created the difficulty in the way of getting an adequate supply of water had to continue. Before abolishing this depreciation fund, I went into it carefully with the engineers and the expert officers, and they assured me that the amount of money paid in the maintenance of the scheme, and the one per cent. sinking fund were ample, without creating this special fund, known as the depreciation fund. Again, I may point out that by the amalgamation we have been able to concentrate all the officers in one building. I have already pointed out that a fair amount of money has been saved in office rents, and this has been made possible by the fact that we have taken the original buildings in Wellington Street, occupied formerly by the Water Works Board, and concentrated the officers in Government buildings in James-street. Then, of course, the Mines Water Supply and other branches of the water supply departments have all been taken from their several buildings where they were paying rents, and concentrated them in the one building. By using the metropolitan water supply offices, which were built out of capital raised to supply the people of Perth with water, we have credited the scheme with an amount of £1,200 as rent that the other department will have to pay to the Perth fund for the use of that building, and as a set-off we are charging the Metropolitan Water Supply Department £500 for their share of the building, where we now have the whole thing concentrated. In other

words, the Water Supply Department is credited with £700 per annum for the use of a building that was originally erected out of their funds. The net result of the operations of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Department last year was a deficiency of £8,090, as against a profit the year before of £12,592. As I have stated, interest and sinking fund have been charged up on the full capital account as expended up to date on the sewerage and storm water drainage and water supply. While there has been a profit on the water supply, there has been more than a compensating loss of course on the sewerage and storm water drainage, with the result that we shall actually lose on the year's operations, as I have already stated, to the extent of £8,090. This of course will gradually but surely be overcome, for the reason that as house connections go on we gradually bring them in, and they start paying rates with the result that we shall get a bigger return on the sewerage expenditure. Then, of course, we shall get increased rates as the population becomes larger, and as buildings go up, from our storm water capital expenditure, with the result that I am confident that while this year we will carry forward a loss and it may go on for a year or two, ultimately we shall overcome it and pay off the deficiency, and then gradually and surely get the concern on a paying basis, so that Perth will then be carrying the full burden. As we go on and the population increases, we will be able, I hope, to make sufficient profit to justify a reduction in the cost, so that we do not anticipate that there will be any need to increase the burden placed on the people of Perth, but by amalgamation and economy we shall get it down until we can see the possibility of making some reduction. In regard to other undertakings, these were principally town water supplies, which as I have stated, were mainly controlled previously by the Public Works Department and they were financed and controlled under Treasury regulations. It is not proposed to interfere with those other than that we have now under the Bill to get out a balance

sheet of all the large water supplies in the various parts of the State. For instance, we have Geraldton in hand, and next summer that town will be reticulated and a rate will be struck. In regard to Geraldton, it will be our duty under the Act as it now stands, and as it will be perpetuated under this Bill, to get out a balance sheet purely for Geraldton, and we shall thus let the people there know exactly the result of the operations of this scheme. The same thing will apply to Pingelly, Albany, and Narrogin, and all other places where we are controlling water supplies under the amalgamated system. I want just to say that a good deal of energy is being devoted towards bringing those water supplies and other hydraulic concerns that have been operated by boards, up to a better standard of administration. There were quite a number of water supplies controlled by boards when the Scaddan Government took office, which were seriously in arrears. The method of administration was open to serious question, but an energetic effort was made to put them on a proper basis and to try and get those boards to realise their responsibility to the State in the shape of paying interest and sinking fund on the capital cost of the works. I do not want to mention any particular place, but there are two or three places where they took up the attitude that as the State supplied the funds, therefore the State would have to carry the burden of the interest and sinking fund charges. In a number of cases the State had been carrying that burden, but we have been able to put some of the boards on a better basis, with the result that they are now paying interest and sinking fund charges and meeting their administrative costs. There are one or two which are not carrying the full burden, but I hope in the near future to be able to get them also on a proper business footing, and when the balance sheets are issued they will show better results, and demonstrate that all these bodies are carrying the full burden of the interest and sinking fund instead of, as was the case formerly, placing it on the shoulders of the people of the State. While that was so in the case of water supplies, it was more generally

the case in regard to drainage. As a matter of fact with the exception of one or two places, there was absolutely no effort made to compel these people to carry the responsibility of the capital expenditure. Drainage works had been undertaken previously on the distinct understanding, after consulting the people, that if certain works were carried out, to cost certain amounts, the people would pay a rate sufficient to cover interest and sinking fund, but after the works were completed they absolutely neglected to form their board, with the result that no rate was struck and the general taxpayer had to provide interest and sinking fund on the capital which had been expended. We have overcome that difficulty in many places. It has not been an easy task, because some have absolutely declined, although they promised that they would strike a rate. A number took up the attitude that the works were not carried out as they were wanted, while others raised all sorts of arguments concerning details, and in this way they were able to evade the responsibility regarding payment. In some cases where they were absolutely determined not to pay, we superseded the boards and the department are now controlling the districts and are striking a rate, and, after we get the whole thing on a proper business basis and educate the people to the fact that they have to pay, we will endeavour to get boards formed so as to have the concerns locally controlled. So far as drainage is concerned, the capital cost has not been great in any particular district, but when we calculate the total number of drainage schemes undertaken it means a fairly large sum, a sum which is out of all proportion to the amount that the general taxpayer should pay towards undertakings of that description. I do not think there is any need for me to enter into further details in regard to the administration of this department during the last twelve months. I have gone into figures more extensively than I intended to do, and also into the operations of the department, in order to convince hon. members that this effort on the part of the Scaddan Government has been of benefit to the people and certainly in the best

interests of the State. We have not increased the burden to any great extent, other than to make the people carry the burden they promised to do before the works were undertaken. Then I claim that the result has given greater efficiency. I am prepared to leave that to hon. members. Credit must be given to the Water Supply Department for having devoted greater attention to water supplies during the past twelve months than has ever been done before. The general result has been better, and I can claim for the department that greater economy in the general administration has been shown. Therefore it is with confidence that I appeal to hon. members to carry this measure, which will perpetuate the Act passed last session, and which is now known as the principal Act. I trust that when this small measure goes before another place members there will recognise that the work of the present Government in amalgamating the whole of the water supplies is worthy of being continued, and that by passing this Bill we take on the responsibility exactly as we do in regard to other trading concerns of presenting a true commercial balance sheet so that the people may know how the affairs have been operated and know exactly how one is paying in comparison with every other. Our desire is to work the department on economical lines, not to make a profit, but to make it pay its way, and make each concern carry its own burden and not transfer that burden to the shoulders of the general taxpayers. I beg to move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. Mitchell debate adjourned.

BILL — FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister) in moving the second reading said: I wish to inform hon. members that the Bill has been brought down at the request of the Customs Department, and of the Federal Government. As far back as

1904 a request was first made by the Customs Department that the Fremantle Harbour Trust should give them a bond under the Customs Act in respect to all goods entered at the Fremantle harbour. At that time it was pointed out that all the goods entered at Fremantle and put into the sheds were under the control of the Customs officer—as a matter of fact he has the keys of the sheds—that no goods could be removed from the sheds unless the Customs officer was present, and that no goods were ever removed without an order from the Customs officer. It was pointed out to the Customs Department that it was unnecessary that a harbour trust which was a semi-Government department should enter into a bond on behalf of those who sent goods to the sheds. After some little time the question was again raised. It was found then that the Fremantle Harbour Trust had no power to enter into a bond, and that if a bond was entered into it would have to be on the personal security of the members of the Trust. The question has not been allowed to drop, from that time up to the present, and now we are again requested to enter into this bond, it being pointed out that unless we do so there may be a possibility of interdicting the wharves and sheds at Fremantle as places for the landing of goods. The Federal authorities have requested that this bond be lodged in accordance with Sections 42 and 43 of the Customs Act of 1901, which read as follow:—

42. The Customs shall have the right to require and take securities for compliance with this Act and generally for the protection of the revenue of the Customs, and pending the giving of the required security in relation to any goods subject to the control of the Customs may refuse to deliver the goods or to pass any entry relating thereto.

43. Where any security is required to be given such security may be by bond or guarantee or cash deposit or all or any of such methods so that in each case the security shall be approved by the Collector.

It is under these sections of the Customs Act that the Federal authorities require

a bond from the Fremantle Harbour Trust. Personally, I think that, seeing that the Harbour Trust is a Government department and that the bond would not be required if the Government were managing this department direct instead of through a trust, the Federal authorities could very well have left the matter alone. Seeing that the goods landed at Fremantle are placed under the charge of the Customs officers, and cannot be passed out of the shed without the order of the Customs officers, and having regard to the fact that the keys of the shed are kept by the Customs officers I think there is no fear whatever of the Customs Department losing anything at all, and, therefore, there is no real necessity for the bond they ask for. But it seems the Customs Department wish to be doubly sure, and so in the event of any improbable mischance they propose to put the responsibility on the Harbour Trust. The clause forming the subject matter of the Bill was included in the amending Bill of last year but, as hon. members are aware, that Bill did not pass. More recently representations have been made to us by the late Prime Minister, and also by the present Prime Minister, that immediate action should be taken in this direction. Seeing that the new Federal Government have only been in office a few weeks, it is clear that they look on this as a matter of urgency for they have already drawn attention to the advisability of our passing such a Bill without delay. There is virtually only one clause in the Bill, and it reads as follows:—

The commissioners may give, by bond or otherwise, such security as the Customs may require under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1901.

Unless the Bill is passed it will be impossible for the commissioners to give the bond in compliance with the Customs Act and with the wishes of the Federal Parliament. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. MALE (Kimberley): It seems to me that this is a very reasonable measure, If, as the Honorary Minister has said, under the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act

the members of the Trust have no power to enter into the bond which is required by the Federal authorities, then it is absolutely necessary for us to pass the Bill. With some little knowledge of these matters, I can say that this bond is required by the Customs authorities at every port in the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Except those managed by the Government.

Mr. MALE: And even there, as a rule, the Customs authorities get a bond from the agents of the steamers or some other responsible people. It seems to me passing strange that the Customs authorities have allowed this matter to go on so long without compelling the State Government to give that bond. Under the circumstances I think the Minister is quite justified in asking us to pass the Bill without delay.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): I do not wish to oppose the Bill. I suppose it is necessary, since the Honorary Minister says so. But I think that if the measure had been brought on a little earlier we might have taken the opportunity afforded of discussing the concerns of the Fremantle Harbour Trust. I do not wish to worry the Honorary Minister, but I notice that whenever he brings down a Bill he says it is only a little one, that there is no harm in it, and that if we pass it at once we will be doing the right thing. I would like to discuss under this measure the harbour dues and charges, and some other matters in connection with the harbour generally. However, the Minister is so good-natured, and so clearly desirous to get the Bill through without delay that I will forego the opportunity. When the Estimates come down we shall have an opportunity of doing what I think it is, to some extent, our duty to do to-night in connection with the work of the Fremantle Harbour Trust.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the Honorary Minister tell me whether this Bill involves any charge whatever upon Consolidated Revenue?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): No, this is to come entirely from the Harbour Trust, under their Act.

Mr. SPEAKER: What would happen in case the Harbour Trust defaulted on this bond?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): The Harbour Trust meet all obligations under a special Act.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Security to Customs:

Mr. GEORGE: Was the clause sufficiently wide to empower the Minister to give any security that might be needed owing to the transfer of the State steamship service to the management of the Fremantle Harbour Trust?

The Premier: What has this to do with the Bill?

Mr. GEORGE: If the clause were not sufficiently wide for the purpose mentioned, this was an opportune time to introduce a further clause. He understood the State steamers were to be handed over to the Fremantle Harbour Trust without any reference to Parliament.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If the hon. member had been in his place during the second reading he would have understood the real object of the clause. If any additional powers were required in relation to State steamers it was hoped the hon. member would give his support to the securing of such powers.

Mr. GEORGE: This would certainly be an opportune time to insert a clause providing for the transfer.

The Premier: A premature time.

Mr. GEORGE: It was scarcely premature, because it was understood that the transference of the steamers had been effected as far back as Tuesday last.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The clause provided all that was necessary under the Federal Customs Act.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 8.15 p.m.