

Schedule—agreed to.
Bill reported.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Coolgardie Goldfields Water Supply Loan Act Amendment.
 - 2, Treasury Bonds Deficiency.
 - 3, Industries Assistance Act Amendment.
- Received from the Assembly.

House adjourned at 11.15 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 25th November, 1919.

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

RESOLUTION—PEACE.

His Majesty's Thanks.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the following message from His Excellency the Governor:—

The Governor has the honour to inform the Hon. the Speaker that a copy of the resolution passed by the Legislative Assembly on the 31st July last, has been laid before His Majesty the King, and that he has been commanded to convey to the members of the Legislative Assembly

His Majesty's thanks for their message of congratulation. (Sgd.) William Ellison-Macartney.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, FIREWOOD HAULAGE.

Mr. MUNSIE asked the Minister for Railways: 1, On what date was the agreement signed between the Government and the Kurrawang Firewood Company to lay a tram line from Kurrawang to Lakeside, and for what period? 2, The period with regard to the concession to the Lakeside Company to run over the Government line from Lakeside to Kamballie?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, The agreement is not yet signed, although the conditions have been complied with. 2, At the will of the Government.

QUESTION—NATIONAL WORKERS, COMPENSATION, ETC.

Mr. TROY asked the Colonial Treasurer: 1, What amount has been expended to date on National volunteer workers, compensation, wages, and other expenses? 2, How was the money disbursed, and through whom? 3, What were the amounts paid to agents, if any, for disbursement?

The COLONIAL TREASURER replied: 1, (a) Compensation, wages, and other expenditure, £3,282 15s. 11d.; (b) cost of Royal Commission, £360 11s. 3d.; total, £3,643 7s. 2d. 2, Paid in lump sums on production of receipts by Robinson, Cox, Jackson, and Wheatley, solicitors. 3, Answered by (1) and (2).

QUESTION—POSTPONEMENT OF DEBTS ACT.

Payment to Commissioner.

Mr. TROY asked the Colonial Treasurer: 1, Is he aware that the sum of £150, provided on the Estimates for the year 1918-19 for payment to the commissioner under the Postponement of Debts Act, 1914, was struck out by Parliament? 2, Has the amount been paid? 3, If so, to whom was it paid, and why was the expressed decision of Parliament contemptuously set aside?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: 1, Yes. 2, Yes, and the item continued by Parliament on the current Estimates. 3, To Mr. L. E. Shapecott, on the instruction of the Government of the day.

BILL (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Ajana—Geraldine Railway.
Introduced by the Minister for Works.
- 2, Roads Closure.
Introduced by the Premier.
- 3, Factories and Shops.
Introduced by the Minister for Mines.

BILL—NORTHAMPTON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.**First Reading.**

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

Mr. MALEY: I think there is an error in the Order of Leave. There is no such block as Northampton town lot No. 31½.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Bill has been prepared by the Attorney General's Department, and I think it scarcely likely that any error has been allowed to creep in.

Mr. Maley: I understand the error arose through a typist accidentally striking the "1½" sign, which has been perpetuated.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will make further inquiry into the matter and, if necessary, have an alteration made.

Mr. SPEAKER: But the Order of Leave is to introduce a Bill for the purpose indicated on the Notice Paper. There can be no amendment under the Order of Leave.

Hon. P. Collier: But why not have it amended now? It is clearly an error, for none of the blocks have a half attached to their number.

Mr. SPEAKER: If on inquiry it is found to be nothing more than a clerical error, as suggested, it should be competent to have it set right.

MOTION—STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

On motion by the PREMIER, ordered: That for the remainder of the session the Standing Orders be suspended so far as to enable Bills to be passed through all their stages in one day, and messages from the Legislative Council to be taken into consideration on the day on which they are received; also, so far as to admit of the reporting and adopting of the resolutions of the Committee of Supply and of Ways and Means on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees.

BILLS (3)—RECEIVED FROM THE COUNCIL.

1, Drovers Act Amendment.

2, Fruit Cases.

3, Pure Seeds.

Read a first time.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council with amendments.

BILL—ANGLO-PERSIAN OIL COMPANY, LTD. (PRIVATE).

Adoption of Select Committee's report.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [4.48]: In moving the adoption of

the report of the Select Committee, I would inform hon. members that the Committee sat on three occasions and took evidence from the town clerk, Fremantle, the representative of the company, and also the local architect who prepared the estimates and plans of the scheme, which have been duly advertised and were fully placed before the Committee. I do not think I need at this juncture delay the House by dealing with the report. That can be done on the second reading of the Bill. I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed.

As to Second Reading.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [4.50]: In view of the fact that the report of the select committee is favourable to this Bill, and of the lateness of the session, I move—

That the second reading of the Bill be proceeded with forthwith.

Mr. STUBBS (Wagin) [4.52]: I would call the attention of the House to Standing Order 53, relating to private Bills.

Mr. SPEAKER: Standing Order 53 is as follows:—

Three clear days shall intervene between the report and the consideration thereof, and no such consideration shall take place unless the Chairman of Committees shall have informed the House whether the Bill contains the several provisions required by the Standing Orders.

Mr. STUBBS: As Chairman of Committees I certify that the Bill contains the requisite provisions.

Question put and passed.

Second Reading.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [4.54] in moving the second reading said: As hon. members will see from the report of the select committee, this is a Bill for the special purpose of enabling the Anglo-Persian Oil Company to provide storage accommodation at Fremantle for oil fuel. The company is purely a British company with a capital consisting of five million pounds, of which the British Government have invested no less than £2,200,000. The British Government have the controlling influence so far as the oil company is concerned, and I think I can prove to hon. members that it is the only company at present outside the combination that deals in oil. The trustees for the debenture holders are—

Rt. Hon. Lord Southborough, P.C., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Rt. Hon. Earl of Lichfield, and the directors (qualification £1,000) are Sir C. Greenway, Bart., Chairman and Managing; Admiral Sir E. J. W. Slade, K.C.I.B., K.C.V.O., Vice-Chairman; Sir H. S. Barnes, K.C.S.I., K.C.V.O.; J. T. Cargill, D. Garrow, J. Hamilton, F.

W. Lund, H. E. Nichols, Rt. Hon. Lord Southborough, P.C., G.C.B., G.C.M.G.; F. C. Tiarks, R. I. Watson, Sir R. T. Wynne, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E. Appointed by His Majesty's Government: Rt. Hon. Lord Inchcape, G.C.M.G., K.C.I.E., K.C.S.I.; Sir F. W. Black, K.C.B.

These are the directors of the company, and the British Government have invested money in this company for the express and sole purpose of enabling them to have supplies of oil not only temporarily but for the use of the British mercantile marine in various parts of the Empire. I should like to read to hon. members part of the discussion which took place in the House of Commons when Mr. Winston Churchill, the first Lord of the Admiralty, introduced the motion in the House to permit of the British Government investing in this Anglo-Persian Oil Company. Mr. Winston Churchill was pointing out the urgent necessity for the British Government taking control of the Persian oil field before any of those, who were entering into combination at present to trade in oil, got a leg in. The object also was to enable the British Government to get supplies of oil at a reasonable price. There was no difficulty about getting the oil itself but there was a difficulty as to the price. In order, therefore, to do this His Majesty's Government invested £2,200,000 in this particular concern. There was some objection to this step being taken by the British Government, but this came principally from those who were already shareholders in the Shell company, and the various oil companies in the world. One objection was from the military point of view, the fear being that if something turned up of a military nature, the supply of oil might be cut off. After Mr. Winston Churchill had dealt with these points he said—

At this point let me clear out of the way the military argument—the great military argument. There never has been, and there never will be, any shortage of oil for the British Navy in peace or war, provided you do not mind how much you pay for it, and provided you retain the power to protect it in transit on the high seas. The supply of oil in peace depends on the price. In war the supply depends on prices, plus force.

He goes on to say—

Nobody cares in war time how much they pay for a vital commodity, but in peace—that is the period to which I wish to direct the attention of the Committee—price is rather an important matter, and as it takes many years, and as we hope there will be many years of peace to every week of war, I cannot feel that we are not fully justified in taking up the time of the Committee in considering how, in years of peace, and in a long period of peace, we may acquire proper bargaining power and facilities with regard to the purchase of oil. The price of oil does not depend wholly or even mainly on the ordinary workings of supply and demand. The demand for oil is steady, and it is growing.

There is a great potential demand behind that which has already manifested itself. Although I think the demand for oil has been severely checked by the high prices, the demand cannot subside, certainly it cannot suddenly subside, because once people are committed to the use of oil for an engine or for a steamship, or for an industry of any kind, it is not easy, and frequently it is not possible, for them to go back to coal or some other fuel substitute. This is particularly true, of course, of war ships. We must have no illusions on this point. War ships which have been built to be driven by oil can never be driven by coal, and can never be adapted to be driven by coal. So the oil consumer is in rather an unusually weak position in regard to purchasing oil, because he is so easily liable to be made a forced purchaser at an artificial price.

This is one of the principal reasons, according to the debate in the House of Commons, why the British Government entered into this undertaking, namely, on account of the price they have had to pay previously for oil supplies. Mr. Winston Churchill continues—

This is, of course, particularly true of a Government oil purchaser. The oil consumer has not got freedom of choice in regard to other alternative fuels, but neither has he freedom of choice in regard to the sources of supply from which he can purchase. Look out upon the wide expanse of the oil regions of the world. Two gigantic corporations—one in either hemisphere—stand out predominantly. In the New World there is the Standard Oil, against which the Cowdray interests maintain by war and by negotiation a very powerful but semi-independent life. In the Old World the great combination of the Shell and the Royal Dutch, with all their subsidiary and ancillary branches, has practically covered the whole ground, and has even reached out into the New World. Against this, amongst British companies who have maintained an independent existence, the Burma Oil Company, with its offshoot, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, is almost the only noticeable feature. . . . Since then we have experienced, in common with private consumers, a long, steady squeeze by the oil trusts all over the world, and we have found prices and freights raised steadily against us until we have been pressed to pay more than double what a few years before we were accustomed to pay, yielding a good profit to the producers for the oil which was required. It is quite true that these price movements arose largely out of an increased demand by the world, which is eager to use such an extraordinarily convenient fuel. . . . I can assure the Committee that we have not acted with precipitancy in this matter. For many years it has been the policy of the Foreign Office, the Admiralty, and the Indian Government to preserve the independent British oil interests of the Persian oil field, to help that field to develop as

well as we could, and, above all, to prevent it being swallowed up by the Shell or by any foreign or cosmopolitan companies. . . . We recognise in the Persian field a necessary source of supply for a long period of time. We recognise in it the best source from which we could obtain the best kind of oil. We knew that it was in constant danger of being absorbed by some other combination, and welded into an ever-widening price ring. We knew that by our contract we should confer upon the Anglo-Persian Company an immense advantage which, added to their concession, would enormously strengthen the company and increase the value of their property. If this consequence arose from the necessary action of the State, why should not the State share in the advantage which we created? If, in any case, we had to go so far, why should we not go a step further? Was it not wiser, was it not more profitable on every ground, naval, financial, and indeed equitable, to acquire control of an enterprise which we were bound to help and bound to enrich, which we alone could sustain, and on which, to a large extent, we must rely? . . . From the naval point of view, the only consequence of the wiping out of the Persian oil field as a field upon which we could draw, would be that we should have to pay a higher price for the cost of our oil than is fair, or than we hope to pay.

Mr. Churchill then pointed out that all the money invested was used for the purpose of extension, and proceeded—

But the money we pay gives us control, so far as Admiralty interests require, of the Anglo-Persian Co. and its concessions. We can appoint *ex-officio* directors with a power of veto, or in the alternative, if we like, we can appoint an actual numerical majority of individuals as directors on the board. . . . None of the money will be used in paying for goodwill or commission. It will all be used in the actual development of the oil supply by the payment in cash on approved estimates for actual plant and work, and it will all fall into the economic life of the company in reference to new purposes and the development of new assets. . . . All the criticisms, so far, have flowed from one fountain.

I may state that the same fountain has been flowing in Western Australia with regard to the project of this company. The Texas Oil Company have started to move here. Mr. Churchill continues—

They have all come, so far, from Sir Marcus Samuel, one of the heads of the Shell Company, and his spokesman, Dr. Dvorkovitz, of the "Petroleum Review." . . . These gentlemen urged, if I may judge by the public statements which have been made, that a competition by the Government in the oil market will tend to lower prices, and is unfair to the oil trusts.

Then Mr. Churchill quotes articles which have appeared in various papers regarding

the intentions of the British Government in this connection, and he points out that even in America the United States Government have found it necessary to acquire oil fields and to run pipes as a check upon the prices charged by the American oil companies. Regarding Sir Marcus Samuel, Mr. Churchill says—

The honourable gentleman has not had to pay the prices which we have had to pay on behalf of the Admiralty. Some of their directors dissociate themselves from the criticism which has been made, and Mr. Deterding in particular has rendered, and no doubt will continue to render, important services to the Admiralty in respect of their oil supply. These gentlemen are conducting their business with the utmost efficiency, and I do not at all criticise them from their point of view on the course they are adopting. I am only stating the facts as they present themselves to the Admiralty's mind. They have combined gigantic oil properties all over the world. Some of their directors are on the boards of as many as 20 oil companies. In the Dutch East Indies, Sarawak, Borneo, Brunei, New Zealand, Russia, Egypt, Mexico, California, Trinidad—in all these quarters they have already established a control or partial control of the oil supply, and it is their policy—what is the good of blinking at it?—to acquire control of the sources and means of supply, and then to regulate the production and the market price. They have long looked towards the Persian field, which is the only large uncompromised area of supply we can discover at present outside America, and, if this Bill and this policy were to fail, there is no doubt whatever in my mind or in the minds of those on whose advice I rely, that amalgamation or merger of the Anglo-Persian with the Shell, on some terms or other agreeable to both parties, under some name very prominently associated with this country, would probably take place in a very little while. We have no quarrel with the Shell. We have always found them courteous, considerate, ready to oblige, anxious to serve the Admiralty, and to promote the interests of the British Navy and the British Empire—at a price. The only difficulty has been price. On that point, of course, we have been treated with the full rigour of the game.

The British Government, it will be seen, have become shareholders in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company for the express purpose of protecting the consumers of oil fuel. In the course of the discussion Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, who had been watching developments in the Persian field very closely, said—

Another proposition was something to this effect, that it was the duty of the Government to do everything it could to break monopolies. I agree. I should like to say, in connection with this particular agreement and the intention to break the monopoly, that I hope the Government will

not hamper the Anglo-Persian Company in putting upon the market as liberally as it possibly can every species of by-product produced as the result of its business operations. I have read everything I could lay my hands upon that has been produced in connection with this controversy, and one of the conclusions to which I have come is that the letters and speeches, interviews and pronouncements, made by Sir Marcus Samuel and his friends seem to indicate that they are not so much opposed to the Government going in for making itself directly responsible for the production of pure oil, but that they are far more concerned with the marketing of by-products. I hope that the Government will give them no mercy. The Government will certainly not do its duty to the country and to the consumers of these by-products if it shows the least mercy in that respect . . . The Empire and the Union Jack are usually dragged into this controversy, not for patriotic purposes, but for the sake of profits and business arrangements.

Mr. Jones: They always are.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The extracts I have read show conclusively the necessity that exists for the establishment of this British company, which has as one of its shareholders the British Government, who are in a position to direct the policy of the company. The establishment of the company is essential for the purpose of keeping in check the two huge combinations mentioned by Mr. Winston Churchill, which are now, and have for some time been, dealing most unfairly with the users of oil fuel. The purpose of this Bill is to allow the Anglo-Persian Oil Company to store oil at the port of Fremantle. The company intend as far as possible to provide for storage of oil at all the principal ports of the British Empire. They intend to operate in the Eastern States the same as here. Hence, ships using oil fuel will pass by our ports if that fuel is not available here, and in such circumstances we should not have the advantage of shipping that burns oil. The company have a purely British directorate, and this Bill merely seeks to enable them to carry their pipes through the streets of Fremantle. There are various objections to the Bill as presented by the petitioners, and a number of amendments were suggested by the Fremantle Municipal Council. Those of the amendments which the select committee thought desirable in the interests of the town of Fremantle have been embodied in the Bill. For some considerable time the company have been endeavouring to arrange matters with the Fremantle Municipal Council without the introduction of this Bill. In all probability the council would have given the company power to lay pipes through the streets, but in those circumstances there would be no protection for the company; the council would be able to order them to remove their pipes anywhere, and any person could interfere with the pipes. Hence the introduction of this Bill. The company's

intention is to expend on the proposed works approximately £31,000.

Mr. Pickering: Does that estimate include the cost of the reservoir?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes. That is the engineer's estimate. The idea is to begin by building a tank of a capacity of two million gallons. If the company failed to carry out the works at Fremantle, it would be a great loss to Western Australia, as ships that burn oil require provision in every port to replenish their fuel supplies. These tanks will be built at a considerable distance from the harbour and there will be no fear of danger. Every precaution has been taken that the works shall be carried out with due regard to safety, so that there shall be no risk of fire to adjoining property. The protection of the harbour and the railway is provided for. The Bill stipulates that before the company can interfere with the railway or Harbour Trust property, the consent of the Minister controlling the railways or the Harbour Trust must first be obtained. Therefore, the Bill will not apply to either of these concerns until the consent of the controlling Minister has been given. The principal portion of this Bill deals with the opening up of streets. We have provided that the Fremantle Council shall have powers which are not included in the Municipal Corporations Act. Under the Municipal Corporations Act, the council can rate an undertaking on the improved value of the land or the annual rental value, but in this case it would be difficult to arrive at the value and the rates would amount to only £11 or £12 per annum. Seeing that the company will use the streets, it was thought that the Fremantle Council should be able to rate the company on somewhat similar lines to the rating of the Fremantle Gas Company, though the quantity of piping to be laid by the company will be very small in comparison with that of the gas company. We found that the Fremantle Gas Company are paying approximately £133 per annum by way of rates to the Fremantle Council and, under this Bill, we have provided that after two years have been allowed for the construction of the works, there shall be a minimum rate of £100 per annum or a sum equal to one-eighth per cent. of the amount actually received by the company for the sale of the oil and liquid fuel conveyed through the pipes, whichever is the greater. If the tank is emptied once a year, the amount of rates will be approximately £90 or £100, and we have provided a minimum of £100; but the oftener the tank is emptied, the greater will be the amount of rates payable to the municipality. Provision is also made whereby the public will be protected in regard to any accidents which may occur through the neglect of the company. The Bill does not relieve the company from any liability for accident in carrying out the provisions of the measure. It does not grant exclusive rights of monopoly to the company. It will be open to any other company, if they so desire, to secure a private Bill for similar purposes.

The select committee thought it wise to add a clause, to which no objection has been raised by the representatives of the company, that if the work is not commenced within two years, this Bill shall lapse. We thought that a measure of this description should not be allowed to stand indefinitely on the statute-book without the undertaking being carried out. I have every confidence in asking members to pass the Bill and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; Hon. W. C. Angwin in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Power to construct works:

Mr. JONES: I should like an explanation of "works" in paragraph (a). The company will have power to erect, construct, lay down, establish and fix all necessary works for distributing oil in or under any street, and the definition shows that "works" means all buildings, erections, reservoirs, works, plant, machinery, apparatus, pipes, mains, connections, and all other works connected with and incidental to the undertaking, or by this measure or in any other way authorised to be constructed or undertaken by the company. This combine would have power to erect a reservoir in a public street, if necessary.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This clause was altered at the request of the Fremantle Council. The company must have power to erect works; otherwise of what use will the pipes be?

Mr. Jones: Where will they erect the works?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: On the land mentioned in the preamble to the Bill.

Mr. Jones: Why does not the Bill say so?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Bill does say so.

Mr. JONES: The explanation is not satisfactory.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Read paragraph (b) of Clause 4.

Mr. JONES: That gives power to lay the pipes under the streets. Paragraph (a) undoubtedly gives the oil trust power to erect, construct, and fix all necessary works and perform all such acts as may be necessary for storing, supplying, and distributing oil in or under any street or in, on, or under any railway or wharf. I should like the Attorney General to give us the legal interpretation. I should object to an oil plant being erected before my front door.

Mr. ROBINSON: I consider the clause is satisfactory. The paragraph mentions "necessary" works.

Mr. Jones: Who shall say what are necessary works?

Mr. ROBINSON: The clause does not bear the meaning suggested by the member for Fremantle. It would be impossible for any draftsman to say where the particular works should be constructed. This is a general provision giving general power.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I feel somewhat diffident in offering an opinion because, as the advertisements show, I belong to a firm of solicitors who have been employed by the company to attend to legal matters connected with the private Bill. The object of the clause is first of all to give general power to carry out the scheme of erecting, constructing, laying down, establishing, and fixing all necessary works. The next is to enable the company to perform all such other acts and things as may be thought necessary for storing, supplying, and distributing oil and liquid fuel in or under any street or railway or wharf. Hon. members need not concern themselves with regard to the railway or wharf because they will find in the proviso there is a sufficient safeguard. The consent of the Minister must be obtained to open or break up or interfere with any railway or wharf. I shall welcome observations by other legal members of the House on this subject.

Mr. PILKINGTON: This clause seems to give immense power, and the proviso which has been wisely put in only limits that power in dealing with railways or wharves. It seems to me that there should be a proviso imposing a similar limitation in regard to other powers which are granted.

The Attorney General: The bill will be useless if you do that.

Mr. PILKINGTON: There is an enormous power given to the company to erect, construct, lay down, establish, and fix all necessary works, in or under any street. There is further power given to the company to break up and interfere with any street, railway, or wharf, and any sewer, drain, or tunnel within or under any street, railway, or wharf, etc. The limitation which is imposed by the proviso might well be imposed in regard to the other powers. I cannot see that it would cause any greater difficulty to the company.

Hon. T. WALKER: The company require authority to do what is specified, or else they cannot go on with the work. To gas and electric light companies similar powers are granted. There cannot possibly be transmission from place to place or from street to street without interfering with the street, and the whole question is whether it is worth while, from the benefits that are to be obtained from the establishment of a company of this kind, to grant the company the authority given by this provision. It must not be taken for granted that they have whole power regardless of anybody or anything, for before they commence these works they will be compelled to draw plans and forward specifications and all details, not only as to where they intend to do the work, but as to how it is to be done, and moreover to see that it is done in a manner that will not be injurious to the citizens' rights or interests,

and the local body will have the power to send a supervisor to keep in touch with the work. There will be no ignoring of the local authorities if the plans do not meet with the approval of that local authority. Consequently I see no danger in the scheme. If we grant the local authorities power to prevent injury to private property and the interests already established, we shall have safeguarded the general public sufficiently.

Mr. JONES: There should be a proviso to this clause to the effect that the works should be deemed by the Minister to be necessary. That would provide a sufficient safeguard. I am quite satisfied that the Minister for Works, whoever he might be, would offer no opposition to any work being done. The Minister is the direct reflex of the majority of the people, whereas the local authority is a reflex only of the ratepayers.

Mr. ROBINSON: In the second proviso the words, "as defined by" may relate to the word "consent" or to the word "Minister." We can prevent any capacious objection by substituting for "as defined by" the word "administering." I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of the second proviso the words "as defined by" be struck out, and "administering" be inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ROBINSON: Under the second proviso the Minister may consent to the exercise of the power provided, or may veto it, but cannot make conditions or in other ways alter it. I move an amendment—

That the following be added to the proviso, "subject to such conditions as the Minister may deem expedient."

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. JONES: I move an amendment—

That the following be added to stand as the third proviso, "Provided also that all plans and specifications for supplying or distributing in or under any street shall first be submitted to and approved by the Minister for Works."

I have already explained my reasons for the amendment.

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

Clause 5—Notice to be served and plan deposited before breaking up streets, etc.

Mr. ROBINSON: I move an amendment—

That after "plan" in line 6 the words "with descriptive specifications" be inserted.

I use the words "descriptive" because the specification need not be a detailed one to supply what I want.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not think the qualifying "descriptive" is necessary. To provide a specification will be sufficient.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not think the words are required at all. If hon. members will read the clause they will see that the company has to deposit a plan setting forth the extent to and the manner in which

it proposes to carry out such work. Fancy supplying a description of the proposed laying of a pipe along the street! Surely it is not necessary to explain in writing that the earth will be taken out with a shovel and removed in a wheelbarrow! Moreover, under the previous amendment the Minister has to approve the work.

Mr. ROBINSON: It must be remembered that the local authority as defined is not necessarily the Fremantle Municipal Council, but includes the Commissioner of Railways and the Fremantle Harbour Trust. The pipe will cross the territory of all three authorities. The Engineer-in-Chief, who will have to decide for the Railways and for the local authority, will require something more than a plan, will require also a specification.

Mr. PICKERING: The company will have to submit for approval a specification. There are many ways in which a service may be laid. I think it is advisable to have the word "specification" inserted.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We have already agreed to something which practically complies with what the hon. member desires. In the first place the approval of the company's proposed works may be subject to conditions, and the conditions will be those under which the pipes are to be laid. There is no necessity for the amendment.

Mr. Robinson: In view of the previous amendment, I will withdraw this one.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. ROCKE: Already provision is made for the Minister of Railways and also the commissioners of the Harbour Trust, to be consulted, but no provision is made for the company consulting the local authority, such as the Fremantle Municipal Council, in connection with the breaking up of streets. The clause provides that the company shall present their plans to the local authority and may then proceed with the work under the superintendency of the local authority. I think the local authority should have the right to say in what manner the work shall be conducted. I move an amendment—

That after "superintendence" in line 12 the words "and with the consent" be inserted.

This will provide for the local authority being consulted.

Hon. T. WALKER: I trust the amendment will not be persisted in because it really reduces the matter to one of absurdity. The plans and specifications and all the details are subject to the approval of the Minister for Works and the plans are then submitted to the council. After these have been passed by the Minister for Works, would it not be absurd for the council to be able to stop them?

Mr. Rocke: It is a matter of the works themselves.

Hon. T. WALKER: These are inferentially under the supervision of the council, who can appoint their own superintendent to be there all the time and see that the plans and specifications are followed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Even to-day, when we are laying pipes in Perth or Fremantle, we discover pipes of which there is no record. Is it the intention of the hon. member, in the event of some old pipe line being discovered, which may necessitate an alteration in the plans and specifications, that the works in question should be suspended until such time as new plans and specifications have been prepared? I do not think there is any difficulty in connection with this clause. It is inconceivable that the company would do anything in the way of pipe laying which would be opposed to the wishes of the local authority.

Mr. ROCKE: Although I have not the same confidence in a limited liability company that the Minister possesses, in view of his remarks and those of the member for Kanowna, I desire to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 to 9—agreed to.

Clause 10—Power of local authority to alter the situation of pipes:

Mr. ROBINSON: In view of the proviso added to Clause 4, and in order to bring this clause into line, I move an amendment—

That after the word "Act" in line 5 there be inserted the words, "or in breach of any condition imposed by the Minister as provided in Section 4."

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ROBINSON: I move an amendment—

That in line 13, after the word "Act," there be inserted the words, "or of any such condition as aforesaid, or any other default of the company."

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

Clause 11—agreed to.

Clause 12—Damages for accidentally damaging works:

Mr. ROBINSON: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added:—"Provided that such section shall not be deemed to enlarge in any way the obligations of the Commissioner of Railways or the Fremantle Harbour Trust under their respective Statutes."

Assuming that the Commissioner of Railways, or anyone in the service, wrongfully broke a pipe or some apparatus belonging to this company, would the provisions of this measure apply if he were sued, or would the provisions of the Railway Act apply? Under the Railway Act it is provided in Sections 35 to 38 that suits may be brought against the Commissioner, how they shall be brought and when the action must be brought, and when notice shall be given. I do not want the sections of the Railway Act dealing with the Commissioner to be enlarged by reason of this clause. The Rail-

way Commissioner is also a common carrier, but he is only liable as a common carrier in particular instances. Do the words of the clause widen these powers?

The Attorney General: What has this to do with the Commissioner being a common carrier?

Mr. ROBINSON: The same argument applies to the Fremantle Harbour Trust but in a special way. The wharf is made of timber and there are piles or bollards there. A large mail steamer driven by the wind may be swung into the wharf and spring it over. If any of the pipes through which the oil travels happen to be broken, the question might arise as to the liability of the Harbour Trust. I do not want to see that liability widened beyond the liability existing under the present Statutes.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I hope the amendment will not be agreed to. The Minister has to set out the terms and conditions as to how the pipes shall be laid down. If any person unlawfully breaks those pipes, he should pay for them. I know what is behind the amendment. It is that the Commissioner should have power to arrange certain things and not the Minister. I would point out that water pipes are already laid down there.

Mr. Robinson: They have a sliding sleeve on them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Water would escape much more quickly than oil. The 10in. oil main will be laid along the roadway and not on the wharf at all.

Mr. Robinson: The valve would be on the wharf.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: These pipes must be constructed on the plan that is deemed expedient by the Minister.

Mr. Robinson: I presume you do not want to widen the liability.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It does not widen the liability. The first Bill contained the words "carelessness or accidental," but these words have now been struck out of the Bill on the recommendation of the Fremantle Council.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No amendment of this clause is necessary, as the work to be done by the company will be done under the supervision of the Minister for Works and of the Minister controlling the Fremantle Harbour Trust.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 13 to 17—agreed to.

Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

**BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT
AMENDMENT.**

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2, 3—agreed to.

Clause 4.—Amendment of Section 15:

Mr. HUDSON: On the second reading I pointed out that injustice might result if this clause were passed in its present form. I illustrated the position by quoting the case of a man who had sold a dray and some harness to a farmer on the Industries Assistance Board, and who has not been paid yet. That man may not be paid for a long time, if ever; and the Government have security over the dray and harness. It is true that under this Bill the Government have in contemplation the payment of existing liabilities, but there is no obligation on their part to meet those liabilities. I had intended to move an amendment striking out the words, "prior encumbrances" and substituting for them "existing liabilities of the applicant." However, that amendment might have the effect of nullifying the Government security. I therefore move the following amendment—

That after "encumbrances," in line 4, there be inserted "and the existing liabilities of the applicant."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Section 15 of the principal Act, as it stands under Section 8 of the Industries Assistance Act Amendment Act of 1917, provides that—the principal and interest of all advances made, or deemed to have been made, under this part of this Act shall be, and until fully paid shall remain, a first charge in favour of the board in priority to all other encumbrances—(a) upon the estate or interest of the applicant in all lands held or occupied by him for agricultural, farming, or grazing purposes, including all such lands held by him under lease or contract for the purchase thereof, or as a homestead farm, or otherwise; and (b) upon all crops to be sown in or grown upon all such lands and the produce thereof, and the share of interest of the applicant in any other crops wheresoever grown, and (c) upon all implements, live stock, and the progeny thereof, and other chattels supplied to the applicant under this Act.

The object of the amendment moved by the member for Yilgarn is to insert the words "and the existing liabilities of the applicant." Existing liabilities have no security, but would be ordinary unsecured debts. In regard to any balance unsecured to the board the board ranks as an unsecured creditor, together with all other unsecured creditors who would share *pari passu* in the proceeds. The amendment would not be workable. The hon. member seeks to give security to existing liabilities which are unsecured.

Mr. Hudson: No, to exempt them.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the amendment is passed the object of the Act will be defeated. Part of the assets of the debtor not secured to the board might consist of a team of horses necessary for the working of the farm. Suppose an outside creditor levied execution on the horses and satisfied his debt, the board would be obliged

to make further advances to the debtor in order that he might continue to work his farm.

Mr. Hudson: Suppose the team of horses had not been paid for.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am speaking of the obligation on the board to make advances to the debtor in order that he might continue to work his farm, and that the benefit of the security might remain to the board. If the horses were unpaid for and had been bought from someone who knew the majority of the purchaser's assets were secured to the board—

Mr. Hudson: He might come under the board later on, and then you would grab up everything.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: We are dealing with people who are at present under the board.

Mr. Hudson: Or may at any time come under the board.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: As regards future transactions, it would be perfectly well known that the board had security not only for themselves but as trustees for other creditors.

Mr. Hudson: The other creditors have to say in what advances are made by the board to the farmer.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The object is to prevent any creditor coming in and getting an advantage by issuing execution and selling those chattels and compelling the board to make further advances in order that the debtor might be able to work his farm.

Mr. Hudson: Your argument does not hold good in regard to prior encumbrances.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Does the amendment mean that the board will take over live stock and every thing else and get the proceeds and, in the event of a dividend remaining, shall be distributed to unsecured creditors?

The Premier: No, the whole of the proceeds will be distributed.

Mr. WILLCOCK: If a man has a crop of wheat, the board take over the whole of it. They deduct interest and payments due to the board, and any income that the farmer receives from live stock may be retained by him. Does the amendment mean that a proceeds from live stock will go into the pot and be dealt with like all other assets of the board?

The PREMIER: It means that if there are several unsecured creditors, none of the creditors could step in and seize the stock. I tried to get a clause of this description passed three years ago. To-day the farmer might sell his stock, say a team of horses and pocket the money to the hurt of the creditors.

Mr. Hudson: You protect the secured and not the unsecured creditors.

The PREMIER: We have no need to protect the secured creditors.

Hon. P. Collier: Of course the farmer would not sell his horses under such conditions.

The PREMIER: He should not be permitted to sell them.

Mr. HUDSON: I think you will encourage dishonesty rather than otherwise.

The PREMIER: The board find the whole of the money to grow the crop and, after charging interest and other things, the surplus is distributed.

Mr. HUDSON: And you charge the creditor for collecting his money.

The PREMIER: There is a small charge. The clause is necessary for the protection of creditors who have had to stand out of their money for several years.

Mr. WILLCOCK: And for the board too.

The PREMIER: This clause has always met with opposition in this House, and I cannot understand why.

Mr. HUDSON: You should take it subject to existing conditions.

The PREMIER: When the stock is sold, the proceeds will be distributed on a pro rata basis between the board and the creditors the hon. member seeks to protect.

Mr. HUDSON: When will the final distribution be made?

Mr. WILLCOCK: When the board have got all they want.

The PREMIER: No, we distribute the proceeds year by year. If the clause is not included, these chattels might be attacked by any single creditor to the disadvantage of other creditors.

Mr. PICKERING: I think you will discourage stocking.

The PREMIER: I do not think it will have that effect.

Mr. MALEY: If the Minister intends to assume control of the whole of the stock he ought in all fairness to review the ratio of assistance being given to the settlers.

The CHAIRMAN: We are dealing with the amendment.

Mr. MALEY: I am endeavouring to show why neither the amendment nor the clause should be accepted. Many settlers have never drawn anything like the maximum allowance from the board because they were receiving revenue from their stock. I admit some control should be obtained over the assets not secured by the principal Act. We know there was a storm in a teacup over the assistance to settlers, and it resulted in the resignation of a Minister. The ex-Minister issued an edict that farmers had to hand over the proceeds from stock.

Mr. HUDSON: They have to on stock supplied by the board.

Mr. MALEY: There are thousands of sheep which are held under the leasing system.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must confine himself to the amendment.

Mr. FOLLEY: Under the existing Act, the farmer has had the right to sell his stock. If, instead of selling his wheat, he feeds it to pigs and sells the pigs, could not he escape the obligation of which the Attorney General spoke? Will the amendment give the farmer this right which other farmers do not possess?

Mr. HUDSON: No matter what the conditions may be under which a farmer has acquired stock or implements or anything

else, this security will cover it because it will come within the purview of the board. I want to see that whilst the farmer is being looked after, the rest of the community are also treated fairly. I have no desire to embarrass the board or the Government, and I do not want to stultify the Act in any way, but an injustice will be worked if the clause is left as it is, or if it has a retrospective effect. I suggest that the Premier accept an amendment so that the clause will not come into operation for a period of three or four months. That would give notice to the creditors of the position and they could then protect themselves.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. WILLCOCK: What is the policy of the board in connection with this matter? A man may dispose of stock; will the proceeds of the sale be treated in the same way as is being done with wheat now? Will the proceeds be taken by the board, or will they be distributed amongst the creditors? A man may be increasing his capital account and getting considerably better off at the expense of the people to whom he owes money. Will the proceeds of the sale of stock be taken by the board or will those proceeds be distributed amongst the creditors?

The Premier: This clause will protect the creditors.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Will everything be dealt with through the board? Does this mean that the proceeds from the sale of stock will be dealt with by the board?

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. WILLCOCK: That is different from what the policy of the board was before.

The Premier: No.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It must be. Does the clause mean that the proceeds will be dealt with by the board?

The Premier: I have said yes three times.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I realise that the endeavour of the Government is to protect themselves and to protect the creditors against dishonest men.

The Premier: And protect the farmer too.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I would like to point out that in certain parts of my electorate there are settlers who are working hard. They are honest men who are endeavouring to do the best they can with the resources at their disposal. I had trouble with the department a little while ago about a man who had a few pigs from the sale of which he was able to raise money. He fed those pigs on the waste products of the farm. That man did not utilise the proceeds from the sale of the pigs for his own benefit, but he paid for the labour of a man to further improve the board's assets on the farm. I am in accord with the desire to see that the board is protected, but I am concerned about the men who are striving to get along in the manner that I have quoted.

Mr. PICKERING: The department went out of its way to encourage farmers to buy stock. The clause will mean that every farmer who tries to save money out of his

sustenance allowance and is willing to put that money into stock—

Mr. MALEY: Save money out of 9s. a day?

Mr. PICKERING: They may be able to do it sometimes. The clause will have the effect of preventing farmers doing that. It will be no use a farmer investing in stock if the only effect will be to increase the security of the board.

Mr. MALEY: I should like the Premier to explain the meaning of the phrase "pari passu." I have forgotten all I ever learned of Latin. I think we should have the meaning in English.

The PREMIER: The Postponement of Debts Act will soon cease to operate and, unless the clause is agreed to, the outside creditors of the farmer will have the right to sue him and sell any stock which he has not secured to the board. Only in the interests of the farmers am I concerned about having this clause in the Bill. It does not make very much difference to the board, except that the farmer will not be able to carry on his operations if his stock and plant are taken from him. The distribution of the proceeds of the sale of any of his stock will be made on a pro rata basis between the outside creditors and the board. I advise the Country party to agree to the clause; without it the farmers will not be safe.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am glad of the discussion. I was inclined to think the clause was loaded, but until the Country party members elucidated the position by questioning the Premier, we had not the real effect of the provision. The farmers have been protected for long past and been permitted to sell their stock and dodge payment to their creditors. Now that there is a possibility of their creditors being able to get something out of the farmers on the cessation of the Postponement of Debts Act, and in order to permit the farmers to continue dodging the payment of their debts, we are to take them under the protection of the I.A.B. It is to be a substitution of a new protection for the protection of the Postponement of Debts Act. It is another sop to the Country party. When are the farmers' creditors to get something of what is owing them? I object to the clause and will oppose it. The majority of the I.A.B. farmers have been able to build up their capital while dodging payment to their creditors. The clause will indefinitely perpetuate that state of affairs. Can the Premier tell us when the I.A.B. is to go out of existence?

The Honorary Minister: When the weather breaks.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The farmers' creditors should be given a chance to come into their own. I cannot see any end to the I.A.B., yet until that end comes, the creditors of the I.A.B. farmers must go wanting.

The PREMIER: To listen to the hon. member, one would think the farmer desires to rob everybody. As a matter of fact, if the board had not come into existence, the farmers' creditors would have lost a great deal more than they stand to lose now. It

will be some comfort to the hon. member to know it is expected that the farmers' indebtedness to the board will be considerably decreased as the result of the present crop. To the 31st March the outstanding advances made by the board totalled £1,200,000. It is expected that by the 31st of next March this will have been reduced to £750,000.

Mr. Willcock: The ex-Minister told us that three years ago.

The PREMIER: Of course no one can guarantee what is going to happen, but at least the present crops are now assured. The outside creditors will get more this year than they expected. The 5s. guarantee to the farmer will represent a further dividend to the creditors.

Mr. Willcock: When is the board to cease.

The PREMIER: I do not know, any more than does the hon. member. I hope it will continue as long as it is of real use to the country and to the farmer. It has done a great deal of good and has served to produce millions of pounds worth of wheat, which without the board, would not have been produced.

Mr. PICKERING: I view the clause with great suspicion. It is going to have a rather bad effect, and will decrease the amount that will be returned to the farmer. We have no guarantee that an increase will be given to the farmers in the way of sustenance allowance.

The Premier: That was opposed.

Mr. PICKERING: The cost of living has gone up, and the incentive for these people to save money and invest it in stock is largely wanting.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Continuation of principal Act:

Mr. WILLCOCK: At this stage the Premier might give the Committee some idea as to how long this Bill will continue in operation. He has expressed the opinion that it will probably last a couple of years. Will he agree to its terminating in 1922?

The Premier: I agree.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—TREASURY BONDS DEFICIENCY.

In Committee.

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

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—COOLGARDIE GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY LOAN ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Contribution to sinking fund:

Mr. HUDSON: On the 12th of this month I asked a question of the Minister for Water Supply and I wish to read both the question and his answer. They are as follows:—

1, Have the Government recently reduced the price of water to be supplied from the Goldfields Water Scheme to consumers in the agricultural districts? 2, Is it intended to reduce the various prices charged in the mining districts? 3, If so, when and to what extent? 4, If not, why not?

The Minister for Water Supply replied: 1, Yes. 2 and 3, The whole question of the incidence of water charges will be dealt with when the Coolgardie Goldfields Water Supply Loan Act Amendment Bill becomes an Act. 4, Answered by 2 and 3.

The Premier: This clause does not deal with the price of water.

Mr. HUDSON: It affects the general financial position of the water scheme, and the price of the water is involved in that. Up to the present the consumers on the goldfields have been charged a certain rate, which has been estimated on the fact that the scheme had to pay a sinking fund upon the loan obtained for the purpose of carrying out the undertaking. The Minister for Water Supply was able to reduce the price of water to agriculturists before the passage of this Bill, but refused to give the mining community any definite date after the passage of this Bill, when he would alter the price of water charged to them. This has been a great disappointment to those engaged in the industry. The question of the charges and the general incidence relating to the goldfields water scheme should be dealt with together. The mining community ought to have preference in any consideration for the reduction in the price of water.

The CHAIRMAN: I have allowed the hon. member to explain his point, but cannot permit any further discussion along these lines on this clause.

Mr. HUDSON: I must protest against the action of the Minister in this matter, and urge upon the Premier to give an assurance to those concerned in the mining industry that the promise made by his colleague will be fulfilled at an early date.

The PREMIER: Any promise made by my colleague will be honoured. I am unfortunately not permitted to make a statement regarding water supply generally.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—ELECTORAL AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Insertion of new section after Section 44; compulsory enrolment for Assembly:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The maximum penalty of £10 proposed is too heavy. I move an amendment—

That in the last line of Subsection (1) of proposed new Section 44a the word "ten" be struck out and "two" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: On the same ground, I move a further amendment—

That in the last line of Subsection (2) of proposed new Section 44a the word "ten" be struck out and "two" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. PICKERING: On behalf of the member for Williams-Narrogin I move an amendment—

That the following be added to proposed new Section 44a to stand as Subsection (4):—

"The registrar of the district concerned shall issue a receipt to the elector for each claim received."

I understand the Attorney General has no objection to this amendment. The first and second subsections carry penalties, and the mere fact of non-enrolment within 21 days after becoming entitled to enrolment is to be deemed a contravention of the Electoral Act. Therefore receipts should be given for claim cards which are lodged.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I expected to hear something on this amendment from the Minister in charge of the Bill.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Having made inquiries from the Chief Electoral Officer, I see no objection to this amendment.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Will it cost the country £500 or £1,000 a year to carry this out?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: My opinion is that it will cost very little.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The giving of a receipt on every change of residence will cost a good deal. Under the proposed subsection a receipt will have to be given every time an elector removes, not merely from one electoral district to another, but from one street to another in the same district. The Commonwealth Electoral Department, of course, can easily send receipts, seeing that they incur no postage. I hope the Attorney General will take steps to allow of the State availing itself of the Commonwealth roll. Compulsory enrolment is, in my opinion, an impossibility for the State without a con-

siderable increase in the State Electoral staff.

Mr. PICKERING: I hope hon. members will carry the amendment. Many applicants will hand in their applications personally, and will take the receipt away with them.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I appreciate the remarks of the member for North-East Fremantle. Any Government in power 12 months hence will find it necessary to revise the Electoral Act, and by that time we shall have had experience of how this amendment works.

Mr. ROCKE: Even if the amendment involves some expense, it is necessary in the interests of justice. If a man lodges a claim card and it is lost—as it may be—he is liable to prosecution.

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

Clause 4—Substitution of new section for Section 192; collection of information for preparation of rolls:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Here again a maximum penalty of £10 is too heavy. I move an amendment—

That in the last line of proposed new Section 192 the word "ten" be struck out and "two" inserted in lieu.

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

Clause 5—Various amendments; schedule:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: On the second reading there was some misapprehension with regard to ballot boxes. The State ballot box has an inside lid with a slit in it, and then an outside lid which locks. The Federal ballot box has one lid with a slit in it, but to cover that slit there is a fastener which is drawn over, being worked in a slot, and is locked outside. That cover has the same effect as the outside lid.

The CHAIRMAN: We are dealing with Clause 5 and not with the schedule.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6—agreed to.

Schedule:

On motion by the Attorney General, schedule amended by inserting after "paragraph," in line 4, the following words: "Strike out 'the outer cover of,' in paragraph (3), and add to paragraph (3) the following words: 'The cleft shall also be closed and sealed unless the ballot box is provided with an outer cover without a cleft'"; and by inserting after the word "occur," in line 9, the following words: "Add to subsection (1), 'The cleft shall also be closed and sealed unless the ballot box is provided with an outer covering without a cleft.'"

Schedule as amended agreed to.

New clause:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In dealing with the Constitution Act Amendment Bill the other night, the Attorney General pointed

out that the Act of 1918 was too severe in that any person who made an untrue statement even in good faith was liable to a fine of £20. That was not the intention of the House, and I understood that the Minister proposed to alter it.

The Attorney General: Yes, I said I would if you let something else pass.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Two wrongs do not make a right. I move—

That the following be inserted to stand as Clause 7: Clause 5 of the Amending Electoral Act of 1918 is hereby amended by striking out of line 1 of Subsection 1 of Section 188a the words "shall not make any untrue," and inserting in lieu thereof the words "knowingly or wilfully making a false."

The section will then read—

A person knowingly or wilfully making a false statement in any electoral paper, or in answer to any question under this Act, or in any information supplied to any officer or canvasser for the purposes of the preparation of new rolls.

The Attorney General: I am not objecting.

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

BILL—TRAFFIC.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of 13 amendments made by the Legislative Council now considered:

In Committee.

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

No. 1. Clause 4—Add to the interpretation of "district" the words "the term includes sub-district":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to

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

No. 2. Clause 4—Add to the interpretation of "local authority" the words "and as the licensing authority within the metropolitan area, as defined by regulation":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no objection to this amendment. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 3. Clause 4—Insert after the interpretation of "road" a paragraph as follows: "'Sub-district' means that portion of a municipal district or road district which is within the boundaries of the metropolitan area, as defined by regulation, where a portion only of any such district is comprised within that area."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 4. Clause 13.—In paragraph (f) strike out the words "or the number of licenses issued has reached the prescribed limit" in lines 4 and 5:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not see that the inclusion of those words will do any good.

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

No. 5. Clause 33.—Strike out the word "Part" in line 2 and insert "division":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 6. Clause 34.—Strike out the first six lines and insert the following in lieu thereof:—No person shall carry or cause or permit to be carried on any road by any vehicle a greater weight, including the weight of the vehicle, than that prescribed by the Fourth Schedule, for each inch or portion of an inch of the width of the bearing surface of the tire of each wheel of the vehicle.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This amendment will be absolutely necessary if we are to carry out the schedule suggested by another place. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is no necessity now to employ a mathematician to work out these weights, as they appear in the schedule they are clear and distinct.

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

No. 7. Clause 38.—Strike out the words "two miles" in line 6 and insert "one mile":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 8. Clause 40, paragraph (n).—Before the word "regulate" insert the words "prohibit or":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This amendment deals with the regulation of processions. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: These words were in the Bill when it was before this Chamber in the first instance and they were struck out on the motion of the member for North Perth. In the future, however, the control of processions will be in the hands of the Minister and there will be no difficulty about

them provided they are carried out in a proper manner. I hope the amendment will be agreed to. The Government represent the whole of the State, and I do not think this power should be left to a local authority.

Mr. MUNSIE: I trust the Committee will not agree to the amendment. It is putting back into the hands of the local authorities the power to prohibit processions. The local bumbles of Perth, had they the power, would have prohibited the recent Eight Hours' Day procession. Even when it was over, to vindicate their dignity they had to prosecute the chief marshal. I say this absurdity should cease.

The Minister for Works: I will not insist upon the amendment.

Mr. MUNSIE: I hope the Committee will not agree to it.

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

No. 9. Clause 40.—Add a new paragraph after paragraph (xii.), to stand as (xiii.), as follows:—"Prescribe the fee and regulate other matters for any vehicle not otherwise provided for in this Act."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

This will be a very useful provision. The development of the motor vehicle is fairly rapid, and already we have in Perth one vehicle with five wheels. If the amendment is passed, it will enable the Minister to make suitable provision for such vehicles.

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

No. 10. Clause 40.—Add a new paragraph to stand as (xiv.), as follows:—"Regulate the use and driving of camels, and for that purpose may—(a) limit the number of camels to be driven by one driver; (b) require the annual registration of camels and the payment of an annual registration for pack camels":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

This paragraph is virtually a replacement of the provision struck out when the Bill was originally before us. The argument used against it was that on the Eastern goldfields and on the Murchison all the camels were in the hands of white men. Since then I have been informed that the incidence of the provision relates more particularly to the Wyndham district, where virtually all the camels are in the hands of Afghans. I think those persons should be made to contribute to the revenue of the State in which they are doing fairly well.

Mr. SMITH: I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment. On a previous occasion we were most emphatic in striking it out, and I do not think the Minister has given any good reasons why it should be re-instated. Virtually all the traffic in the far

North is carried by camels. It would be most unfair to further hamper that district. Rather should we be progressive in our legislation. There are already too many restrictive regulations concerning the North.

Mr. DURACK: I hope the amendment will be agreed to. In the Wyndham district there are 300 or 400 camels, principally in the hands of Afghans. None of those camels are employed in wagons or drays. They pay nothing for their agistment, but roam about all over the place. I do not think their owners should be allowed that latitude. The tax will not be imposed upon camels used in wagons or drays; it relates merely to pack camels which, in single file, constitute a destructive factor on our roads. The use of camels in teams should be encouraged.

Mr. MALEY: I hope the amendment will be agreed to. I think it only right that we should have some control over the camels. When we were dealing with the Road Districts Bill, the Committee refused to give the local authorities power to provide for the registration of goats. This was done primarily at the instigation of the member for Carnarvon (Mr. Angelo), who made the astounding statement that camels were more afraid of horses than were horses of camels.

Mr. ANGELO: I have no objection to the amendment, which is quite different from the original provision. This only deals with the registration of pack camels. Many years ago nearly the whole of the camels in the North-West were owned by Afghans. To-day every station owner has his camel team, and nearly all the drivers in the Gascoyne are white men. Very few of the camels are pack camels, and they are practically all driven in teams of 17. Camels have been found to be very necessary in the Gascoyne district, both for carting wool to the port and carting provisions back to the station. As they are driven by white men I cannot see why they should be treated differently from horses or bullocks. I have known of cases in which camels have been more afraid of horses than horses of camels.

Mr. MUNSIE: If there is one class of camel that should not be taxed in this country it is the pack camel, because that is the animal so largely used by the prospector in his searches in the bush. Apparently, however, it is proposed to tax this particular class of animal, and to allow those who are making their living out of them, such as the users in the North-West, to go scot-free.

The Minister for Works: Do you not think we should regulate the use of camels as well as of other animals?

Mr. MUNSIE: I take exception to the registration of pack camels in particular, and the imposition of a license fee in connection with them. I have no objection to the Minister getting all the information required, to enable him to register camels, but I do object to this differential treatment in the case of pack camels.

Mr. Foley: Cut out the word "pack."

Mr. MUNSIE: Then all camels would be included. If the Minister would introduce a clause providing for a registration fee for every animal, horse, bullock, or camel, we might be prepared to consider it. There are more white men using camels to-day than there are foreigners, particularly where they are driven. I am not prepared to make a man with a camel team pay a license when a man with a horse team pays nothing. I move an amendment—

That paragraph (b) of the Council's amendment be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is said that there is a great deal of traffic as a result of the use of camels. I understand that there should not be a prohibitive amount imposed in connection with the registration of these animals. If the hon. member would be prepared to accept a suggestion from me that the license fee in the case of camels should not be more than 5s. that would be agreeable to me. This would give us some hold upon the owners of camels, who should be regulated in some way. Under the old Act there was provision for the imposition of a fee of £1 in the case of camels for hire, and varying amounts in other cases.

Mr. Smith: Another department for collecting fees!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Apparently I am always hurting the hon. member's feelings. The work would be done, and the fees would pay the expenses of officers who already exist.

Mr. Foley: They pay a fee now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Why should they not continue to pay a fee?

Mr. Munsie: Why should they?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not care what colour the camel drivers may be, if they are getting their living in the State they should contribute towards the revenue of the State.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am not prepared to accept the Minister's suggestion. If he would accept from me an amendment to strike out all the words after "camels" and add the word "all," making the paragraph read "require the annual registration of all camels," I think that would meet with my requirements. I have had numerous deputations from men regarding the real position so far as the use of camels is concerned.

The Minister for Works: You could get twenty deputations from people in Perth against the income tax.

Mr. MUNSIE: And the Minister will get them, too, because that is unjust. Why place a special tax on those men because they happen to be using camels?

Mr. Foley: Their industry is not taxed as much.

Mr. MUNSIE: Under this Bill they will pay just the same as any other class of drivers.

Mr. Smith: Why does the Minister want registration of camels?

Mr. MUNSIE: For the purpose of taxation.

Mr. MALEY: In many parts of the State, on account of the dry stages, horses could not enter into competition with camels; but elsewhere the horse is being unnecessarily displaced by the camel. The horse requires feeding, and in that way promotes production. A registration fee should be imposed on camels in order that their owners may contribute some revenue.

Mr. FOLEY: I have no wish to see any section of the community specially taxed. Horses and camels have been used together on the outback roads of this State, and greatly to the disadvantage of the horse owner, and also of the motor driver. Camels are nearly always driven by Afghans. Horses have to be fed, and petrol is very expensive; yet the Afghan charges just as heavily as the horse teamster or the motor driver. Moreover, the Afghan lives on the smell of an oil rag; and thus he contributes little or nothing to the revenue of the State. The white teamster or motor driver generally maintains a home, whereas the Afghan merely camps alongside the road. Certainly, the Afghan camel driver who competes with the wheeled vehicle, which is taxed, should also be taxed. The prospector who goes out with perhaps one or two camels will willingly pay the registration fee when he knows that the Afghans are paying heavily.

Mr. MUNSIE: Perhaps the Minister can suggest an amendment which will get over the difficulty. I am willing to admit that the man who uses pack camels should pay something as well as the man who uses camels to draw a wagon. A prospector generally goes out with three camels—two pack camels, and a riding camel. Prospectors have already expressed strong objection to paying license fees on their camels. Under this amendment camels in a wagon team will not pay any fee at all.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member's difficulty might be met by imposing a registration fee of 5s. on pack camels used for the carriage of goods.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes. I ask leave to withdraw my amendment on the Council's amendment.

Amendment on the Council's amendment by leave withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will withdraw my motion "That the Council's amendment be agreed to" for the purpose of substituting another.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I now move—

That the Council's amendment be agreed to subject to the following amendment: "That in paragraph (b) all the words after 'of,' in line 1, be struck out and the following inserted in lieu: 'all camels, and the payment of an annual registration

fee of five shillings per head for pack camels used for the carriage of goods.'"

Mr. MUNSIE: Should not the Minister include the words "for hire"? The prospector, whom I wish to exempt, carries goods.

The Minister for Works: I shall agree to insert a proviso to exempt prospectors.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the following proviso be added:

"Provided that camels used for prospecting purposes shall be exempt."

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

No. 11. Clause 61—After the word "and," in line two, insert the words "Sub-section (a) of":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 12. New clause—Add the following clause, to stand as 12: "Apportionment of fees between districts.—12. (1) The local authority of any district which has, after the commencement of this Act, received any vehicle or other license fee for a vehicle used for the carriage of passengers for hire, or the carriage of goods for reward shall, if the license has been wholly or mainly exercised in another district, pay such fee on demand to the local authority of such other district. (2) If any dispute shall arise between local authorities touching the question as to which district a license has been wholly or mainly exercised in, the question shall be tried and determined by a police or resident magistrate in accordance with the prescribed procedure."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This is the outcome of a particular case that happened in the Leonora district. Cobb & Co. run motor-cars, and the bulk of their time is spent in the Leonora-Malcolm road district but, for some reason not quite clear, they license one of their cars in one district and another in an adjacent district, but none at all in the Leonora-Malcolm district. It was shown that, in the Mount Sir Samuel district where they paid one fee, they stored a car for one night, and in the Wiluna district they had a car for only a day. The Leonora-Malcolm district feel that they have a right to their proper share of these fees. I believe the same thing occurs in a few other outback districts, and I am advised that it is only a matter of justice to agree to this amendment. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 13. New Schedule.—Add a schedule, as follows:—Fourth Schedule.—The following is the scale of weights referred to in

Section 34 of the Act, regulating load (including the weight of vehicle) to be carried according to the width of tire:

Vehicle.	Width of Tire.	Weight per inch in hundred-weights.	Load.
wheels.	For Tires of—		tons. cwt. qrs.
2	1½ inches ...	4	0 12 0
4	1½ " ...	4½	1 5 2
2	1½ " ...	4½	0 16 3
4	1½ " ...	4½	1 13 1
2	2 " ...	5	1 0 0
4	2 " ...	5½	2 2 0
2	2 " ...	5½	1 7 2
4	2 " ...	5½	2 17 2
2	3 " ...	6	1 16 0
4	3 " ...	6½	3 15 0
2	3 " ...	6½	2 5 2
4	3 " ...	6½	4 14 2
2	4 " ...	7	2 16 0
4	4 " ...	7½	5 16 0
2	4½ " ...	7½	3 7 2
4	4½ " ...	7½	6 19 2
2	5 " ...	8	4 0 0
4	5 " ...	8½	8 5 0
2	5½ " ...	8½	4 13 2
4	5½ " ...	8½	9 12 2

The width of bearing surface as defined by Section 4 of the Act is for the tires as originally made, and does not permit of any extra weight by increased width owing to any spread of tire occasioned by wear or otherwise.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This is consequential. It provides a new scale of weights which it is hoped will prove satisfactory. I am afraid some of the country road districts will not be quite pleased with it but it represents a compromise. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. SMITH: The schedule does not go far enough. Whoever drew it up appears to know little about it. A two-wheeled vehicle may carry 12 cwt. including the weight of the vehicle, but the vehicle would weigh the best part of 12 cwt. It will mean that people who hire these vehicles will have to pay a man to make two or three trips instead of one. The schedule might be suitable for the country, but it is not suitable for the metropolitan area, where we have good roads, and where heavier loads could easily be carried.

The Minister for Works: We have to deal with sulkies.

Mr. SMITH: A man with a light sulky should be able to carry a heavier load on the well metalled roads of the metropolitan area. The weight should be increased by 1 cwt. per inch.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This Bill applies to the whole of the State. Perth has magnificent roads but the country districts have not and, if vehicles in the country are overloaded, they cut through the surface, and cause great damage. This schedule represents a good compromise.

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

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a committee, consisting of the Attorney General, the Minister for Works, and Mr. Munzie, appointed to draw up reasons in disagreeing with one amendment and in agreeing to another with amendments.

Reasons adopted and a Message accordingly returned to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1919-20.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 21st November; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Business undertakings, continued; Hon. W. J. George, Minister.

Vote—Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage undertaking, £88,034:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This is a very large undertaking and involves close on two millions sterling. Surely the Minister will give some information to the Committee regard to it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [10.41] The report of the Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department has been on the Table of the House for some little time, but I had hoped to get it printed and distributed amongst hon. members before now. Unfortunately, however, for various reasons it is not yet available. Hon. members will see from a foot-note that "the Estimates are based on rates of pay obtaining on the 1 July, 1919, that several industries are now before the Arbitration Court applying for considerable increases of pay, that it is impossible for the department to forecast the effect the awards may have on the costs of works and undertakings." Hon. members will have noticed in the "West Australian" to-day that an award has been given by the Arbitration Court in connection with the Railway Department employees. That award will make a considerable difference to the whole of the labour employed by the Government of Western Australia. So far as the Railway Department is concerned I understand that the difference will be considerable, probably £250,000 per annum. So far as the departments which I control are concerned, the effect will be to increase the expenditure by something like £50,000 per annum. I cannot give the apportionment of this particular work, but very few words are required from me to show that our Estimates of expenditure are likely to be largely exceeded. The amount of revenue received and paid into the Treasury last year was £146,500, including about £4,000 cash payments for interest on sewerage main capital and sundries. The actual amount received, therefore, was £150,065. For the present financial year we expect to be able to collect £154,000 and a good deal of this is to come from

increases in the sale of water to the railways, shipping, and domestic services. And further, I am pleased to say that the alteration in the system of collection is bringing into the Treasury a larger amount of arrears; in fact, looking at the collections up to this day, I find we have already exceeded by about £2,000 the amount collected for the same period of last year. I have had this question of arrears gone into very carefully, and when the figures were brought before me by the officers I wrote off about £2,000 which seemed to me to be uncollectable. As to excess water accounts which have been left after the tenants who should have paid them vacated the houses—some will say it should have been collected before the tenants went out, but those experienced in household property will know that the sudden departure of a tenant is not always to be foreseen—I am sure we can do nothing more than we are doing now. Wherever we find small excesses of water at the time of reading the meter the chief inspectors endeavour to collect there and then. In a number of cases the amounts for rates have been in arrears for some time. Those cases are dealt with sympathetically. I think the Committee will be with me in this. When, as the result of hardship, a man is prevented from paying right up to the day, I do not think the Committee would wish me to press him. The expenses last year charged to Consolidated Revenue amounted to £34,959, whereas the estimate for this year is £38,000, or an increase of £3,000. This is made up of increases in salary expenditure owing to advances which have been dealt with several times in the House, and £2,000 operating expenses. But, as I have previously stated, the award which has been delivered will cause our expenditure to rise considerably. In the working of the scheme the year just passed has been rather a good one, as we were able to use a large quantity of water from the Victoria reservoir, much more than for many years past, with the result that we were able to keep down our pumping expenses. We have made provision in the Estimates for the increased cost of coal, and also in case there is a further increased cost on account of wages. The capital expenditure to the 30th June last was £2,015,526. The amount of capital expended in works last year was £53,525. The capital account was reduced by £21,038 through the Metropolitan Water Supply Department being relieved of the capital expenditure on the Wellington-street buildings now occupied by the Taxation Department. The main items of capital expenditure last year were, supplementary bore in Loftus-street, rising main, etc., £11,000, new pumping plant at North Fremantle, £2,300, enlargement of mains and improvements of water supplies at Nedlands, Midland, Guildford, Armadale, North Perth, West Perth, Claremont and Subiaco, £13,000; while on account of sewerage there is an amount of £3,500 expended in the extension of reticulation sewers, and £6,400 in the

erection of new filter beds. The only storm-water drainage work carried out last year was the Hyde Park drain, representing £2,857. In regard to the future, the department is faced with the fact that the consumption of water is steadily increasing; and many of the mains which were laid when the population was much smaller are absolutely inadequate to meet the present demand. We have laid down Mount-street during the last 12 months a 36-inch main. In the first place there was a 12-inch main, and later the 18-inch main, which was laid about ten years ago. We could have put in a smaller main on this occasion, but knowing as we do that the growth of a city like Perth is very rapid, it was considered to be uneconomical to put down a 30-inch main, notwithstanding that the 36-inch main will not be fully taxed during the next seven or eight years. But the cost of raw material has been very high. We have had to pay at the State Implement Works and Monteith's for material to make the pipes about 50 per cent. more than we used to pay for the finished article. We have paid up to £20 per ton for pipes which a few years ago would have cost £8 or £9. Therefore the efforts of the officers are directed to conserving the water and deferring as long as it is safe to do so the expenditure of the capital on the enlargement of the mains, because we believe that within the next two years the cost of raw material will return to normal again. The enlargement of a main in Perth is not to say that the revenue will be increased in proportion to the expenditure. The people are using more water, it is true, but the rating in Perth proper is so high that very little extra money can be expected from the increased sales of water, because the rating allows the consumers to take a very large quantity without further expenditure. There are various proposals afoot for improvements and extensions covering the requirements of this and future years. I am sure the Committee will recognise that the engineers are carrying out their duties well if they are looking, not merely to the next five or ten years, but are considering the ultimate requirements of the city up to, say, 30 or 50 years ahead. I do not wish the Committee to understand that we are entering upon a scheme such as that; but whatever improvements we are making are all part of a scheme which, in the judgment of the engineers, will be required at the end of the period I have mentioned. There are some other matters which can be fully explained when we reach the Government Property Trust Account Estimates. It is advisable that the water should be very carefully used in the city supplies and that no waste be permitted. At some periods of the year we are supplying to Perth 12 million gallons of water daily. When the original scheme was completed by Neil McNeil, for whom I was manager, and water was first turned on in 1891, its capacity was 500,000 gallons per day, which was then considered sufficient to meet

all requirements for a number of years ahead. I should like hon. members to understand that whilst no doubt the department will be able to meet the call made upon it, it is still advisable to preach economy in the use of water. The Public Works Estimates show that in 1916-17, when the metropolitan and goldfields water schemes were amalgamated as one organisation, the expenditure on salaries was £46,488. It is estimated that the figure this year will be £41,311. The amount expended on salaries in the Metropolitan Water Supply Department last year was £22,130. This year it is expected to reach £23,204. The position in regard to the permanent officers of the Metropolitan Water Supply Department who enlisted with the A.I.F. is as follows: from the 1st July this year to the 15th September, nine officers resumed duty, their aggregate salaries being £1,584, while to make room for them, eight temporary officers with aggregate salaries of £1,110 were retrenched. There are still 15 permanent officers to return, their aggregate salaries being £2,532. We find it is not always practicable to pay off a man to make room for another officer, as the returned soldiers naturally are somewhat out of touch with their work and it is advisable that we should keep on, for a little time at least, officers thoroughly in touch with their work, so that the returned soldiers may have a chance to thoroughly understand the position. It is very hard to retrench married men with families who have been employed as temporary officers during the absence of the soldiers. It is one of those things which cannot be helped, and every effort is made to deal sympathetically with those who have to retire. If there is a chance to find them employment in any other department that chance is availed of. The amended rate books for this year provide for two instead of three balances in the year, it being found that two are quite sufficient, and that as against three it saves considerable expense in books and clerical work. The amended rate notices for this year have resulted in the saving of a fair amount. The departmental officers are now writing up the rate books in their ordinary time, which has effected a saving of about £175. Formerly special men had to be put on to do this work, or else the departmental officers were called upon to do it in overtime. With regard to sewerage to the 30th June last, 615 sewerage house connections were made. Of these 574, or 93 per. cent., were paid for in full. An extension of time for payment was given in nine cases, while there are only 32 debtors to the department who owe small balances. The system established in connection with the sewerage business has proved a great convenience to the general public, and the action of the Government in installing the system has been appreciated. We also find that general complaints on the part of the public have been considerably minimised. That is principally due to the fact that an officer has been specially appointed to go

into these complaints and settle them at once.

[Mr. Piesse took the Chair.]

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [11.1]: The Minister has stated that the expenditure last year for the purpose of installing three new mains in various places, including North Perth, amounted to £18,000. Later on he urged upon hon. members the necessity for seeing that economy was exercised so far as the water supply was concerned. It is a matter of impossibility to be anything else but economical in the use of water, if one happens to be living in North Perth. It is impossible to get water in that locality. I was surprised to hear that a portion of this £18,000 had been expended in North Perth in increasing the size of the main to that district. The summer has hardly started and we have only had one really hot day, but on that day it was impossible to get sufficient water to put on the garden. When the new reservoir was put in at Mt. Hawthorn, the position, so far as North Perth is concerned, was relieved to some extent. Since then, however, it has become gradually worse. During this summer, if we have a hot spell I am afraid the people, particularly those who live at the top end, in Walcott-street, for instance, will not get any water at all. I trust the Minister will see that a more adequate supply is given to that portion of the city. In connection with the policy adopted, I was told earlier in the session that I would have an opportunity of dealing with that on this vote. It seems to me that the Government have adopted a principle, irrespective of the justice or otherwise of the position, of putting officers off in order to replace them by returned soldiers. The returned soldiers are not looking for that class of repatriation. They do not want men put out of work in order that they may be given a job, more particularly when it comes to a question of sacrificing a man who has a record of many years of good service. If there are officers in the service who were there before they enlisted and went to the war, and whose places were taken temporarily by other officers, I have no objection to the old officers getting their positions on their return. It is, however, going too far to put off a man who has been 18 years in the service and who was close on 50 years of age when war was declared and against whom there are no complaints, in order to replace him by a returned soldier.

The Minister for Works: Are you referring to Austin? If, so this man has not been put off.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes, but I do not know him personally.

The Minister for Works: I know he is a really good man.

Mr. MUNSIE: I have it on good authority that this officer was served with a notice that after a given date his services would not be required.

The Minister for Works: He will not be put off. If you had not brought up the matter I would not have put him off as I know the man very well; but your information is quite correct.

Mr. MUNSIE: I believe the same thing has been done with other officers. I must protest against the introduction by the Government of this principle of putting people off in order to replace them by returned soldiers. I am not, however, opposed to preference being given to returned soldiers. Where there is a job vacant for which two men are applying, one of them being a returned soldier, it is the duty of the Government to give the returned soldier that position. I contend that the principle about which I am speaking is not one of preference to returned soldiers, and that they are not looking for that kind of work. It simply means that the Government are putting numbers of people on the labour market, which is a bad principle. I trust the Minister will make a note of the position regarding the supply of water to the ratepayers. No one can grumble at the price that is charged for excess water, but the rates themselves are fairly stiff and the people are entitled to get a fair supply for the money they pay. I do not know how people will get on in some of the suburbs of Perth if we get a spell of hot weather. Last Saturday, the first hot day of the summer, it took quite five minutes to fill a cup from a water tap turned on full.

Mr. SMITH (North Perth) [11.8]: I endorse the remarks of the member for Hannans with regard to the water supply at North Perth, and I am afraid the position this year will be a serious one. The supply last year was bad enough, but since then many more houses have been built in the district. I do not suppose there is any portion of the metropolitan area where building has been so rapid as has been the case at North Perth. With the increased demand for water there is bound to be a breakdown of the supply in the summer. I trust the Minister will make special inquiries into the position beforehand so that he will not be caught. I do not know if it is possible to temporarily hitch up with the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme.

The Minister for Works: We have any amount of water but the difficulty is to get it through the mains.

Mr. SMITH: I am pleased to hear that Mr. Austin is not being retrenched. It would have been a scandal if he had lost his position. He has served the country well, and it would have been an injustice to have dispensed with his services. I am surprised at the net results of the working of the department. If there is any Government department that should pay its way, because of the high rates that are charged for water, it should be the Metropolitan Water Supply Department. As far as I can make out from the figures the department is being run

at a big loss. The expenditure this year is put down at £88,000 and there is £70,000 set down for interest and sinking fund which makes a total expenditure of £158,000. The sinking fund should not be included in the expenditure, and I do not know how much of that £70,000 is interest and how much is sinking fund. I may assume, however, that £20,000 is for sinking fund. We are old that there will be a considerable increase in the expenditure of £88,000. That is only to be expected. The cost of living has gone up very much and men must be paid a reasonable living wage. The expenditure of £158,000, even allowing for increased wages, will be £4,000 over the estimated revenue. Who is going to make up the difference?

Mr. Pickering. It ought to be a paying proposition.

Mr. SMITH: It ought to be one of the best paying propositions in the State. Everyone must use water and pay for it. We have a cheap supply, but we are charging the consumers very high rates for it. I do not see why it should not pay handsomely. There is something loose in the department when such a state of affairs exists. The sewerage system is an excellent one. It has been some 14 years in operation, and it is not yet complete. Apparently the department are not in a hurry to complete the scheme. We still have the pan system in force, and for some reason or other the department refuse or neglect to connect with the sewerage system various tenements in the city. Some Government offices still remain unconnected. It would be economical to connect them even if the connections had to be removed in a couple of years. The cost of installing a connection is £40 or £50; and if that amount can be saved in a year or two, as against the continuance of the pan system, the isolated cases I refer to are simply spoiling an excellent scheme. Surely 12 or 14 years' notice—the period during which the sewerage system has already existed—is sufficient to enable owners, including the Government, to make arrangements to connect their premises. There is also the question of rating properties for storm water drainage. I saw the Minister on this subject, and he promised that he would look into it, but unfortunately I have not heard from him. Many properties have been rated without any provision whatever being made to relieve them of storm water. I know of a property in North Perth where after heavy rain it is impossible to get into the premises without wading through water over one's boots; yet the owner is charged by the Government a storm water rate. I do not know whether the department have to do with the supply of water to railway trains, but it does seem extraordinary that to-day the Railway Department should be training water from Perth to Fremantle. A water train, I understand, runs from Perth to Fremantle every night.

The Minister for Works: That is a railway matter, and I have nothing to do with it.

My department are willing to supply the Railway Department with all the water they require at Fremantle. If the Railway Department choose to train the water, my department cannot help that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [11.18]: I regret not having had the opportunity of looking through the department's last report, which is supposed to have been laid on the Table but unfortunately cannot be found.

The Minister for Works: It is here. I have it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That explains why I could not get it.

The Minister for Works: It is the only copy I could get. I have sent to the Government Printer for copies, but could not get them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We are at the end of November, and the report should have been printed and distributed long before this. The member for North Perth says the metropolitan water supply is a losing proposition. I do not agree with him. On the 30th June, 1918, the whole scheme had £18,000 to its credit; and for years the metropolitan water supply has been showing a profit. The last year when the contrary was the case was 1908-9, and then the loss was some £500. I agree with the member for North Perth that the Government act unfairly in the matter of the storm water rate. In the district I represent there has been no extension whatever of storm water drainage for years, and yet the Government are rating this year for the first time an area which does not and never will derive any benefit from the existing storm water drainage, the contour of the ground being utterly against the very possibility. I refer to the land about Marmion-street.

The Minister for Works: I will inquire into that. If the position is as you state, the matter will have to be rectified.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is another complaint I have to make. The Fremantle Lighting and Tramway Board are working under an arrangement by which they draw electricity from the Government supply. In November of last year the board received a letter from the Water Supply Department asking whether they would erect a pump which was required by the Melville road board for the supply of higher ground. The Fremantle Tramway Board replied in the affirmative, and from that time to the present day have heard nothing further from the Water Supply Department. Instead of acting fairly by Fremantle under the agreement, the department have been trying to arrange the matter with the Perth City Council, because they consider that by this course they can save ¼d. per unit. At all events, the least the department could have done was to reply to the Fremantle Tramway Board's letter written as far back as November, 1918.

The Minister for Works: I will look into the matter. Had the hon. member mentioned it before I would have had it looked into immediately.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I discovered this only about a week ago. The department, instead of writing to the Fremantle Tramway Board, wrote to the Melville road board, who have nothing whatever to do with the supply. Next, I wish to call attention to the amounts charged to consumers for alleged excess water. It is no use for the department to keep up any longer the bluff that air does not work the meters.

The Minister for Works: The rate is all right, but you think the quantities charged are wrong?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes. It is an absolute fact that the air does work the meter when not a drop of water is passing through. I know the Minister only wishes to charge fairly, and there are good grounds for complaint as to the quantities of excess water charged.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [11.26]: I listened with much interest to the remarks of the member for Hannans, and I have a case of the same nature to bring forward as that to which he drew the Minister's attention. It is the case of a man named Sawkins, who joined the sewerage maintenance staff of the department in 1912, and is now the fourth oldest hand in that branch. Since the outbreak of war ten new men have been appointed to fill vacancies created in the branch. One can quite understand the need for putting off temporary employees now, but this case of Sawkins is a special one. This man, having an injured knee, said it was of no use his trying to enlist, because he knew he would not be passed. It is asserted by the foreman that all the men on the staff volunteered to enlist. As a matter of fact, a lot of them made no attempt whatever to enlist. This man, Sawkins, has no black mark against him. He is a married man. Through injuries received in the service of the department, he has never volunteered. I know that the man who is in charge has a particular bias against men who have not offered their services.

Mr. Munsie: And he has made it pretty hot for them.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Discussing the question with him I said, "I have a son at the Front, but I am strenuously opposed to married men with responsibilities going to the Front." His comment was that he had no time for any man who did not volunteer, whether single or married.

The Minister for Works: Who is that?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Mr. Lawson.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington—in reply) [11.30]: The member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) spoke of Walcott-street, North Perth. I will have inquiries made into that.

Mr. Munsie: It was increasing the storm-water drain.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I understand the hon. member wants more water in North Perth. I will see whether it can be done. In regard to the putting off of men to make room for returned soldiers, it is sometimes very awkward, because many of the temporary officers have heavy responsibilities. It is one of the things the war has brought, and all that we can do is to treat the cases sympathetically. In respect of Austin, I remember that he worked for me many years ago. Fortunately, there is no question in respect of him, because an opening has been found for him. As for Mr. Sawkins's case, I am astonished to find that the member for York (Mr. Griffiths) has been talking to Captain Lawson about him, and that Captain Lawson was otherwise than sympathetic. I shall inquire very closely into that, because I am not going to allow any officer to have peculiar opinions of his own, if they are opposed to what the Government have laid down. He is there to carry out orders, whoever he may be. The member for North Perth (Mr. Smith) said the water supply was bad last year. He may have been round a particular district where there was a little shortage but, on the whole, North Perth has been fairly well supplied. However, I will inquire into it. The hon. member said the water supplies were disappointing. He seemed to have the idea that it was a question of management as to the amount of money we can get out of the people. Nothing of the kind. It is a question of the amount we are authorised to levy. We cannot get from them more than is permitted by the Act. I thought the people were carrying as much as they could be expected to carry. We can only levy our rate on the assessment. The hon. member says the rate is too high. What would he say if I were to increase it? The only way I can get revenue is by raising the rates. During the last two years, when we were effecting necessary retrenchments in the Water Supply Department, members of the House were around to me nearly every day asking me not to put off this man, but to put off the other man. Yet members come here and talk to me of economy! Scarcely any man in the department can be put off without some members of Parliament coming along and giving me special reasons why he should not be put off, why somebody else should be put off in his stead. It is time that sort of hypocrisy ceased. It is true that certain sewerage connections in the City have not been made. I have felt some diffidence in forcing private people to connect up their premises when the Government themselves would be mad to connect buildings which we know will be replaced within a year or so. The hon. member said it would cost £50 to make certain connections. It is in keeping with the hon. member's usual extravagance. It will cost between £500 and £800 to properly sewer the barracks, below this place; but would any hon. member, preaching economy, wish me to put that money into the building when we know that as soon as we can get the Federal people out of the Post Office buildings, we shall have those premises

for the accommodation of the department? It is silly, and I am astonished at a grown man and a business man talking in that way. There seems to be a misunderstanding with regard to the storm water rating. The function of the Government in connection with storm waters is to lay the main drain that will serve a certain area, and the area which can be drained by the main drain may then be rated. It is a matter for the local authority to make the connections with the drain. Immediately the Government have laid down the main drains, they can impose their rates and no law can compel them to do anything more.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: After the drain was put down, they fixed an area.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No doubt the hon. member has cause for complaint; there are other people who have cause for complaint. There have been some portions which could not be drained into the storm water drain and, when such cases have come under notice, they have been relieved at once from the rating. I shall inquire into the matter and if I find, as no doubt I shall, that the facts are as stated by the hon. member, I shall get the matter rectified. The hon. member spoke of water being taken to Fremantle by the Railway Department, but that is not my business. Some years ago the Water Supply Department discovered a fine supply suitable for railways at Walter's Brook, Maylands. The Works Department charged the Railway Department for all the water they took from that supply, but I preferred to transfer the supply to the Railway Department.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That was found over eight years ago.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Works Department lost a certain amount of revenue owing to the transfer, but it was all in the family and I consider I did the right thing. No doubt the railway authorities find that they can run water down to Fremantle by train more cheaply than they can obtain their supplies at Fremantle. I regret that the departmental report is late. Some returns should have reached the Government Printer earlier, but owing to one of the accountants, Mr. McKinlay, having to be sent away, owing to a breakdown of health due to the work he has been doing, his work has been thrown on to others in the department. I hope to do better next year if I am still in office and, if I am not, no doubt someone else will try. The member for North-East Fremantle also complained, no doubt with good reason, of the Water Supply Department being slack in replying to the Fremantle Lighting and Tramway Board. I shall inquire into that point and ascertain why there has been no reply, and whoever is responsible for the omission will have to answer to me. I shall let the hon. member have the explanation. The hon. member complained also of the water meters. This is a matter of which everyone complains, and it is hard to know how to deal with it. I have been investigat-

ing the matter of a house which has been shut up for months and yet the meter shows that the consumption of water has been greater than it was when the house was occupied. We endeavour to get the best possible meter. When complaints are made regarding excess charges and I feel that a bit of common sense is wanted, I generally exercise my power and write the amount off. If the member for North Perth (Mr. Smith), when he gets the water supply report, will turn to Table A, he will find all the information he requires. He will find that the aggregate surplus of income over expenditure during the years which have gone is £97,528, and, deducting a certain amount paid off debentures in 1912, there is a net surplus of £76,000. We shall have to keep adding to the expenditure on our water supplies in order to keep pace with the increased demands for water. We can raise only another penny or so and, if I raise that penny the hon. member will blow me up for rooking the people and, if I do not raise it, the hon. member will blow me down for failing to make the revenue and expenditure balance, so I shall have to throw myself on the mercy of members.

Vote put and passed.

Vote, Other hydraulic undertakings chargeable to revenue, £32,663:

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I wish to speak at some length on this vote and, as the hour is late, I move that progress be reported.

Motion put and passed.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.47 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 26th November, 1919.

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

QUESTION—RAILWAY LOCOMOTIVES.

Hon. H. STEWART asked the Minister for Education,—With reference to the Government Railways—1, How many locomotives are in use? 2, The number of different types or classes? 3, How many locomotives of each type are fitted with spark arresters or preventives, effective when running on Collic coal? 4, The number of locomotives of each type which, on 30th November, 1918, were fitted as in Question 4?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, 303 in actual work at present. 2, 25. 3, All locomotives are fitted with spark arresters and the following, viz., Class D, 2; Class E, 24; Class Ec, 2; Class F, 8; Classes O and Oa, 17; Class R, 4; Class M, 1; total, 58, have been fitted with an improved type and are effective on Collic coal under the best conditions; but perfect spark arresting, together with perfect steaming is not yet arrived at. 4, Class C, 3; Class D, 1; Class E, 6; Class Ec, 1; Class F, 1; Class G, 1; Class N, 2; Class O, 4; Class R, 1; total, 20. Note.—In the case of the C, G, and N engines referred to in paragraph 4, the improved type of arrester has been removed, as it interfered with the steaming of these particular classes of engines.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. J. Cornell leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. J. E. Dodd (South) on the ground of ill health.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS.

Further re-committal.

On motion by Hon. J. Nicholson Bill again re-committed for the purpose of further considering clauses 211 and 249 and a new clause to stand as Clause 269.

Hon. J. F. Allen in the Chair, the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 211—What shall be rateable property?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Yesterday Mr. Nicholson moved that a proviso be added to this clause, beginning with the words "provided further that nothing herein contained shall exempt the Crown or any trading concern." I have looked into the matter and found that the sponsors for the State trading concerns have laid it down that they must trade fairly and equitably with private concerns. The Minister in charge of them admits that they should trade on an equitable footing with private concerns. There is some difficulty about the Crown paying taxes, but when the Crown trades it becomes a trader and therefore should be amenable to the conditions which operate against all other trading concerns. Take the case of two timber mills, one a State trading concern and the other a private concern. Both are cutting up the roads in a road district. The Gov-