

Hon. G. Taylor: Such men may be working for themselves.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If that sort of thing is allowed to go on without any regulation, the whole industry will be brought down to that level. This paragraph does not prevent people from setting up in business.

Mr. MANN: This applies only to three small bakers in the city. One has a shop in William-street. For two or three years he has defied the master bakers, and sold his bread at 1d. a large loaf cheaper than the other bakers. Every miller refused to supply him and his credit was stopped. He then paid cash for his flour and his supplies were stopped. He has now had to resort to other tactics. He is supplying bread to a working class district at the cheaper price. There are two other shops in Beaufort-street doing a similar business. These bakers have refused to raise the price of their bread. The secretary of the Master Bakers' Association appeared at the court with the secretary of the bakers' union, and both endeavoured to induce the president to put a stop to this.

The Minister for Works: With the object of preventing night baking.

Mr. MANN: This clause will play into the hands of the master bakers and bread may go to any price. Small men will have no chance of carrying on their business. The little infringements, if any, should not be considered in comparison with the fact that for the last two years these men have been supplying bread cheaper than the master bakers. If they are to start only when the operatives start, they will not be able to deliver bread.

The Minister for Works: You were speaking in the singular, and the man you mentioned does not deliver any bread.

Mr. MANN: He sells over the counter, and at the kerbstone market, and delivers to certain shops.

The Minister for Works: He does not deliver any bread. I am going by the evidence he gave before the Royal Commission the other day. Anyhow, what has this got to do with the clause?

Mr. MANN: If the clause is put into operation, that man and others like him, will be put out of business.

Mr. DAVY: I suggest that the Minister and others are getting a little myopic. They cannot see anyone but the employer on the

one hand and the employee on the other. That perhaps is natural. To their surprise and annoyance they now find that somebody who is neither an employee nor an employer is competing. They become indignant, as also do the employers. Everybody calls competition with himself "unfair competition." However, competition is the only thing that keeps prices within reason. People of independent character who do not want to be either employees or employers are one of the chief safeguards against those trusts and combines at which hon. members opposite are constantly railing. In passing this clause hon. members opposite would be doing a bad turn to the people whom they claim to represent solely—the poor people who should be protected from exploitation.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.45 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 16th September, 1925.

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

QUESTION—WATER CONSERVATION.

Norseman, Esperance, Scaddan.

Hon. J. E. DODD asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Do the Government intend to provide means for water conservation in the Norseman-Esperance district before the end of the winter rains? 2, Is an early start to be made on the construction of a reservoir at Scaddan?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, A survey party is in the district investigating for conservation works which could not be constructed in time to catch this season's rains. 2, The question of the construction of a reservoir at Scaddan is receiving consideration.

BILL—MAIN ROADS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. E. DODD (South) [4.36]: Having received a number of communications from local authorities in the province I represent asking me to oppose this Bill, I wish to make my position clear. I shall support a reference of the Bill to a select committee. I do not think that it is impossible to make the measure more acceptable than it is at present, and therefore the course of referring it to a select committee is, in my opinion, the best that can be adopted. I am entirely opposed to the board proposed in the Bill. There is just one point I wish to make, and that is as regards the construction of roads from revenue instead of loan. I appreciate the Government's action in trying to construct roads out of revenue instead of out of loan. In my opinion, the Government are to be commended for their attitude.

HON. H. A. STEPHENSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.37]: Many members have spoken to the Bill, and have raked it fore and aft. I am opposed to the measure in its present form. It seems to me a Bill something after the style of Paddy's gun, wanting a new lock, stock, and barrel. However, the time is ripe for a roads Bill—I do not know why the measure should be called a Main Roads Bill. Certainly we want an Act dealing with the roads of this State, but unless we are prepared to embark on a bold policy of road making we are not likely to get very far. At the present juncture it would take several millions sterling to place our main roads in proper order. The revenue to be provided under the Bill is altogether too small, and in fact would be almost useless for the purpose. I am totally opposed to the board suggested in the Bill. If the board were

created, it would resolve itself into nothing but a glorified Public Works Department board. I favour a board somewhat on the Victorian lines, with statutory powers to borrow money and make roads and bridges entirely free from political control or influence. The £190,000 per annum contemplated by this Bill, if spread over the whole of Western Australia, would mean very little advance and would get us nowhere: we should be no better off under that scheme than we are to-day. Western Australia is unfortunate in not having good material for road making, and therefore roads here are expensive, especially from the aspect of maintenance. Most of our road making materials, such as limestone and gravel, are not lasting. In that respect we are at a great disadvantage as compared with other States. Victoria and Tasmania have enormous quantities of basaltic rock, which can be crushed into road material lasting twice as long as the material we have at hand. Therefore the upkeep of our roads must be considerably more costly. I regard developmental roads as of much greater importance than main roads. Developmental roads are absolutely essential, because we cannot have successful development in the absence of good roads for the man on the land to get his produce to market. It is most disheartening for a farmer to work 12 months getting a crop in and getting it off, and then to find that it is almost impossible to cart over the roads. That sort of thing certainly retards progress. With regard to main roads, various members have pointed out that the railways run parallel with those roads thus assisting to a great extent. It is, however, indispensable that money should be spent on developmental roads. The amount proposed by the Bill being utterly inadequate, I advocate the creation of a board with statutory powers to borrow money and make roads and keep them in order. I shall not discuss the matter at length, because with one exception members who have spoken on the Bill have expressed themselves against it, the exception being Mr. Brown. I should like to quote from a speech delivered by the Minister for Works at the Road Boards Conference held in Perth during August of last year. Mr. McCallum said—

I am very pleased indeed to have the opportunity of addressing this Conference. I assure you that I thoroughly appreciate the work which has been done throughout this

country by the local governing authorities. During the short period I have had the responsibility of Ministerial office, I have tried, with the limited time at my disposal, to get into touch with as many of the road boards as possible, to visit them and to understand their viewpoints and discuss their difficulties. I hope, instead of being bombarded with correspondence, to be able to continue that course. I want to meet you on the spot and discuss problems with you. I want, as far as possible, to develop local government control. I am not desirous of gathering into the hands of any central authority work that can be done more efficiently locally. I have been warned that if I do so, I am creating trouble for myself and that a monument of mistakes will be built up. Even if mistakes be made, however, the man on the spot knows better what is to be done than the man living hundreds of miles away. I propose, therefore, with all safeguards necessary in the interests of the public funds, to permit road boards to exercise as much local autonomy as I can possibly give them.

I do not think it necessary to read further. That extract shows what was in the Minister's mind 12 months ago. I ask members to compare those remarks with the present Bill. I support the suggestion that the Bill should be referred to a select committee. We should then be able to get something workable and in the interests of the State. Unless we can improve on the Bill before us we might just as well cut it out and remain as we are at present. I will support the second reading.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central—in reply) [4.46]: Some of the opposition to the Bill is not likely to appeal to a majority of members. Mr. Stewart quoted a letter from the Albany Municipal Council asking that the Bill should be thrown out, so that the council might retain the £500 or £600 per annum they collect as traffic fees. If the traffic fees collected by the Albany Municipal Council were fairly distributed, the council would not have £500 or £600 to spend within the municipality. Albany is a tourist resort, and a large number of the cars registered in Albany are hired and used largely on roads within the Albany road district. Those cars use that section of the Albany-Perth main road within the Albany road district, but it has never occurred to the municipality to assist the Albany Road Board to repair their roads. That statement is borne out by Mr. Burvill's speech. Also, they say they have no assurance as to what roads within the district of Albany would be considered main roads. Surely the mayor does not think the main

roads board would have any hesitation in recommending that at least one road to the town of Albany should be declared a main road? The system of pooling fees is in operation in the metropolitan area, and there appears to be a fair distribution. Out of the traffic fees fund the Perth municipality received last year £3,862, the Fremantle municipality £1,024, the Midland Junction municipality £964, the Guildford municipality £708, the Subiaco municipality £698, and the Claremont municipality £510. The distribution to the various local authorities is a recognition of the fact that heavy traffic passes through those municipalities. Mr. Stewart pointed out that in Victoria the main roads board has power to authorise local authorities to carry out work on main roads. Although in the Bill it is contemplated that the bulk of main road construction and repair shall be done by the board, yet power is given to the main roads board to permit local authorities to carry out the work. In Victoria the financial position of the shires enables them to employ qualified engineers. That is not so in this State; the financial position of the various local authorities is such that they are unable to do so. What is quite easy in Victoria is impossible for the local authorities in this State. In regard to the appropriation of large sums from loan for reconstruction and maintenance of roads, it must be borne in mind that in this State a considerable portion of the money available to the main roads board will have to be expended during the first few years on sections of main roads in order to keep them in repair. Those main roads have got into an awful condition, and instead of spending money on the construction of main roads, for many years to come, I am advised by the Public Works Department, it will be necessary to spend money on the repair of those roads. Permanent reconstruction work will necessarily be slow, and it would be unsound from a business standpoint to appropriate large sums of loan money for the mere purpose of repairing roads. In these circumstances hon. members will agree that revenue should be utilised to that end. Mr. Stewart criticised the class of work carried out by the department on the Armadale-road in the Gosnells district. A certain sum of money was provided by the Government for the purpose of providing work for the unem-

ployed. The road had been in a very bad state and it was substantially re-conditioned, but it was never contended by the professional officers that it was first-class work. If the road board had spent a reasonable sum of money on maintenance from the time the department relinquished control, the road would not have drifted into the condition in which it is to-day. The argument used in that respect is certainly an argument in favour of the Bill. Mr. Stewart mentioned the Bridgetown board, and said that if they came within the prescribed area their traffic fees would be taken away and the main roads board would have to maintain only 14 miles of main road. It is unreasonable to suggest that the £700 or £800 the Bridgetown board collects would be sufficient to keep 14 miles of road in good order under present-day conditions. It would be interesting to know how much the Bridgetown Road Board has actually spent in repairing that road. I am given to understand that very little money indeed has been spent on it. Mr. Stewart referred to the Katanning district and said their traffic fees amounted to £2,000. I am informed, on the basis of the return sent in by the Katanning board, that the amount collected last year was only £755, not £2,000 as stated by Mr. Stewart.

Hon. H. Stewart: I understand the figures given to me represented the anticipated new revenue.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Duffell is of opinion that the board should be free from political control and should have power to borrow money. Almost every department in the State is under political control, and every Minister has almost absolute power to spend the money placed at his disposal by Parliament. The Bill is asking nothing more than that. The proposal to give the board statutory powers to borrow and spend whatever they like would place them outside the power of Parliament. If a Minister commits himself in respect of public expenditure he is subject to the censure of Parliament; but under Mr. Duffell's proposal this board could snap their fingers at Parliament if they were removed from parliamentary control. In the second place, the Victorian Act gives country road boards no power to borrow money. The money is borrowed by the Government by the issue of stock or debentures, but the board itself has no power to borrow. Mr. Duffell also re-

ferred to the direct tax of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound on the unimproved value. I thought I had already explained that. Under the provision in the Main Roads Bill it was intended to have a flat rate of 2d. in the pound on the unimproved value—

Hon. J. Duffell: They have already imposed that.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes. 2d. on unimproved, and 1d. in the pound on improved land. The original intention was to have a flat rate of 2d. all round, but that was abandoned. The Bill was drafted when the Government proposed to have a flat rate of 2d. in the pound on all land. At present this provision is simply an excrescence; yet it is as well to leave it in the Bill, for it is possible that some future Treasurer may provide an amount equal to a $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound out of funds provided by land taxation. It is not likely to occur in the immediate future, but with prosperity and increased revenue no doubt some future Treasurer might agree to hand over the proceeds from the land tax to the extent of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: It is unusual to leave in a Bill what is admitted to be an excrescence.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It can be removed. However, it does not impose any tax. Mr. Duffell thought the tax on petrol could be evaded, that petrol could be brought in from the other States. Several speakers have said that the users of petrol could combine and import it; and so would pay no tax. That aspect of the case is not likely to cause any trouble. There are only four or five wholesalers in Western Australia, and they import petrol in shiploads for sale. It would not be possible for anyone introducing small quantities to compete with them in any shape or form, for the freight on small quantities of petrol would be four times as much as it is per ton on a shipload.

Hon. J. Duffell: Even then there would be a saving.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: The "Kangaroo" brings it down now from Singapore.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The "Kangaroo" is bringing it under a contract for one of the oil companies. Nobody could introduce petrol from the Eastern States at the same rate, or anything like it. An experiment in this direction was tried some

time ago by a certain association, but the scheme failed within a few months, for they could not possibly compete with the big companies operating here. Mr. Duffell feared that the petrol tax would be a tax on something imported, and that presumably it would be contrary to the Commonwealth Constitution. It is rather late in the day to raise that point. The provision in the Bill is for a license for the sale of petrol. Under the Licensing Act license fees are charged in respect of alcohol. Section 32 of the Licensing Act of 1922 reads as follows:—

(1) The fees hereinafter prescribed shall be payable in respect of licenses grantel, renewed, transferred, or removed under this Act. (2) Subject as hereinafter provided, the fees payable in respect of licenses authorising the sale of liquor shall be assessed at a percentage on the amount paid or payable for all liquor purchased for the licensed premises, or paid or payable by the licensee for liquor sold or supplied as hereinafter prescribed.

I understand that in at least one of the other States a similar provision also exists.

Hon. J. Nicholson: There may be no question about the licensing fee; the question is whether people can evade it by importing direct.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Duffell referred to the expenditure of traffic fees in the metropolitan area. All fees collected in the metropolitan area are pooled and are then distributed amongst the local governing authorities according to the chainage of main roads they have within their boundaries. When Mr. McCallum took over the administration of the Public Works Department, neither Gosnells nor the Armadale-Kelmscott road boards was within the metropolitan boundaries. He extended the boundaries of the metropolitan area to include these two boards and since then no less than £2,156 has been paid to the Gosnells road district and £2,989 to the Armadale-Kelmscott Road Board out of the traffic pool. The money from the fees fund is supposed to be expended on main roads, and that condition has been lived up to by other local authorities. It will be seen, therefore, that it is incorrect to infer that the Minister for Works has penalised these boards. As a matter of fact, they have benefited to the extent I have stated. It may be that Mr. Duffell is unaware of the conditions under which the Commonwealth grant is made

available. The Federal Act sets out that the money is to be expended on main developmental roads leading to new settlements. It strictly debars the expenditure of money on main roads, and any road running parallel with a railway is definitely ruled out; so that under both headings set out by the Commonwealth the road quoted by Mr. Duffell is debarred. The road work carried out with Federal and State funds in the South Fremantle electorate since the Main Roads Bill was introduced in another place last year was confined to the Fremantle-Armadale feeder road and represents 241½ chains of clearing, 395½ chains of forming, and 199 chains of metalling. Mr. Holmes is of opinion that under the Bill those districts that have not been brought under the operation of the measure will be deprived of any share of the Federal and State grants. This course is not proposed; it is intended that the main road board should in all cases control the fund in order that they may be able to advise the Minister as to how the money shall be judiciously expended. I was not too clear on that point, and I drew the attention of the Solicitor General to the matter and he drafted an amendment which I have here. It was my intention to place it on the Notice Paper, but seeing that it is the general desire that the Bill should be referred to a select committee, the matter can be considered by that body. From my reading of Clauses 28 and 29 I consider it is advisable that they should be made even clearer than they are now. Mr. Hamersley stated that £20,000 had been spent on the Gingin Brook-Moore River Road, and that only five miles of road had been completed. I am informed that the facts are that the amount spent was £22,152 and for that sum of money nine miles of road were completed. That information has been supplied to me by the Public Works Department.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Pretty expensive, was it not?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Kirwan raised the question that small users of petrol could arrange with large importers to ship a certain quantity for them, and he considered that by this means the Act could be evaded. I did not take a note of what the hon. member said, but I believe that is what he intended to convey. In the first place, the Government feel certain that the four or five oil companies

doing business in Western Australia would not lend themselves to such conduct; in the second place, they would have nothing to gain by allowing themselves to be made use of in this way. They are wholesale dealers, and such an arrangement would be contrary to the principles under which they work.

Hon. J. Duffell: Suppose they withdrew from operating in the State and the petrol then came from Victoria?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It would be too costly to bring it from Victoria.

Hon. J. Duffell: Oh, no!

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If it was sold it would have to pay the tax.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But the sale would be made in Victoria. Suppose I sent to Victoria and made the purchase there and not here.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The oil is not manufactured in Victoria. It has to go there by shipload and there would be increased cost if it were sent over here by another ship. It would not pay.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is the question; would it pay?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: An attempt might be made to bring it over, but it would result in failure. That aspect of the case has been thoroughly considered.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Can private users not import oil from Singapore?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, but the freight would be very high unless they chartered a ship. The oil comes here in ship loads and in that way low freight is charged. Contracts are made for 12 months and the rate is very low. If a man imported a thousand cases of petrol he would have to pay very high freight. It is quite true, as indicated by Mr. Kirwan, that the users of petrol outside proclaimed areas would pay the tax without getting any direct benefit. But there are no practical means of exempting them. Every effort has been made to devise means by which they could be exempted. A way out of the difficulty would be extra financial consideration by the Government in the matter of subsidies after an estimate had been made of their contributions to the main road fund per medium of petrol fees. I have no authority for stating that this would be done, but it is a view that might be taken. However, those outside proclaimed areas would have to pay petrol tax without getting any direct benefit. Mr. Harris and Mr. Holmes

are concerned about the extent of the operations of the Bill; they fear that the whole State will be proclaimed. I can assure them that neither the goldfields nor the North-West will be included. When I moved the second reading of the Bill I stated that it would apply only to the South-Western agricultural division and that neither the Murchison goldfield nor the eastern goldfields nor yet the North-West were in that division. The Bill might not even apply to the whole of the South-Western agricultural division.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Have you any objection to putting that into the Bill?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Bill will go to a select committee and that will be a matter that will engage their attention. Mr. Harris stated that the Kalgoorlie Council had to pay traffic fees on their steam roller. Section 10 of the Traffic Act, 1919, provides that no fee is to be paid for any vehicle, which would include a steam roller belonging to the Crown or any local authority or belonging to any fire brigades board. In any case the local authorities on the goldfields would retain the fee; they would simply be paying themselves, that is if they were exempted from the provisions of the Bill.

Hon. E. H. Harris: It is not provided that the whole of the fees collected will be kept by the local authorities.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The fees will be retained by the local authorities unless the particular area is brought within the range of the Bill.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You did not tell us that.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Well you know it now.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member knows the position well; he does not need to be told. Mr. Burvill wanted to know where a main road would end, whether it would end when it got to the borders of a municipality. A road will end where the board decides. The board will have full power to continue it into a municipality, and it will include any thoroughfare or highway that the public are entitled to use and it can go down to a jetty or a railway station. That is sufficiently comprehensive. Mr. Holmes said that we had collected land tax for the whole year and granted a rebate in freights for only two months. The rebate of freights was from the 1st May—three months, not two. The whole of the tax was not paid. Many assessments were

not issued until after the 1st July. I did not get mine until after that date and there must be hundreds of others who are in a similar position. Therefore, we did not get in the whole of the land tax before the 1st July. The Perth-Fremantle road has been reconstructed three times in 25 years, and on each occasion the work has been carried out from loan funds. If the Government had not undertaken to maintain that thoroughfare after the last reconstruction, out of traffic fees, it would be in an impassable condition to-day. Last year £4,500 was spent on maintenance work and the road is now in perfect condition. The traffic fees collected in the metropolitan area unfortunately, are not sufficient to keep the roads in good order. But what would be the position if the local authorities collected the whole of these fees and had been able to spend the money in any way they liked? Exclusive of the amount spent on the Perth-Fremantle road, £28,000 was last year handed over from traffic fees to 24 road boards and municipalities within the metropolitan area. What would have been the condition of the section of the Bunbury main road, between Armadale and Kelmscott if £3,000 had not been made available from this source? Similarly, there was £4,000 expended within the Fremantle road district on the Armadale road, £1,56 by the Melville Road Board for the portion of the South-Perth-Fremantle road within their district, and £795 by the South Perth Board for the same road. A sum of £2,300 was paid to the Greenmount Road Board for work on the York road and £3,900 was paid to the Perth Municipality and so on. It is safe to say that not 25 per cent. of the sums named would have been expended on the main roads had it not been that Parliament provided that the traffic fees collected within the metropolitan area should be earmarked for that purpose. The inevitable result would have been that the roads would be in a deplorable condition to-day. There is opposition to the Bill in certain quarters to-day and it is based upon the time honoured objection to taxation. Any measure that imposes taxation is unpopular, but this measure gives something in return for what it takes away. Local authorities have to give up traffic fees, but they get back the construction of developmental roads on a well regulated basis and the construction and maintenance of all main roads. They will be under no obligation to build or look

after main roads. Under the present system, developmental roads can receive little attention. The local authorities have not the funds necessary for that purpose. In addition to that, main roads can receive practically no attention at all. And who will pay the taxes under the new order proposed? It will be the users of the roads, the owners of vehicles that damage the road. The payment will be in proportion to their capacity for destruction.

Hon. J. Duffell: Only 10 per cent. of the population would pay that.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The main roads board would give the public better roads; it would facilitate travel and reduce depreciation on vehicles. If no Bill be passed, and if there be no well ordered system established in its place, what will be the result? The roads will deteriorate from bad to worse and in the course of time it will be dangerous to travel over them.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

As to Committee Stage.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move—

That the consideration of the Bill in Committee be made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

Referred to Select Committee.

Hon. H. STEWART: I move an amendment—

That the Bill be referred to a select committee consisting of Messrs. Willmott, Gray, Seddon, Stephenson, Holmes, Macfarlane, and the mover; and that such committee have power to call for persons, papers, and records; to move from place to place, and to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned; that four shall form a quorum; and that the committee shall report on Tuesday, 17th November next.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I second the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH.

Second Reading.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [5.22] in moving the second reading said: Even the most casual observer cannot fail to recognise that if something be not done to end the difficulty,

the congestion of traffic in the City of Perth will soon reach an alarming state. The enormous increase in the number of motor cars and motor lorries during recent years, added to the fact that a number of the streets are so narrow, is responsible for this condition of affairs. Under the Municipal Corporations Act the Perth City Council is greatly limited as regards its power to cope with the position, and to remedy the defects that exist. It certainly has authority to purchase the actual land that is required for street widening or under any extension scheme, but it cannot purchase any adjacent land so as to provide new frontages on the widened or extended street. Further, the council has no power to declare a new building line for narrow streets such as Hay-street, to which any buildings to be erected in future shall conform. Nor is there power given to the council to colonnade a narrow street in the manner that is adopted in many Continental cities by making the footpaths under the existing buildings and setting aside all the space formerly occupied by footways to the use of vehicular traffic, thus providing a greater effective width of street. All these powers are possessed by most up-to-date cities, and it is proposed to confer them on the Perth City Council. It is interesting to state some of the works the City Council has in contemplation with a view to bringing about the results desired. There is under consideration the widening of George-street from St. George's-terrace to Hay-street; the widening of Adelaide-terrace from Victoria-avenue to the Causeway; and the widening of Wellington-street from Plain-street to Thomas-street. These proposals will provide two main traffic arteries from east to west, and it is suggested that if they are put into operation the tram lines might be transferred to those streets, thus leaving the narrower Hay and Murray-streets free for ordinary traffic. The extensions at present in mind include Stirling-street north to Walcott-street and south to Wellington-street, and also Forrest-place through to St. George's-terrace. When these improvements have been effected a largely increased inlet and outlet for traffic will have been provided. There has been much discussion within the past 12 months in regard to the necessity for widening Hay-street, and it will be noted from what has already been said that the view of the Perth City Council is that with the removal of the trams, this street might be allowed to remain without being widened

for the present. At the same time, in the view of many people it will be imperative in any case to take steps to widen this street at no distant date. It is probable that if this be done, advantage will be taken of the building line and the colonnading powers contained in the Bill. Under the building line proposal, new buildings, as they are erected would have to be set back to the new building alignment, and it will be seen that it would therefore take 20 or 30 years for the street to be widened throughout its length. The objective of a widened street could, however, be achieved much earlier by colonnading buildings that are not likely to be demolished within a reasonable period. To carry out this scheme means that a large amount of money will have to be raised by way of loan. Under the Municipal Corporations Act, the borrowing powers of the City Council are restricted to ten times the average ordinary income of the council for the previous two years. But all the money that can be raised under that Act will be needed for the ordinary works of the municipality. Hence the necessity for providing in the Bill special and largely increased authority to borrow for the purpose set forth. It would be a great power to place in the hands of any small body were it not that an adequate safeguard is provided. The money cannot be borrowed except with the permission of the property owners concerned. As the Title of the Bill indicates, there is another provision to which I wish to draw attention. It is an amendment of Section 217 of the Municipal Corporations Act. The Perth City Council bought new offices in Murray-street, and in order to complete the payment, issued mortgage debentures. It was later found that the City Council had no power to register such a mortgage. There is a clause in the Bill that will legalise the action of the municipality and enable the necessary registration to be effected. The amendment gives no power to raise money by mortgage for schemes of the character outlined in the Bill. It is a pity that the Perth City Council did not widen and extend its streets many years ago when the value of property was much less than it is to-day; but it is useless to bewail that oversight. The wise course is to take action now before land values soar to a much greater height. Every day of delay will increase the burden which sooner or later must be placed on the city of Perth.

The property owners will have the final say as to whether the proposals of the corporation shall be accepted or not. Clause 2 gives the City Council power to acquire land for the purpose of opening, extending, diverting, altering or increasing the width of any streets or footways, and enables the council to take land on either side or on both sides of the proposed new street for any depth the council think fit. At present the City Council have power to purchase only the land required for the laying out of the street. I wish members to consider the point that the scheme would not be a financial one for the Council to undertake unless they had power to purchase adjacent land in order to provide the frontages to new streets and thus enable the ratepayers in part to recoup themselves for the large expenditure that will be incurred. Furthermore, it is necessary to enable the Council to re-subdivide the property and provide an orderly lay-out to the new street. Clause 3 will permit the Council, after acquiring any land for the carrying out of the scheme, to demolish or repair any building, to erect new buildings, or to sell or lease any portion of the land. I have already explained that this power is necessary if the City Council are to benefit in some way by their acquisitions with the object of assisting the financial side of the project. Clause 4 gives the power to colonnade, that is to construct footpaths under existing buildings and allow the space now occupied by footpaths to be used for vehicular traffic. It also gives the power of purchase and resumption of any land required for the purposes of the Act. It provides that any question as to the amount of compensation to be paid shall be determined by arbitration under the Arbitration Act of 1895, that is if the parties cannot agree upon some other method of deciding the question. Clause 5 furnishes the authority to prescribe new building lines. No owner will be allowed to erect any new building or repair one already erected upon land between the old alignment and the new, except in the case of minor repairs for which he must first have the approval of the building surveyor. The land lying between the old and the new alignments will be the property of the City Council, but compensation must be paid to the owner, who can always take advantage of the provisions of the Arbitration Act if there is a dispute as to the amount of com-

pensation. Clause 6 includes in the Bill all the works that the Council have power to carry out with borrowed money under Section 438 of the principal Act. Clause 7 gives, with the consent of the Governor, power to borrow in excess of those powers provided for in the Municipal Corporations Act, but all the other provisions relating to loans contained in the principal Act apply. These are supplementary powers. For instance, the City Council, before embarking on any scheme under this measure, will be required to give notice of their intention by advertisement in the "Government Gazette" and some newspaper not less than one month before the proposition is adopted, and any 20 owners of rateable land within the municipal district may demand that the question be submitted to a vote of the ratepayers. Clause 8 amends paragraph (a) of Section 217 of the principal Act. The effect of the amendment is that the Council may mortgage any land purchased to secure to the vendor payment of the purchase money and interest. The amendment is retrospective to the date of the commencement of the principal Act. The object of this is to validate the Murray-street office transaction to which I have already referred, but by the proviso the amendment does not apply to any land acquired for the purpose of this Act or to the purchase of land by the Council of any municipality for streets or public places. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [5.38]: As a representative of the metropolitan province I welcome the introduction of this Bill. For many years the City Council have knocked at the door of successive Governments seeking power such as is contained in this measure, but for some reason or other no measure was introduced, excuses having been made that this was due to pressure of other legislation. The present Government must certainly be congratulated upon having brought forward this Bill making it possible for the city to attempt to carry out the works that are so essential for the development and progress of the capital. Other cities throughout the Empire provide instances of municipalities having been compelled to carry out extensive works of reclamation and improvement. In the old land it has been customary to

carry out such works through improvement trusts, and the works of reclamation are noted for their excellence. It was in 1900 that the first earnest and emphatic appeal issued to the public was made by the then mayor seeking re-election for legislative power to widen Hay-street and other main arteries of the city. That man foresaw that Perth would develop into a city vastly more important than it was at that time. Yet during the intervening 25 years nothing has been done apart from the efforts of the City Council year in and year out to obtain powers such as are contained in this Bill. The safeguards provided in the measure are such as will protect the whole body of ratepayers. Clause 4 gives power to colonnade, and I wonder whether the City Council will find that as efficacious and beneficial as other means of widening thoroughfares, whether the streets should be widened back to the building line or whether some reservation should be made. Paragraph (c) of Clause 4 provides—

Such purchase or resumption may be carried out on conditions reserving to the owners of the land resumed any of the following rights, that is to say:—(i.) Rights to the continued possession, use and occupation of any existing cellar or rooms below the level of the new footways; (ii.) Rights to the continued possession, use and occupation of existing buildings above such footways; (iii.) Rights of erecting, possessing, using and occupying buildings above such footway.

It can readily be seen that the council, in carrying out the work of widening thoroughfares, will be put to great expense. In the years that have elapsed since efforts were first made to widen our thoroughfares, the value of land has increased considerably, and it will continue to increase more and more as the years go on and the State grows in importance. No doubt the City Council will recognise that they might be able, through the possession of these powers, to carry out the work of widening streets at less cost than would be the case if they went right back to the building line. It is, however, a matter for them to determine whether colonnading is the best method for dealing with the matter or not. I believe the principle has been introduced in some cities with very good effect, though I do not know what the results have been. The safeguards contained in the principal Act are maintained in the Bill, and, I understand, nothing is altered in this respect. The Minister has

pointed out that before the ratepayers can be put to any expense upon these works, the City Council must publish their intention to undertake the expenditure. The required notice will have to be given so that these works may be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Act. If the ratepayers think a poll should be demanded, they have the right reserved to them to call for a poll. These works will not be carried out other than under the protection afforded by the measure. There is a vast difference between the position of a capital city and the other centres of the State. It is time such a Bill as this came before the House. I trust it will not be too late, having regard to the advancement of the State and of the capital city as well as the other centres in Western Australia, for this work to be carried out at the lowest possible cost. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

HON. J. M. MACFARLANE (Metropolitan) [5.47]: I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill and in congratulating the Government upon bringing it down. It should have the effect of affording relief to the City Council from the difficulties they have contended with for many years with regard to the widening of streets, the resumption of land for the purpose of widening streets, and the erection of new premises. It would have been better if the Bill had been taken in hand many years ago. I wish to exonerate past city councils from any blame that may be attached to them. An effort was made to secure the passing of similar legislation, and a City Bill was presented to another place some two sessions ago. At all events, it was just about to be introduced when it was withdrawn owing to the feeling that there was some hostility towards it, and that it would not be returned in a form that would be acceptable to the City Council. The Bill now before us has made a timely appearance. I hope it will be passed through expeditiously, so that the civic authorities may be able to take the necessary steps to improve the city, particularly with regard to the extension of Forrest-place. One or two buildings are now in course of erection in the alignment of the proposed new street, and immediate action is necessary to prevent further expense being incurred. If the Bill becomes law very shortly, expense will

be saved to both parties, as well as to the ratepayers. I understand why the City Council are asking for power to colonnade as well as to widen the streets. The colonnading applies particularly to Hay-street. In the centre of the city many of the buildings are almost new. If the City Council possessed only powers to widen the streets they would be faced with very great expense, because of the necessity for pulling down portions of the buildings. If a building line could be declared, and colonnading could be enforced, the city would derive nearly the same advantage, but at less expense, as it would derive from the widening of the street. The ultimate intention to widen Hay-street from Melbourne-road to Thomas street will be a comparatively easy matter, but to widen it between Melbourne-road and Pier-street or Irwin-street would be a very costly matter. The system of colonnading would certainly be a very much cheaper way of dealing with the project. It would inconvenience owners of land only to the extent of their giving away a certain amount of footpath. They would still have their cellars, where these are in existence, and the portions of their buildings overhanging the footpath. The latter I do not like, but as an expedient it should be acceptable. When landowners have been building from time to time they have been asked by the City Council to set back their frontages, so that the footpaths may be widened and may accommodate more pedestrian traffic, and at the same time relieve the vehicular traffic. In very few instances, however, have the city authorities succeeded in this matter. Where they have been successful landowners have benefited to a large extent because of the better display; they have been able to make in the front portions of their buildings. I trust the House will not dwell upon the consideration of this Bill, and that it will be passed into law at the earliest moment. With as little delay as possible the City Council ought to be able to advise owners of buildings that are now going up along the line of the proposed extension of Forrest-place, so that the work now being carried on may be suspended and extra expense avoided. The same thing applies to other places where improvements are now going on.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £1,232,000.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 5.55 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 16th September, 1925.

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

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL LIME.

Sheep Mortality.

Mr. BROWN (for Mr. C. P. Wansbrough) asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, In connection with the inquiry now proceeding into sheep mortality in Eastern districts, has the question of lack of soil contents, particularly lime, arisen? 2, In view of the necessity for agricultural lime being made available, will he have departmental inquiries made as to the provision of supplies for this and other relevant purposes?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, The inquiry into this complex problem is proceeding, but no report is yet available. All its aspects are, however, being considered, and amongst these will be the possibility referred to. 2, The department has already made inquiries regarding supplies of lime for agricultural purposes, and