

BILL—PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th September.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW (Metropolitan-Sub-urban) [5.10]: This is a Bill which lends itself to a discussion in Committee more than on the second reading. There is very little doubt that the House will be in agreement with the main motives underlying the Bill, and I congratulate my colleague, Mr. Duffell, on bringing it forward. I believe Mr. Duffell is affectionately known amongst his friends as "Uncle." I have no doubt that after the Bill is passed, he will be known amongst dumb animals as "Grand pa." I fancy some of the clauses will require to be carefully looked into. There is a clause, for instance, dealing with the hours that a horse shall work, and I think that perhaps will give rise to a certain amount of discussion. I am not sure whether we should not go the whole hog and give horses the right to apply to the Arbitration Court. But the clauses in which I am particularly interested are those dealing with the question of vivisection, and I would like to have the assurance of the leader of the House that those clauses have been brought under the notice of the responsible health authorities in the State. I see that persons employed in vivisection are exempt from the operation of the measure, provided they have a license from the Government. I speak open to correction, but I do not know what authority at present exists for licensing anybody to perform vivisection. I do not know that there is anything in the nature of vivisection or anti-vivisection legislation in this State, and I am not sure how anybody is to receive a license. Then, undoubtedly some of the provisions seem to me to be far too drastic. Paragraph (g) of Clause 5 exempts any operation of the nature of an inoculation or of a feeding experiment. It therefore seems to me that the Bill defines inoculations and feeding experiments as operations. A subsequent clause says "An animal which has suffered one operation shall not be subjected to another." I do not know whether the intention of the mover is that if an animal has received one inoculation, or has been subjected to one feeding experiment, it shall not undergo another. But in any case, even supposing that is not the intention, and that the paragraph will not bear that construction, I think the clause goes too far when it says that an animal which has suffered one operation shall not be subjected to another. Many of these operations are of quite a trivial nature, and I do not think that there is any reason, provided the experiments are carried out without pain and the animal is suffering no inconvenience, why another operation should not be performed.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Would shoeing a horse be an operation?

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: Not under the Bill. It is not vivisection. I think members will agree that those engaged in experimenting

on animals in the interests of science are as humane as are any other section of the community, and I am sure all those experiments are, as far as possible, carried out without the infliction of any more pain than is unavoidable. Where possible those experiments are performed under an anaesthetic. That brings me to another clause, which provides that an animal subjected to an operation shall, during the whole of the time thereof, be so under the influence of some anaesthetic as to be insensible to pain. That should be made a little clearer. There are not only general anaesthetics, but local anaesthetics. In general surgery on the human subject we frequently do considerable operations under local anaesthetics. I should like it to be made clear that the use of a local anaesthetic is not debarred in an experiment on an animal. These points should be definitely cleared up before we reach the Committee stage. In the meantime I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

On motion by Hon. J. Nicholson, debate adjourned.

BILL—CARRIERS.

Order of the Day read for the resumption of the debate from the previous day.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 5.18 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 30th September, 1920.

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

QUESTION—REPATRIATION, ESPERANCE DISTRICT.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (for Mr. Green) asked the Premier: Will the Government permit pastoral leases to be granted to applicants in the Esperance district as elsewhere, and the Repatriation Board to grant assistance to returned soldiers in the Esperance district as obtains in other localities in the State?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied: Pastoral leases will be granted in the Esperance district as elsewhere. Each returned soldier's application for assistance will be dealt with on its merits.

QUESTION—ESPERANCE NORTH- WARDS RAILWAY.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (for Mr. Green) asked the Premier: 1, Will the Government arrange for the continuous shipment of rails and sleepers from Albany to Esperance instead of allowing the boat to be idle for a week to ten days at a time at Albany at the expense of the taxpayer? 2, Will provision at once be made in the Estimates for the sum necessary for the completion of the Esperance Northwards railway to the 64-mile dam, which has received the King's sanction, as the Minister for Works informed the last deputation that the money already available would only be sufficient for construction to 46 miles northwards? 3, Will the clearing and formation for the balance required to be done to 64 miles be at once proceeded with?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied: 1, All the available sleepers are being sent forward, viz., 6,000 per month, but at times the "Eucla" can only take part cargo. Rails are being negotiated for and, when available, will be forwarded. 2, Funds will be provided for such work as can be done this financial year. 3, This would be neither economical nor calculated to expedite the construction of the line.

QUESTIONS (2)—RAILWAYS, INCREASED FARES.

Apprentices and Junior Workers.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that great dissatisfaction exists over the extremely large increase in railway fares, in many cases approximately 100 per cent., for apprentices and junior workers? 2, Is he aware that in many cases after the large increase in fares is paid there is only about 1s. per week of their wages left towards the maintenance of these juniors? 3, Will he reconsider the rates with a view of granting some relief?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, No, but I am aware that the rates of pay for apprentices and junior workers working 48 hours per week laid down by the recent railway award are as follow: junior workers, per day of eight hours, up to 16 years 4s. 3d., 16 to 17 years 4s. 9d., 17

to 18 years 6s. 7d., 18 to 19 years 7s. 10d., 19 to 20 years 9s. 7d., 20 to 21 years 11s. 3d.; apprentices, per week, 1st year of service 19s. 6d., 2nd year 26s. 6d., 3rd year 38s., 4th year 49s. 6d., 5th year 60s. 6d.; clerical cadets, per annum, 15 to 16 years £67, 16 to 17 years £74, 17 to 18 years £103, 18 to 19 years £123, 19 to 20 years £150, 20 to 21 years £176. These rates leave considerably more than 1s. per week after payment for railway travelling. 3, The question of a season ticket at two-thirds the full rate for apprentices is under consideration. The department has been so extensively defrauded by such concessions that it is proposed they shall, if adopted, be obtainable only on production for sight of the apprentices' indentures.

Clothing Trade Apprentices.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that the apprentices referred to in the preceding question are apprentices in the clothing trade receiving 7s. 6d. per week? 2, If so, what steps does he propose to take to remedy the position.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: I am not aware of it, but I will accept the statement as being correct. I ask whether we are expected to carry over the railways apprentices at less than cost in order that private employers may get cheap labour?

Mr. O'Loghlen: The only alternative is direct action.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is robbery.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

QUESTION—MIDLAND JUNCTION WORKSHOPS.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (for Mr. Green) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that at the present time the employees in the iron trades at the Midland Junction Workshops are so short-handed that they are required to work one and four-fifths hours per day overtime for four days a week? 2, Is it a fact that some little time ago first class workmen in the same department had their services dispensed with, although a large number of engines were laid up at the time awaiting repairs? 3, If the facts are as stated, what was the reason for the dismissal of the workmen referred to?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. 2, No suitable men have been put off since April, 1919, when four fitters were paid off owing to men returning from munition working. 3, Answered by No. 2.

QUESTION—RAILWAY PROJECT, UCARTY-YORKRAKINE-NORTH BAANDEE.

Mr. PIESSE asked the Premier: 1, Has he received the report of the Railway Advisory Board dealing with the Ucarty-Yorkrakine-North Baandee agricultural area? 2,

If so, is it his intention to lay the same upon the Table of the House?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied: 1, No. 2, Yes, when received.

QUESTION—MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

Mr. JONES asked the Premier: 1, Is a man named K. Bolton employed by the Medical Department as an inspector of hospitals? 2, What are his duties and the conditions under which he is employed? 3, Do his duties include collection of hospital fees? 4, What salary does he receive? 5, Is he paid any commission on amounts of fees collected, and, if so, at how much per cent.? 6, Does he get any commission on amounts paid voluntarily and not collected by him? 7, What amount was paid this man in commission for six months ending 30th June, 1920?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied: 1, Yes. 2, The duty of this officer is to inspect the records of hospitals so far as they apply to the collection of patients' fees, and to supervise the work of hospital collectors generally. The conditions of employment are those applying to any other public servant under the Public Service Act. 3, No; this officer does not personally collect any hospital fees. 4, £288 per annum. 5, No. 6, No. 7, Answered by 5 and 6.

BILL—LUNACY ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Attorney General and read a first time.

BILL—ROADS CLOSURE.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—PARLIAMENT (QUALIFICATION OF WOMEN).

Third Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. P. Draper—West Perth) [4.45]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before the third reading of this Bill is passed, it is necessary that an absolute majority of the House should be in favour of it. The question is, "That the Bill be now read a third time."

Question put:

Mr. SPEAKER: There being no voices against the Bill, and having counted the House and found that there is an absolute majority present, I declare the third reading of the Bill carried.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH ENDOWMENT LANDS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 28th September.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [4.47]: This Bill is a new invention so far as local government in Western Australia is concerned, as it provides for a city within a city under different laws. There is a possibility of its being successful but there is no doubt it will cause a good deal of ill-feeling amongst a large number of the ratepayers. I do not think the residents of North Perth and Leederville would be satisfied if they had to pay a higher rate for the administration of the wards in their districts under any conditions which may be made through the leasing of the endowment lands.

Mr. Underwood: How do you make out that they would pay more?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Because there is a new system of rating provided for. Under the Act, Leederville and North Perth, which join the district of Perth, are to be rated on the annual rental value, less a percentage for outgoings, but under this Bill provision is made for rating on the unimproved land value. The same thing does not apply so far as other areas in Perth are concerned. It only applies to endowment lands dealt with in the Bill.

Mr. Foley: Is it not going to apply right through?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have a certain amount of doubt as to whether the clauses contained in the Bill are really genuine, and whether it is actually the intention of the promoters of the Bill to rate on the unimproved value, even if that is inserted here.

Mr. Foley: Absolutely.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have a doubt about the "absolutely" uttered by the hon. member, who is a member of the Perth City Council.

The Attorney General: Will you not give them the chance?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Bill itself creates a doubt in my mind. If hon. members will refer to Clause 7, they will find that the discretion as to whether it shall be on the unimproved land values rating or the annual rental value rating is left to the council. Under the Roads Act, district boards have to rate on the unimproved land values.

Mr. Johnston: That is not carried out.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The local authorities themselves have no power to rate on the annual value without the consent of the Minister. Suppose the land in this district is sold or leased with the idea on the part of the persons taking it up that the unimproved land values system of rating will apply. They improve the properties to a large extent and perhaps put up expensive buildings, but as soon as they finish their works they find that the city council, without any reference to anyone, can alter the system to the annual rental value basis.

Mr. Foley: We can make it compulsory in Committee.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am dealing with the Bill as it stands. Under such conditions the persons concerned would have to pay a larger amount of rates than they anticipated at the time they bought or leased the land. There may be large areas in the territory left unsold. In all probability the council would revert to the annual value basis for the purpose of getting an increased revenue from those who have improved their holdings. I hope the Minister will either delete this discretionary clause altogether, or else provide something similar to that contained in the Roads Act, whereby the local authority, before altering the system of rating, must have the approval of the Minister.

Mr. Johnston: That approval is always given as a matter of form.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Not always. I do not see why this discretionary power should be allowed entirely to the city council. The ratepayers should have the right of appeal if they so desire. I approve of the idea of making compulsory the system of rating on the unimproved land value.

Mr. Johnston: We will do that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This is a dual Bill. Not only does it give the city council power to dispose of certain lands; it also gives them power to construct tramways and run omnibuses or motor cars. I see no objection to that. It may be the forerunner of the taking over by the council of the tramways in the metropolitan area. Although the Government may approve of the construction of these trams, the city council is limited under the Bill to the construction of tramways to the adjoining districts. Adjoining districts mean those districts which are actually connected with the Perth district. If the city council desire to go further out into a district which does not adjoin their lands, it will be necessary to have a special Act of Parliament passed to enable them to do so. That being so, it is a flaw in the Bill which should be struck out. There is no doubt, as the Minister has stated, that when these tramways are constructed, they will be run by the Government so long as the Government hold control of the tramways in the metropolitan area. It will not pay the city council to run them for many years, over such a small area. It naturally follows that immediately these tramways are constructed, agreements will be entered into with the Government to run them. That works very successfully in Fremantle. We have two districts there, each owning its own tramways, but the running of these tramways is left to the Fremantle Tramway Board. I am rather pleased to see that the city council propose to construct these tramways themselves. I am strongly opposed to the Government spending any money on tramway construction in Perth. I think I can prophesy that things will have to take a decided change as to cost of material before the city council will construct these tram-

ways, even if the Bill is passed. The cost of material is very high, and, when hon. members realise that rails cost nearly £40 a ton, they will see what difficulties have to be contended with.

The Attorney General: Undoubtedly that is the case at present.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: When the Minister, in this Bill, empowered the city council to run omnibuses or motor cars, why did he give them power also to make by-laws for the control of the traffic? We have a Traffic Act which applies to the whole of Western Australia, and by-laws are made by the Governor-in-Council to suit the various parts of the State. I find an encroachment being made by this Bill on the Traffic Act, for by-laws can be made under which another authority will have an opportunity of making regulations different from those made under the Traffic Act to apply to other parts of the metropolitan area. All the powers contained in the Municipalities Act regarding traffic were embodied in the Traffic Act. The Minister, under the Bill, will have no say over this particular area. I see that the Bill also gives the Government the right to purchase after 25 years. That, of course, does not prevent the Government from purchasing by agreement at any time if such a course is found desirable. However, under this Bill they can claim the right to purchase after the lapse of 25 years without any payment for goodwill. I may point out that before 25 years there will in all probability be no goodwill to pay for. Another important matter which I think should receive attention in all measures relating to local governing authorities is the provision of a sinking fund whenever money is borrowed. Every loan should carry a sinking fund sufficient to redeem the loan on maturity. Very few of the local authorities that have borrowed money are providing sinking funds sufficient to repay the loans on maturity. Of course, a sinking fund of two per cent. is sufficient to redeem a loan with a currency of, say, 30 years; but it is very far from being sufficient in the case of a loan having a currency of, say, 15 years.

The Attorney General: Of course, the loans under this Bill will always be subject to the provisions of the principal Act.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is, only as regards the raising of the loans.

The Attorney General: In other words, you consider that the sinking fund should vary in accordance with the period of the loan.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes. There is provision for a special rate to be struck in case there is a loss on the working of the undertaking. This refers not only to the tramways, but to anything connected with the various requirements of the area. It is proposed that a special rate shall be struck in case there is a prospect of a loss in the following year. In my opinion that is entirely wrong. I consider that a special rate

should be struck when there has been a loss during the past year. Suppose a special rate is struck on account of a loss being feared twelve months hence, and suppose that the twelve months have passed and that the undertaking has been successful. Then the rate is not required, and the money would remain in the bank until there is a loss, or else it will be spent unlawfully by the local authority in other directions.

Mr. FOLEY: The local authority cannot do that until the ratepayers have authorised reallocation of the money.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That applies only in the case of loan moneys, not in the case of moneys raised by rating. I consider that the local authority should strike a special rate to meet a loss that has actually occurred, and not to meet an anticipated loss, which may not occur. The part of the Bill which principally affects the future community of Perth is that which deals with the endowment lands. Those lands represent an endowment given to the Perth City Council to hold for all time for the benefit of the future citizens of Perth. Any revenue which may be derived from this area should be held in trust. The Bill, however, proposes to do away with the endowment and to wipe it out entirely. The Bill provides merely for the present, and thus entirely kills the very idea of endowment. There will be no endowment as soon as this measure has been enacted. The Bill empowers the city council to sell the endowment lands without any provision being made for payments received from the purchasers to be invested, say, in the joint names of the municipality and the Government, in which case the revenue could be applied for the future benefit of the city. I contend it is wrong to give the council power to sell the land at any time and to use the money in any way they may think fit. It is a wrong to those who gave the land originally, and it is a wrong to future generations of Perth citizens. A much preferable course would be to grant the municipality only the power to lease for long terms. I would not think it necessary to limit the term of leasing—it might be for ever—but the value of the land should be re-appraised after a term of years. That is the only proper method of dealing with endowment lands so that future generations may enjoy the benefit of them. I hope that the Minister, even if he insists that the municipality shall have power to sell, will introduce an amendment to provide that any funds derived from sales shall be deposited in the joint names of the Government and the Perth City Council.

The Attorney General: But you would not object to the funds being applied to the repayment of loans?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It would all depend for what purposes the loans had been raised. These endowment lands are given to all the people of Perth, and not to a particular section of them. On reading this Bill I was rather surprised at the proposed action of the Perth City Council. What they

ask for in this measure amounts almost to pure socialism. It is as strongly socialistic as anything ever proposed in this Chamber. On reading Clause 40 hon. members will see that the Perth City Council ask for power to construct a town, to build theatres and music halls, to run picture shows, to construct bathing establishments—in fact, almost everything under the sun. They want power to run refreshment rooms and accommodation houses. If this is not pure socialism, what is it? Undoubtedly the intention of the council, if they can raise the money required, is to build a town on this endowment area. No doubt it is an advantage to the people of this State that the Perth City Council have become so advanced in their ideas that they propose to prove that such undertakings as are mentioned in the Bill can be run more successfully by representatives of the people than by individuals. I shall not oppose that portion of the Bill, because I regard it as a step in the right direction. A public accommodation house is better than a private one. A public refreshment room is better than a private one. A public theatre or a public picture show is better than a private one. I only regret that instead of bringing down this Bill to deal with the endowment lands in such a fashion, the Government did not bring down a Bill to deal with the entire area of the city of Perth and thus give the city council an opportunity of showing what they can do on the same lines as have been adopted by municipalities in other parts of the world. New South Wales has legislation dealing with the entire city of Sydney. Many of the provisions of our existing Municipalities Act are not suitable for the city of Perth, and some of the provisions would be better out of it so far as the country districts are concerned. If we passed an Act putting the whole of the area of the city of Perth under one law, it would be far better for the citizens. I suggest that the wiser course would be for the city council to get a special measure dealing with the city as a whole, rather than get this particular measure dealing only with the endowment lands. The Bill contains one or two clauses of a contentious nature, the power to sell land being the chief of them. If it is decided to sell the land some provision should be made for depositing the money. There are not many points in the Bill to which one would object. I support the second reading.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora) [5.16]: I support the second reading. I do not know whether I should take as a compliment the statement of the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) that the Perth City Council are striking out in a socialistic direction. The hon. member should recognise that a few years ago he could not have made that statement of the city council. Had I been on the hustings, I should have taken advantage of the hon. member's remark to observe that since my return to the

council the audience could see for themselves how things had improved. Had the Attorney General been introducing a City of Perth Bill, every provision in this measure would have been included. Every member of the metropolitan community realises that there is room for only three municipalities in the metropolitan area, one at Fremantle, one at Perth, and one at Midland Junction. Prospects of the consummation of this ideal are looming in the distance even now and, when it is realised, the many activities in the metropolitan area will be governed in a much less expensive form than is the case at present. It is a good augury that the Perth City Council, after having absorbed several of the suburban municipalities, are now showing an earnest desire to improve the outer portions of the city. Had the municipality of Leederville still had separate existence there would have been no thought of any improvement in the western portion of the district. Since the amalgamation, administrative costs have been cut down, and the city council are able to launch out into bigger enterprises. I do not think the city council will be able to go on with the work entailed under this Bill for some time to come. The Attorney General and the deputy Leader of the Opposition have both pointed out that the cost of rails is exorbitant, and, in fact, practically prohibitive. We realise that if the city council begin this work, they will have to face the cost not only of rails, but of material for road making; and the construction of the roads will have to be carried out contemporaneously with the building of the tramway. The city council are in a better position than the Government to do this. The city council have an area of 2,281 acres on the Ocean Beach immediately west of the city. In 1917 the council purchased an additional 1,290 acres between the endowment lands and the city, known as Perry's estate. It has been computed by responsible and competent officials that the city council would be able to provide road material from the Lime Kilns estate at much lower cost than from any other source of supply. This is one of the great advantages resulting from the purchase, and this is a reason why the city council should be permitted to extend their boundaries in the interests of those who live in the city and who desire homes a little out of the city. No member has any desire to see slums in existence in Perth. The slum conditions are being eliminated; there is almost an entire absence of slums in Perth to-day. The city authorities wish to make it possible for people to reside on these endowment lands and at a reasonable cost. The Federal Government made a proposition to take certain portions of Perry's estate for the erection of soldier homes. Unfortunately, not only the price but the conditions offered by the Federal Government prevented the city council from selling some of that land which would have meant a great deal to the soldiers requiring homes. Under the

conditions of sale the city council provided for blocks of a certain size and for playgrounds and open spaces for groups of blocks. Although the council paid a big price for the estate, it was thought that satisfactory returns could be obtained from the rates. So far the scheme has failed. Much money has been spent in carrying out a contour survey of the land from the eastern boundary to the western boundary of Perry's estate. It has been found that there is land which, given easy means of access, will provide homes for many working people and permit them to live under better conditions than is possible in the existing suburbs. The Bill provides for the mode by which money may be raised and the conditions governing borrowing. The question raised by the member for North-East Fremantle regarding arrangements with adjoining municipalities does not apply because the tramway would run through the Perth municipal area. There is only one little strip of land that the council must have in order to complete the scheme. I am just as firm a believer in the non-alienation of land and in rating on the unimproved value as is the member for North-East Fremantle, but I shall not go to the extent, for the sake of a fetish, of cutting out that block of land and having dual control, especially when Perth will be called upon to find all the money. The House can rest assured that a majority of the council—

Mr. Lutey: Some councils would sell the lot.

Mr. FOLEY: The Perth City Council will not. It is desired to sell only sufficient to provide money to effect the necessary improvements. The member for North-East Fremantle characterised this as an innovation established by the Bill. It is not. I quite agree with the hon. member as to the intention of the endowment, but the city council have certain rights with regard to the lands held.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: On such terms as are set out by the Governor.

Mr. FOLEY: And the same conditions can be made to apply under this measure.

The Attorney General: There is no necessity under this measure to obtain the consent of the Governor.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No, but at present it is necessary to obtain the Governor's consent.

Mr. FOLEY: At present the council can sell with the consent of the Governor in Council. If an amendment is needed to improve the Bill, I shall not object. The Perth City Council did not contemplate getting such a Bill through Parliament without amendment, and I am not going to be narrow-minded about any amendments. The question of motor buses and the control of traffic, according to the member for North-East Fremantle, is also something new.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I did not say you were introducing something new. I objected to the dual control.

Mr. FOLEY: The Traffic Act is administered by the Government and the hon. member said the council were asking for control outside the Traffic Act. That being so, the council were asking for something new. If the hon. member will read the clause carefully he will see that it only means giving them the same powers that any other municipality in the metropolitan area enjoy. If a number of motor car owners apply for a motor rank in the city of Perth they apply to the city council, and not to the police or the Minister. Only last week a motor rank was applied for to the city council in Murray-street east of William-street. I fought the proposal, but it was carried against me. It was the city council that gave these people the right to have a motor rank there. It will be the city council alone that will have the right to say from what place motor cars shall start and to what places they shall run within these endowment lands, and the conditions under which they shall run. If the owners of these cars break any of the by-laws, which the Traffic Act permits the city council to make with regard to the use of their own streets, the city council will have power to enforce penalties. I hope that a sinking fund will be made compulsory. If a sinking fund of two per cent. be provided it will be sufficient to liquidate the debt within the period over which the loan extends, namely 30 years. I think the Bill is a fair one as it applies to the citizens of the State. The question of striking a special rate in the event of a loan being required might be considered in Committee. The Bill provides that if there is a loss anticipated for the following year, a special rate may be struck. Members of councils or road boards have no desire to strike special rates. It is an unhealthy thing to do. If in Committee it is decided that a special rate shall not be struck in the event merely of an anticipated loss, but in the event of an actual loss on a previous year's working, I shall not mind. The difficulty is not insurmountable and should not obstruct the passage of the Bill. I do not believe in the dual control of our tramways. I opposed the taking over of the tramways by the Government, but now they have got them it is likely that there will be dual control over them because the city council wish to control those trams which will run to the endowment lands.

The Attorney General: There is a possibility but not a probability of that.

Mr. FOLEY: The city council were trying to get money a little while ago with which to construct this tramway.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Are the tramways connected with the lands now?

Mr. FOLEY: No, they have not yet been started.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How far are the present tramways from them?

Mr. FOLEY: It would mean that the tramways would have to follow a new route. The proposed route I can hardly give to the House, because it is a matter that has been dealt with confidentially. The city council were asking the Government to allow them to construct a tramway from the city to the eastern boundary of the present line.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This Bill does not go as far as that.

Mr. FOLEY: No. Before any tramway can be constructed either the Government or the city council will have to build a line to the eastern boundary of the tramway line.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The city council have no power to do this.

Mr. FOLEY: The city council have failed to raise the money for this purpose, and the House can rest assured that there is no chance of the tramway being built for the present.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It will cost the city council a great deal of money to connect up with the existing system.

Mr. FOLEY: The city council are prepared to raise a loan to construct a tramway from the Hay-street or Wellington-street points to couple up with the tramways that would go through the endowment lands, and negotiations are going on to that end.

Hon. T. Walker: Is it proposed to have a sort of White City there?

Mr. FOLEY: It is proposed to erect residences there, and to make the place a seaside resort on the best lines that can be ascertained from other parts of the world. Pleasure resorts will be provided and it is also proposed to erect theatres there. Some of the land will be leased or sold on which these various places of amusement will be situated.

Hon. T. Walker: Is there any offer from any big company to start there?

Mr. FOLEY: No. If the hon. member could bring along proposals from a big company he would have my whole-hearted support.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I would not like to be a shareholder in the company.

Mr. FOLEY: No, not for many years to come. We know what developments have occurred at Sandringham and Mentone in Victoria, and how bare the country there was some years ago. We have also seen the growth that has occurred along the St. Kilda beach and around Sydney Harbour in the last few years. I think that in a few years' time we shall see equally important developments here. We desire to put into effect a policy that will ensure those people who come here in the future the right of living under the best conditions and enjoying themselves, so that they may be able to live comfortably and happily in those parts that are more remote from the city.

Mr. BROWN (Subiaeo) [5.40]: I regret that the principle of a definite rating has

not been embodied in this Bill in place of an optional system of rating. The time has long since arrived when, instead of our rates being struck on the present system, they should be struck on the system of unimproved land values. For many years past anyone who has greatly improved his property and so increased the value of the property of adjoining owners, has as a consequence been more heavily taxed because of such improvement. This is unfair, and places upon the land an incubus out of all proportion to the return from it. In my opinion the 1,290 acres that it is proposed, to dispose of in fee simple should be retained as leasehold. The experience the world over shows how valuable sites in cities have become as a result of the influx of population. The buyers of this property will derive an unearned increment out of all proportion to the amount that the sellers will get for it, and we shall be still further extending the principle of the sale of land in fee simple. The selling of land in fee simple should be abolished, and the whole principle of the disposal of land should be on the leasehold basis. Under the leasehold principle a much fairer system of taxation would be in vogue against those who were using the finest sites in the various towns. We have heard times without number about the land adjoining our railways and tramways, and the betterment tax. Our lands are brought into use by our railways and tramways, and people who purchase land along these routes reap the benefit of their increased value as a result of the construction of these lines, without any effort on their part. If a tax on the betterment principle was placed upon people owning land adjacent to our railways and tramways, means would be found of raising money that would be helpful to the taxpayers in general, and the owners of the properties would be doing something towards financing the undertakings. I hope when the Bill reaches Committee, Clause 39 relating to the sale of land, will be altered to provide for the leasehold principle rather than the fee simple principle.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Interpretation:

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

That the following be added to the clause: "‘Minister’ shall be the Minister of the Crown charged for the time being with the administration of this Act or any part of it."

The Bill does not provide that any Minister shall administer the measure. In fact, no Government department has anything to do

with the Bill. Why should the Perth City Council have discretion to rate either on the unimproved value of land or on the annual value? Under the Roads Act that discretion is given to the Minister administering the Act.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: While not wishing in any way to hamper the member for North-East Fremantle in regard to his amendment, I must point out that unless the Bill is further amended, there can be no necessity for this amendment. A definition of ‘Minister’ will be superfluous unless the Bill is at a later stage so amended that a Minister will exercise control with regard to it. I would prefer that the member for North-East Fremantle should tell us a little more about what he wants inserted later on. I do not wish to cumber the Bill with unnecessary definitions.

Hon. T. WALKER: The suggestion of the member for North-East Fremantle is a sound one. He pointed out on the second reading that the Bill as it stands gives a sort of sovereign right to the Perth City Council with regard to a certain portion of the territory of this State, to the exclusion of all Government interference. Under the Bill as it stands, there will be no ministerial supervision, and the measure practically ignores or overrules the Traffic Act. Provisions usually found in legislation relating to municipalities and road boards are set aside by this Bill, which will, unless amended, make the Perth City Council all powerful within the endowment area. The member for North-East Fremantle wants to introduce the principle of responsibility, on the part of the council, to the Government.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am not treating the amendment as a hostile amendment; but there is no necessity for it as the Bill is drafted. Speaking from memory, I think the only matters in connection with which the Government would have anything to do would be the approval of by-laws and the giving of consent to the proposed tramways going on the narrow reserve which has been referred to, or to the running of motor omnibuses over that reserve. The member for North-East Fremantle knows a great deal about the municipal law of this State, and on many points of municipal law and administration his opinion would have great weight with me; but if he desires to move amendments which necessitate the definition of a Minister, I suggest that he put them on the Notice Paper, and I will move that progress be reported so that they can be considered.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have only one amendment to move. On the second reading I said that I did not think it right for the Perth City Council to have the power to decide whether they will rate on unimproved value or on annual value. My amendment will be on the lines of the provision in the Roads Act, whereby a local governing body cannot without the permission of the Government change from rating on unimproved value to rating on annual value.

Mr. Johnston: That permission is given as a matter of course.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The question has now become whether we shall insert in this clause a definition which may not be required. The only object of a definition clause is to avoid the necessity for repetitions in the Bill. The member for North-East Fremantle has said that he has only one amendment to propose. I will not restrict him to that, but will assume that he may find occasion for another amendment as the Bill goes through. But if it is only a matter of one or two clauses, there is no necessity for this definition. If the word "Minister" is to occur only a few times in the Bill, what advantage is there in including it in the definition clause? Let me point out that to include the definition of "Minister" in that clause does not appoint a Minister to administer the measure. The Executive Council will appoint a Minister for that purpose, if necessary. If the Committee should insert in the Bill a clause rendering it necessary for a Minister to interfere, surely that clause can contain the words "the Minister charged with the administration of this Act." I hope the amendment will not be pressed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Who would be the Minister called upon to see that those provisions of the Municipalities Act which are incorporated in this Bill are complied with?

The Attorney General: The Minister administering the Municipalities Act.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Bill does not say so. However, not being a lawyer, I cannot argue that matter. The definition which I have proposed is to be found in almost every Bill that is introduced. Why should the Perth City Council, as regards the administration of the endowment area, be placed in a different position from all other local governing bodies? I was going to suggest that we insert the definition "Minister means a member of the Executive Council charged for the time being by the Governor with the administration of the Act." What is wrong with that?

The Attorney General: It may be unnecessary.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In all these local governing Acts there must be a Minister to see that they are carried out.

The Attorney General: If when we have gone through the Bill a definition of "Minister" is found to be necessary, I will recommit the clause.

Hon. T. WALKER: Apparently the necessity for a Minister is ignored in the Bill, and all the powers are handed over to the governing body in the area to which the Bill relates. The member for North-East Fremantle has indicated that there are several matters which will have to be referred to a Minister. In addition, I can point to the question of traffic as being one for the Minister. We should put the Bill on all-fours with the other local governing Acts.

Mr. Money: Clause 44 refers to the Municipalities Act as applying to the Bill.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: At present it appears to be quite unnecessary that we should have the proposed definition. If during the progress of the Bill through Committee it is seen to be necessary, or even convenient, to have such a definition, and if the member for North-East Fremantle still desires it I will recommit the clause.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4, 5, 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Rates on capital unimproved value:

Mr. JOHNSTON: The clause gives the council power, without reference to the Minister, to decide the methods on which the rating shall be imposed. All the rating at this new resort should be on the unimproved capital value, so that those people who lease land from the council shall not be penalised as soon as they improve their property. The Roads Act gives a road board power to rate, of its own volition, on the unimproved value, and on the annual value with the permission of the Minister. I do not think the people who will build residences and theatres and picture shows out on the North Beach should be heavily penalised for their enterprise. If a man breaks the law he is fined but once, whereas if he goes into a new district and builds a home for himself, the local governing body fine him heavily every year by an increased rating, whilst the man alongside him, who has a similar block but does not improve it, escapes being heavily fined, sometimes escapes being fined at all. I move an amendment—

That in line 2 "may in the discretion of the council" be struck out and "shall" inserted in lieu.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The amendment is unnecessary. The hon. member apparently forgets that under the Roads Act they have the option of rating.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Only by proclamation.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Anyhow both systems are open to them. Under the Municipal Corporations Act they have only the power to rate on the annual value.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Only in prescribed areas.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: All that the clause asks is that in addition to the power which the City Council has to rate on the annual value, power shall be given also to rate on the unimproved value. It does not seem reasonable to withhold from them the option. The land is entirely unimproved and so the council ask for power to rate on the unimproved value. Conditions may arise to prompt them to rate on the annual value. I should not like to see them deprived of the option.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Attorney General advanced strong arguments for the striking out of the words which the member for Williams-Narrogin desires to delete. He said that the council had the power now to

rate on the annual value, but they had asked for an extension of power so that they might rate on the unimproved value. In other words, they say "We want to rate on the unimproved value if we desire to do so." Those who purchase land believe that there is a special Act under which the rating will be carried out on the unimproved value. Then the council, if they find that the sales of land are not up to expectations, will rate on the annual value. A road board cannot rate except on the unimproved value and only on the annual value in a special area by permission of the Minister, and on the issue of a proclamation. The proposal in the clause might be a step in the direction of extending the principle to every municipality in the State. It is only of late years that the city council has come to think of this. They used to be strong opponents of the system of rating on the unimproved value.

Amendment put and passed.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin, clause consequentially amended by inserting "shall" in the place of the words deleted, and by striking out from line 2 the words "the annual value or."

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 8 to 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Power to construct and work tramways:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Paragraph (b) reads that the city of Perth is authorised, subject to the proviso, to enter into any agreement with the local authority of any adjoining district for the extension of such tramways into such district. The municipality may wish to carry on their operations further south and no matter how close they may be to a district which is not adjoining, the clause will prohibit them from entering into an agreement with that district. I therefore move an amendment—

That the word "adjoining" be struck out.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It will widen the scope of the clause. I have no objection to it.

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

Clauses 12 to 16—agreed to.

Clause 17—Person injured to submit to examination:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: What is the necessity for this clause? If a person should be injured, would he not come under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: When we deal with proceedings against public bodies, who do not act in their own interests but in the interests of the public whom they represent, it is reasonable that a person who may be injured, should submit himself to an examination.

Hon. T. Walker: He would have to do that in any case.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Sometimes they will not. The clause can do no harm and it might prevent some abuse.

Hon. T. WALKER: The Attorney General must know from experience that it is difficult for an injured person, whether in the service of a private employer or the Government or a corporation, to get to the court. All kinds of difficulties are put in the way, and it is unwise to increase those difficulties. I do not feel disposed to put any obstacle in the way of anyone having received an injury placing his case before the proper tribunal. When the case does come before the tribunal, all the facts are properly presented. No greater powers should be given to a corporation, or to a public body, than are given to a private individual. As the adage says, a corporation is undoubtedly soulless. It acts on the strict letter of the law, and if any technical bar intercedes between the applicant for relief and those who are in the wrong, it is applied rigorously. Generally speaking, one can get more justice from a private employer, who has a feeling of fellow-sympathy with a man working for him, than from a Government, a municipality or a road board.

Mr. Underwood: You are utterly wrong. What about the Workers' Compensation Act?

Hon. T. WALKER: When an accident happens to a Government employee the matter is referred to the Crown Law Department.

Mr. Hudson: You contend that the individual does not hedge it around with conditions?

Mr. Underwood: The member for Kanowna is quite wrong.

Hon. T. WALKER: I know from experience that I am right. If a Government employee is injured, the matter is referred to the Crown Law Department, and if there is a technical omission of any legal form—

Mr. Underwood: You are wrong again.

Hon. T. WALKER: I say that these objections are raised. The Minister may exercise discretion, but it depends upon the character of the Minister, and it is not incumbent upon him to exercise discretion. If it is left to the pure letter of the law, the applicant is liable to fail through lack of compliance with some formality.

Mr. Hudson: No such formality is required in the case of an action against an individual.

Hon. T. WALKER: Undoubtedly, and we should not provide this exemption in favour of public bodies.

Mr. Hudson: They should not be privileged.

Hon. T. WALKER: Quite so. Corporations are prone to be lacking in sympathy.

Mr. Hudson: Is not this a harmless clause?

Hon. T. WALKER: It might be neglected from ignorance, or from a variety of reasons, and it would give an excuse to evade responsibility.

Mr. Hudson: There is no specific date as to when it is to be applied.

Hon. T. WALKER: The clause is quite unnecessary. Anyone going into a court would be fortified with evidence as to the injuries, and that could only take the form of a medical certificate. The clause looks like another species of intimidation to the casual eye.

Mr. Hudson: Does not it give an opportunity to a corporation to have an examination before its own medical officer?

Hon. T. WALKER: It always has, and must have, that opportunity. Does not the Workers' Compensation Act apply similarly?

Mr. Hudson: There is no parallel between an action under the two measures.

Hon. T. WALKER: There is no need for a parallel. An accident occurs and proof of the injuries must be adduced, proof of the employee's examination by both parties. Why make this innovation?

Mr. BROWN: The clause should be deleted because the medical practitioners will be appointed by the council. Further on in the Bill there is a provision for leasing and selling the trams. If the trams were sold to a private corporation, it might appoint its own medical practitioners. This would be indeed dangerous.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The member for Kanowna said that he would rather deal with a private individual than with a corporation or the Government.

Hon. T. Walker: I did not exactly say that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He said the individual showed more compassion than the Government.

Hon. T. Walker: Taken generally, it is so.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is not so. I believe in the extension of Government insurance. Since the Government have insured their employees they have never fought a case. The private employer insures his men and one of the conditions of insurance is that he must fight every case, and the poor injured person submits to being cut down again and again rather than go to law. The Government have shown their readiness to pay reasonable compensation. Minister after Minister has laid down that compensation shall be paid according to the intention of the Act.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Attorney General said he would not agree to give this power to a private individual. There is no difference between giving it to the city council and to a private individual. All local authorities insure their risks, and would be in a similar position to the individual insurer. What is the reason for the clause? It does not appear in any other Act that I know of. If it would be dangerous for a private individual to have these powers, it must be dangerous for a local authority working under similar conditions through an insurance company.

Mr. Hudson: It appears in the Railway Act.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The clause as it stands is not quite satisfactory. A corporation elected by the ratepayers should be protected from claims which are not always genuine. If the member for Kanowna said a company had no soul, I would be more inclined to agree with him.

Hon. T. Walker: It applies to all corporate bodies.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: A company is very different from a municipal corporation.

Hon. T. Walker: They are the same.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Then the hon. member must accept the other side that a jury always leans, and sometimes unfairly, against a corporation. A corporation acting entirely in the interests of the public should have a certain amount of protection. The clause goes a little too far. What was intended was that, if a person refused to be examined, he should not be entitled to bring an action for relief. That would remove the objection.

Hon. T. Walker: Yes.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In order to meet the objections raised I move an amendment—

That in lines 2 and 3 the words "to the person unless the person injured submits" be struck out, and "if the person injured refuses to submit" inserted in lieu.

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

Clauses 18, 19—agreed to.

Clause 20—Power to run omnibuses and motor cars:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We are told there is no tramline within approximately two miles of these endowment lands, and yet power is to be given to the council to run motor omnibuses and motor cars for passenger traffic. There is a proviso, which says that the council shall not run any such omnibus or motor car service beyond the endowment lands and the Lime Kiln estate without the consent of the Governor. What is the proviso for?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The nearest point of the tramline to the lands of the city council comprised in this Bill will, I think, be by the hotel in Subiaco where the tramline turns off towards King's Park. Following the road in a direct line to the boundary, one would have to travel a little under two miles to reach these lands. So long as the council have power to run motor omnibuses for a purpose of this kind, they have power to run them over any road. With regard to the object of the proviso, there is a long narrow strip coloured yellow on the plan, which it was thought desirable to hold as a reserve for public recreation purposes. It was also thought to be unwise to allow the council to run a tramway or motor omnibuses in that reserve without the consent of the Governor.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It would cost the Government about £14,000 to construct a tramway to the boundary of the endowment lands. Before permission can be given for the council to run omnibuses or motor cars through these lands the Minister for Works has to issue a license, but if that license is issued, this motor service will come into direct competition with the tramways. In England motor omnibuses are killing the tramway service, which has reduced the fare from terminus to terminus to twopence, with the object of getting some of the traffic from the motor service. If this land is thrown open the city council will have to apply for a license to run a motor service from the present terminus of the tramline.

Mr. Hudson: Could they not under this clause run them from the Town Hall?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They can only run them in a certain area, and they will constitute serious opposition to the tramways. The tramways can cope with all the traffic. I am not prepared to see £600,000 or £700,000 worth of the people's property scrapped, without making a protest. The Kalgoorlie-Boulder trams have taken away practically the whole of the revenue of the Kalgoorlie-Boulder railway line, and the loss to the Railway Department has been a heavy one. This matter wants watching very carefully. On the Traffic Bill I raised this same point with regard to the Fremantle tramways. Private enterprise will not take the risk of a doubtful proposition; private enterprise comes in only when there is an assured profit.

The Attorney General: From a practical point of view, this Bill will be of no use unless the council get some means of communication.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am out to protect the property of the people. The council should have some means of communication, but not such means as will prove detrimental to the revenue of the State. This clause is a very dangerous one, and, if my information is correct, may prove productive of strong opposition in the form of motor omnibuses, which vehicles have been selling at very cheap prices in England for the past two years.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The member for North-East Fremantle has done a distinct service in drawing attention to the possibilities of this clause. Probably he and I differ on the question of motor omnibuses competing with the Perth tramway system. Such competition might prove effective if a wealthy company had the right to use our roads as they pleased, but I do not think competition of that kind is possible under existing conditions. However, we are entitled to protect our tramway asset. The Government have to run the trams at all times and seasons for the convenience of the public, but motor buses would operate only during

such hours as would be profitable. I do not think the Attorney General would suggest for a moment that Parliament should empower the Governor in Council to authorise the running of motor omnibuses parallel to our tramways, the proprietors of the omnibuses to be at liberty to take them off during periods when the traffic was not payable. The clause needs redrafting in that respect. Of course the council are anxious to get communication with the endowment lands as speedily as possible, and it is a question whether we should permit them to provide temporary means of communication in the event of their deciding to open up the endowment area immediately. We might perhaps allow them to run motor omnibuses temporarily. I do not know whether I am committing a breach of confidence in saying that it is proposed to extend the tramway system as far as Selby-street, which is well on the road to the North Beach—in fact, at the end of the existing settlement in Leederville. The running of motor omnibuses, if permitted, should be restricted to any given point on the tramway system. For instance, if we extend the system to Selby-street, the motor omnibuses would not be permitted to run beyond that street, because, if they were so permitted, they would be running parallel with our trams. As regards the construction of tramways, this Bill only permits the council to build tramways within the endowment area, so as to connect with our system. Possibly the Government might permit the council to construct a tramway through the endowment area to the corner of Thomas-street and Hay-street. The Government would have power to do so under this clause. Similarly the Government might permit the council to run motor omnibuses to join up with the tramway system at the corner of Oxford-street and Newcastle-street. But the Government would not permit the council to run motor omnibuses parallel with the tramways and thus take the cream of the tramway business. It is certain that the motor omnibuses, if competing with the trams, would go off the road during certain periods of the year; at all events, they would do so until the district had become thickly populated, which is not likely to be the case for a number of years. In the circumstances all the Government can fairly ask is that they should be empowered to allow the municipality to run motor omnibuses in such a way that these vehicles will not conflict with the trams.

Progress reported.

BILL—CORONERS.

In Committee.

Consideration resumed from the 16th September; Hon. G. Taylor in the Chair, the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clause 33—Additional evidence where cause of death not satisfactorily explained:

The CHAIRMAN: An amendment has been moved, "That, in lines 5 and 6, the words

'report the matter to the Attorney General, who may' be struck out."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I was not here when last the Bill was under consideration, but I have since read the report in "Hansard." I do not attach much importance to the words proposed to be struck out. They do not occur in the Acts referred to in the marginal note. They are new in this State, and were inserted with the object of giving some control over expenditure which sometimes may be unnecessary. I will not offer any strong opposition to the amendment.

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

Clause 39—agreed to.

Clause 40—Remuneration to witnesses.

Mr. MUNSIE: I cannot move to increase these fees, but I draw the Attorney General's attention to their inadequacy. They are the Supreme Court fees, and were fixed many years ago. I hope the Attorney General will see to it that witnesses are paid a little better than is contemplated by the Bill.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Paragraph (b) provides that the travelling expenses for a medical officer shall be 1s. per mile one way. It is impossible for a medical officer to run a car for 1s. a mile one way. In many cases he will have to hire a car. I move an amendment—

That in line 3 the words "one way" be struck out.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment would serve to increase expenditure, and therefore I cannot accept it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The question of medical fees has been under discussion recently with the medical profession. Alterations have been made in the scale and have been accepted as satisfactory. A medical practitioner going to an inquest will not have to hire a car, because he has a car of his own. I see no reason for increasing the allowance.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I do not agree with the Attorney General. A shilling a mile was the ordinary cost years ago. The cost of a motor car to-day is 1s. 3d. per mile each way.

The Minister for Works: And they want it increased to 1s. 6d.

Mr. Nairn: Over Perth roads it is worth 2s.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: And the price of petrol is still going up. If we want medical officers to attend to their duty, we must either pay them their out of pocket expenses, or, alternatively, increase their salaries as medical officers. We cannot expect a medical officer to hire a motor car at 2s. 6d. a mile when he is allowed only 1s. a mile. The result will be that medical officers will not attend. I trust the Attorney General will review the position.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Shall I be in order in moving that the clause be postponed?

The CHAIRMAN: Not at this stage. The Minister may recommit the Bill for the purpose of further considering the clause.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I undertake to recommit the clause for further consideration.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 41—Penalty on witness neglecting to attend:

Mr. JOHNSTON: Power is given the Attorney General to remit fines. I think it should be extended to cover a reduction of fines. I move an amendment—

That after "remit" in line 1 of the proviso the words "or reduce" be inserted.

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

Clauses 42 to 48—agreed to.

Clause 49—Obstruction of coroner:

Mr. JOHNSTON: Is £20 a sufficient penalty for so serious an offence as that contemplated? It appears to me that for one who obstructed a coroner in, say, a murder case, there ought to be imprisonment.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Only a lunatic would interfere with a coroner in the discharge of his duty. It is not an offence likely to occur. I think the penalty of £20 is quite sufficient in ordinary circumstances, but if the Committee think it is not sufficient I will not object to an increase.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 50, 51—agreed to.

First Schedule:—

Mr. MONEY: I would like the Attorney General to give us some information with reference to the proposal in the schedule to repeal the Fire Inquiry Act, 1887. Under Section 13 of the Bush Fires Act provision is made for certain steps to be taken under the Fire Inquiry Act, and if we repeal the latter we shall be taking away the powers contained under the section I quoted of the Bush Fires Act. Perhaps the Fire Inquiry Act has been unwittingly included in the schedule.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not know whether the hon. member has the Fire Inquiry Act before him, but if he has he will probably see that a corresponding provision to Section 13 is contained in the Bill.

Mr. Money: The provisions are not quite the same.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I think the matter is all right, but if there is any doubt about it I will have the schedule re-committed.

Schedule put and passed.

Second Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1920-21.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 28th September, Mr. Munsie in the Chair.

On motion by the Minister for Works consideration of the Votes—Premier's Department; Minister for Lands and Repatriation, Colonial Treasurer, Minister for Education, and Minister for Public Health, was postponed.

Department of Agriculture (Hon. H. P. Colebatch, Minister); the Honorary Minister in charge of the Vote.

Vote—Minister for Agriculture, £68,222:

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. F. E. S. Willmott-Nelson) [8.55]. In introducing the Estimates of the Minister for Agriculture for the consideration of the Committee, I would like to say that so far as the Agricultural Department is concerned we must all consider it has done excellent work. The department should undoubtedly be a department of experts, and its activities should be confined as much as possible to giving advice and direction on matters of production. The functions of the department consist of giving advice, protection, and education. The department has to administer in all about 20 Acts of Parliament. It has amongst other things to endeavour to control, prevent, and eradicate diseases and pests. We have a competent staff of experts continually travelling in the agricultural districts giving lectures and demonstrating, as well as making personal visits to settlers. Some 8,000 pamphlets and bulletins were issued last year. The department also operates the Wyndham meat works, the abattoirs and sale yards, cold stores, and butter factories.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And wheat.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, at the present time, but that is under a separate Minister.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Mr. Baxter?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, but Mr. Colebatch is the Minister for Agriculture.

Mr. Johnston: I thought the Premier was.

The HONORARY MINISTER: No. So far as the administration of the department is concerned, the staff has been re-organised, and whilst the number of experts has been increased the administrative staff has been reduced by twelve officers. Hon. members will agree it is necessary that in a department such as this we should have experts and curtail administrative expenses as much as possible.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Where have those officers gone?

The HONORARY MINISTER: If the hon. member will refer to the Estimates he will see.

Mr. O'Loghlen: What are their titles?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Some of the officers connected with the School of

Agriculture, for instance, have been transferred to the Education Department.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Then they have not been dispensed with.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Narrogin school of agriculture has been re-organised and improved. There are 44 students there at the present time, and applications largely exceed the accommodation that can be provided.

Mr. Johnston: What are you going to do about it?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The matter is under discussion now, and we are waiting for the report of the Committee which has been looking into the matter with the view of shifting the school. The State farms at Morredin, Chapman, and Denmark serve a very useful purpose indeed in supplying seed wheat, stock, and demonstrating cultural methods. The area under crop has been increased and 8,000 bushels of seed wheat was supplied to farmers last year. Regarding sheep and wool, it will be remembered that the Premier stated that we have now 7,200,000 sheep in the State, as against 4,800,000 in 1915. The 1918-19 clip produced 45,403,000 lbs. of wool, valued at £2,680,000, or an average of just under 14d. per lb. Everyone must say that that is very satisfactory so far as price is concerned. Western Australia is the only State where the area devoted to sheep-raising has been increased, and as hon. members should know we have not really begun yet to utilise the country so far as sheep-raising is concerned.

Mr. Davies: Did the number increase last year?

The HONORARY MINISTER: During last year it did increase and it will go on increasing beyond 7,200,000. The member for Kimberley will bear me out when I say that we ought to be running 50 million sheep in Western Australia to-day.

Mr. Teesdale: There are not many sheep in the Kimberley district.

The HONORARY MINISTER: We have the country capable of running the sheep. There is the great North-West and there are also the eastern districts. Anyone who has been through the eastern districts lately will have noticed the grass knee high and upwards and the absence of stock to eat it.

Mr. Harrison: No fences.

The HONORARY MINISTER: A lot of that grass could be utilised even without fencing. In the old days we were able to make money by shepherding sheep, and it would pay us to do so to-day. In fact, it is being done. Men have gone out with large numbers of cattle and sheep and have done remarkably well. The meat storage works at Fremantle and Carnarvon are approaching completion, and other companies are in process of formation. Western Australian wool is not surpassed by that of any country in the world, and buyers are here at present endeavouring to lay their hands on some of the clip. The Murchison clip seems to suit the fancy of many buyers. The French are always anxious to obtain this wool. In the

Nojonup district, although the breeding of sheep is carried out on different lines there from those of the Murchison, the wool from that district realises the highest price of any wool grown in Australia. The area run by the farmers and graziers down there is greatly increasing.

As they eradicate the poison, they find they can make excellent use of the country. By the kind and sympathetic handling of that part of the State, as we have seen during the last few years, very excellent results will be the outcome.

Mr. O'Loghlen: What has become of the chief inspector of the South-West?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Regarding dairying and pig raising, we have three new butter factories—at Narrogin, Avon, and Harvey—which were opened during the year, and also a new bacon factory. We have two additional butter factories and another bacon factory in course of construction, and a co-operative butter factory has been started at Albany. Factories are contemplated at Katanning and Ravensthorpe.

Mr. Johnston: Why do you wish to shift the Narrogin school?

The HONORARY MINISTER: No doubt that matter is causing the hon. member great heart-burning, but the school is still at Narrogin. He should not worry himself at present. Herd testing has been rather jeered at by some people, but there is nothing more important to the dairying industry than the testing of our dairy herds. The scheme initiated by the department now embraces 10 herds, totalling 101 cows, and the tests compare very favourably with those of other States. One record shows 560lb. for 273 days from a cow estimated to produce over 600lb. in the full year. Nothing is more important than this testing of herds. We often see dairy farmers walking around saleyards looking at cows and getting opinions as to the best cow in the yard. They buy a cow, pay a big price for it and take it home, and when it comes to the test, they find that it falls very much below the average of the scrubbers they have on the farm. I myself fell in. I went to the saleyard and had my pick of 30 cows at a price. I bought two cows; one a big beast with a good udder, altogether a fine looking cow, but the other showed every sort of point that a dairy cow should have. I took them home to the farm and, after the first week, I put a test on them and found that the cow, which I had selected as standing alone out of the 30 cows in the yard, gave a poorer test than any scrub cow I had milking at the time.

Mr. Johnston: Did you look at its escutcheon?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I did not; I looked at what it would put in my pocket by way of butter fat. I read something of considerable interest to-day apropos of the methods adopted by the average or perhaps by all dairy farmers of this country in buying their cows. This is from America where they have evidently fallen from grace as I have done—

At the termination of the judging of some of the dairy classes the attending

farmers were asked to give their judgment upon the merits of five cows that were subsequently led into the ring for their inspection. It was announced that the five cows had been under official test for a season, and that their records would be given out. One of the animals in the ring was a pure-bred Friesian, two were half-breds of that breed, and one was a cross-bred Jersey, and the fifth a cross-bred Guernsey. The assembled farmers were asked to make an inspection of the cows from appearances only, and to pick the best three, placing them in order of merit, accordingly as they deemed they would yield the best net return of money for the season. Keen interest was displayed in the competition, and all the cows were closely examined, the various points being freely discussed. The officials then asked all those who favoured each particular cow to indicate their choice by lining up beside her. It was noted that the greatest number of judges amongst the farmers placed themselves alongside the grade Guernsey, but great was their astonishment when it was announced that they had chosen the very worst tester in the group, whilst the cow which found the least number of supporters (the grade Jersey) had actually given the best yield under the official test.

It goes on to say that no more striking example could be given of trusting to the eye and ignoring the testing of herds. For this reason the Department of Agriculture has given great attention to the testing of herds and I think the result will be excellent indeed. Steps are contemplated to protect the local producers of butter from the difficulties of marketing in competition with the imported butter. Last year Mr. Hampshire was appointed dairy expert, and this officer is doing excellent work. He points out the necessity for permanent pastures to enable butter production to be carried on during the season when we experience such a great falling-off in our output. The production of butter in Western Australia last year approximated 2,500,000lbs. worth £210,000, and bacon to the value of approximately £50,000 was also produced. At last it seems as if Western Australia is making a serious effort in this direction.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If they do not make a serious effort now, with the price ruling at present, they never will.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is quite admitted that the price is high, but the hon. member has surely not forgotten the tremendous cost to the dairymen of bran, pollard, oats, and everything else. Consequently, the profits have not been what they would otherwise have been with the high price ruling for butter. According to Mr. Hampshire the average cow at present prices is worth for butter £30 per annum. He said that a good cow properly fed should bring in £50 a year, or nearly £1 a week. The prospects for the coming harvest are excellent. The total area under wheat is estimated to be 1,250,000 acres, and the area under other cereals, is 250,000 acres. The greater portion of the

increased area cultivated this season is under wheat. The total of oats and fodder crops is estimated at 380,000 acres. I think it is reasonable to anticipate this year a harvest of 14 million bushels of wheat and four and a half million bushels of oats.

Mr. Harrison: We shall need rains this week to get it.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If the rain is necessary, I think it will come. During the year ended the 30th June last, the acreage under potatoes totalled 3,858, while the production was 13,240 tons. The acreage was less than in the previous year, but the production was greater by 1,500 tons, and that in spite of the fact, as the member for Bunbury is aware, that the season was one of the driest and hardest experienced in the South-West for many years. It was only in those spots where irrigation could be carried on or in particularly well suited and damp places where crops were obtained. Considering the dryness of the season the crops were greatly in excess of expectations. Potatoes to the value of £27,000 were exported. There is a considerable area under potatoes this season.

Mr. Johnston: How are the State orchards doing?

The HONORARY MINISTER: They are not involving the State in expense to the tune of £2,000 a year as they were some years ago. Regarding vermin eradication, 14 poison carts are engaged on the worst portions of Crown lands. I am sorry to say that although the rabbits have very greatly diminished—in fact, when travelling through the country, it is surprising how few rabbits one sees—the other pest, the dingo, is increasing, and this in spite of the fact that 9,000 dingoes were killed and paid for last year. Every man who goes out laying baits and killing dingoes knows that a good many dingoes go away into the bush and die which dingoes he never sees and never gets paid for. If we know that 9,000 dingoes have been killed and paid for, how many others have been killed and never seen?

Mr. Harrison: I understand you have a special breeding ground for dingoes down in the South-West.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, ever since the wreck of the "Pericles" when hundreds of tons of butter were washed on to the beach, the dingoes have been going down there and bringing forth big litters of fat pups, and the pest has consequently increased greatly.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Are they breeding dingoes for the scalps?

The HONORARY MINISTER: No, but unfortunately the people have had to put their hands into their pockets considerably to pay for the scalps, and the fact that we got rid of 9,000 of these wretched animals last year shows that we are working on the right lines.

Mr. Johnston: Why do not you increase the bonus?

The HONORARY MINISTER: There is no need to do that when we can wipe out

9,000 which we know of in one year. The time to increase the bonus is when we find our figures falling off. Then will be the time to increase the bonus and try to exterminate the pest.

Mr. Piesse: The dogs are increasing.

The HONORARY MINISTER: People know what can be made at trapping, and there are men who put in their whole time at it. I need hardly stress the necessity for vermin boards and land holders exercising special activity in dealing with rabbits now that the numbers have so greatly diminished. They should not allow themselves to take things quietly, but should work on with the same energy that they have shown in the past, and with the help of wire netting, when that is obtained in sufficient quantities, they should be able to deal with this pest in the manner we all so greatly desire.

Mr. Johnston: Crown lands are the best breeding grounds for rabbits.

Mr. Harrison: There is no chance of getting wire netting, is there?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member may have seen from the newspaper that a deputation waited on the Federal Minister dealing with this question, and asked that a certain course of action should be taken. The Minister replied that Lysaghts could turn out 20 thousand tons of netting a year, and that other firms could also turn out thousands of tons, but that last year only 1,500 tons of netting had been used. He did not see that it was the prohibitive cost of netting that was the cause of this small quantity being used, and that if the Government had fallen in with the wishes of the people the demand would have been ten times that amount. The rabbit-proof fence has been well maintained, and poison is still available for distribution at a small charge. The present conditions in the stock industry are satisfactory and this season promises to give good results. We are going further east with our stock, and land that a few years ago was spoken of as a desert by those who did not know it, is to-day carrying large herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. If anyone had stated 25 years ago that we should see stations in the Laverton district such a person would have been considered to be insane. To-day we see stations east and north, well established over a considerable area of that country. The water difficulty, which has been so troublesome in many parts of the State, does not exist there. We deserve great praise for the three bullocks we sent to the Adelaide show. They got first, second, and special prizes; and the average price obtained for the owner when he sold them was £65 10s. per head. These beasts came from the Midland district. It is not surprising that they did so well in the Adelaide show and weighed so heavily. The area planted in fruit trees in this State is 23,348 acres, of which 16,000 acres are bearing and producing fruit, valued at over half a million pounds sterling per annum. During the war planting

was not maintained at the usual average rate, but there is evidence of a revival in this direction and a growing demand for fruit land. Notwithstanding the great difficulties that we laboured under last year in the matter of our orchards, such as shipping difficulties and others of that kind which I will touch upon later, the State exported a record quantity of fruit, namely, 21,348 cases. This fruit went to England, Sourabaya, Singapore, Batavia, Colombo, Hong Kong, Mauritius, Durban, and Port Said. This shows that we are not content with one market for our produce, but that we are endeavouring to find markets in all parts of the world.

Mr. Johnston: What about Java?

The HONORARY MINISTER:—That market will only take the very best of fruit, and they are very particular there as to what they get. They have a very rigid system of inspection, but I am pleased to say that up to the present we have had no trouble with any fruit we have sent there. The Western Australian fruit is especially noted for its high quality. Before price fixing came into vogue in England, Western Australian apples realised the highest prices. Last year grapes, which were not controlled, were sold in London up to 57s. a case, and pears, which are also not controlled, up to 70s. per case. The Government have made every effort to have this embargo on apples removed. The price is fixed in London for certain months in the year.

Mr. Harrison: It is the fixed maximum price.

The HONORARY MINISTER: These happen to be the months in which our fruit arrives there. As soon as our fruit is all sold the embargo is lifted, and other countries are able to send their fruit in and get any better price that buyers are offering.

Mr. Johnston: It is a shame.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is unfair to Australia that such a state of things can be allowed to exist.

Mr. Teesdale: Are you sure that the embargo is lifted then?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes. All the facts and figures were given in another place, and appear in "Hansard." It is hard that Western Australia, above all the other States, should suffer in this way, because our fruit has proved to be so much superior to any other going from Australia, that in past years it has always realised the highest price. It is better packed and better graded, and better looked after in every way. When I was in England some years ago I was told that there was no comparison between the fruit sent there from Western Australia and that sent from the other States. The Western Australian orchardist is, therefore, hit particularly hard by this fixing of prices.

Mr. Harrison: Who fixes the price?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The British Government. They also fixed the retail price, but shrewd men have been able to find a way out of that difficulty.

Mr. Harrison: It was a war measure.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It began as a war measure, but the war is now over and it has been continued in spite of all the remonstrances that have come from Australia. People found that they could circumvent this maximum retail price. Instead of selling two or three pounds of apples alone they sold a pound of apples, a few bananas, and some other kind of fruit, at any price they liked. This enabled them to get over the difficulty of the retail price. I have reason to believe that the big fruit men in England, the men with millions of money, and who control Covent Garden, have made handsome profits out of this fixed price.

The Minister for Works: The middle man makes the profit.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I trust that the efforts of the Governments of Australia will be such as to cause this iniquitous price fixing for apples to be removed. In Western Australia we are in the fortunate position of being free of the codlin moth, the only State in the Commonwealth in that position. This pest has cost people in the Eastern States considerable sums of money every year and involved a heavy loss of fruit. Many soldiers have been settled in the Swan district and are now engaged in growing raisins. In 1919, 96 tons of raisins were grown in that district, and this year 100 tons have been grown. In 1919, 103 tons of currants were grown and this year 520 tons have been grown. I have been told by experts that they do not know any part of the world better suited for the production of raisins and currants, and vines generally, than the Swan district. There are other places in Western Australia which can also produce excellent currants and raisins. At Woodanilling and in the immediate vicinity, for instance, I have seen some very fine samples of currants and raisins. The meat trade comes under the Agricultural Department. Western Australia has been better off than the Eastern States so far as the price of meat is concerned. Supplies of beef and mutton for the metropolitan and South-Western areas have been equal to the demand. From the 1st March to the 31st August, 11,448 head of cattle were shipped from Derby and northern ports to the metropolitan markets. There is a large amount of feed going to waste in the eastern districts. I hope people will not wait to stock their lands until they procure wire netting, but will take my advice and go in for a little shepherding. They will find that it is a paying business indeed. Those who have taken it on, acting on my advice, have written to me saying that they have made good money out of it. If they can do so others can do the same. Notwithstanding many disabilities, including the high price of feed, great activity is being manifested in the poultry industry.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Now?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Even now, in spite of everything. This indicates how

great the activity would be if poultry farmers could get all the articles so necessary to their business. A very strong body, styled the National Utility Poultry Association, has taken over the Government grounds at Subiaco, formerly leased for the Periscope egg laying competition. This association will continue egg laying competitions there.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The name will kill it.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Not at all. Experts of the Agricultural Department have rendered much assistance in the settlement of returned soldiers, in the way of advice, and reports on properties prior to purchase, and helped in many other ways. Experimental plots in the South-West have been established to determine the germination of and growth of locally grown lucerne seeds, and the results so far have been very encouraging. I also started another plot towards the extreme south of the Scott River, and yet another one on the Mye River, by the Nornalup road. These plots are divided into small sections for potatoes, root crops, and fodder. I found that without lime good results cannot be obtained. We all know that there are enormous deposits of lime at Lake Clifton.

Member: They have been there for 30 years.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, and they are still there; but if hon. members think that nothing is being done in this direction, they are utterly wrong. A railway has been built to those deposits, and there are 50,000 tons of lime at grass to-day drying. When the company now working the deposits commenced operations, every expert said, "Your trouble will be that after you have pumped the lime out and have spread it preparatory to sending it away in trucks, it will dry very rapidly and the wind will blow it away. As fast as you pump it out, it will dry up and blow away." What has been the actual experience? That the lime will not dry. All the experts, with all their knowledge, have proved to be absolutely wrong. The trouble to-day is not that the lime dries too quickly and blows away, but that it will not dry. Hon. members know that lime can be dried by putting it through a kiln, but that process means putting another 3s. or 4s. per ton on the cost. The great idea in the South-West is to use lime not in small quantities but in large quantities. The cheaper the lime, the more will be used.

Mr. Maley: Cannot the lime be used wet?

The HONORARY MINISTER: That is a matter I am prepared to argue. I say lime can be used wet. The only trouble is that when using wet lime one pays for water, which one does not want. Lime can be spread wet. At last year's Royal Agricultural Show there was exhibited a machine which would spread wet lime. That machine has been enlarged, with the idea of spreading wet lime in considerable quantities. But even then the trouble is not got over. Although one can escape paying the company for so

much water, I doubt very much that the Commissioner of Railways would grant a reduction if he was told that a truck consigned as carrying five tons of lime carried in fact four tons of lime and one ton of water.

Mr. O'Loughlen: There is lime at Dongarra which goes 86 per cent.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I have tried the Dongarra lime and also the Busselton lime; and although these will give, with sulphuric acid, an 86 per cent. test, they are not soluble in water when put in the ground. That is the trouble with the Dongarra lime and with the lime obtained on Busselton beach. At Busselton and at Capel the finest lime in the State is found. The lime at Fremantle is only a circumstance to it. There is 80 per cent. of silica in the Fremantle lime. The Busselton lime is absolutely pure, but too expensive for agricultural purposes. Of the Lake Clifton lime, as I have said, there are 50,000 tons at grass drying; and it is hoped that that lime will be dry enough for distribution to the farmers in January next. The company's plant has been duplicated, and it is working three shifts. It is capable of pumping from 40 to 50 cubic yards of lime per day; so hon. members can work out for themselves whether sufficient lime will be obtainable at Lake Clifton. The Lake Clifton lime is going to be used, and so is alunite. In conjunction, they furnish what is wanted in the South-West, namely lime and potash. The land in the eastern districts, of course, is not deficient in potash; and as one goes north one finds the proportion of potash increasing. Hence the great productivity of the land on the Gascoyne River.

Mr. Angelo: Which you do not approve.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I have always approved it, and I regard it as second to none in the State. With these remarks I think I can safely leave the vote to the consideration of the Committee.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin). [9.36]: The Honorary Minister has brought me to my feet by his remarks about the Narrogin school of agriculture. I admire the Honorary Minister for his outstanding honesty. He lets the cat out of the bag at times when it is difficult to discover from other members of the Cabinet what the intentions of the Government are. I give the Honorary Minister my meed of appreciation for his frankness and honesty. For some considerable time the Government have refused to spend any money on this very excellent educational institution. Some 18 months ago a sum of nearly £2,000 was approved for expenditure on the farm to provide accommodation for the many boys applying for admission. I am given to understand that when the present Treasurer assumed office he blocked that expenditure.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why is not the school placed under the Education Department?

Mr. JOHNSTON: That ought to have

been done years ago, and I am glad that the Premier has lately announced that he is going to place the school under the Minister for Education, who is always voted plenty of money for education. The Honorary Minister tells us that Mr. Colebatch is the Minister for Agriculture, though I have always understood it was the Premier, with Mr. Baxter as under-study. At any rate, to-night we have a frank admission from the Honorary Minister that the committee controlling this institution have been instructed to go into the question of removing it to another locality. I wish to know why the Government have given such instructions to the committee, and what is the specific nature of the instructions?

The Honorary Minister: To ascertain whether there is a more suitable site.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I look with a good deal of suspicion upon the Government's action in regard to agricultural education, and more especially as to the instructions they have given with regard to the selection of a site for an agricultural college. I cannot forget that a little while ago a committee was appointed to inquire into this question. However, the Government did not give that committee a fair and honest brief to go over the whole of Western Australia to find the most suitable site. They were instructed to select a site within 20 miles of Spencer's Brook.

The Minister for Works: Oh!

Mr. O'Loughlin: Is that true?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am assured that that is so. If it is not so, I shall be pleased to have a denial from the Government. The same statement has been made in this House previously, and has not been denied. If any Minister can deny it, I shall be pleased to have the denial. Further, I shall be even more pleased if the Minister for Works will lay the papers relating to the matter on the table of the House. At any rate, I am assured that such instructions were given to the committee.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We will be able to tell you after next March.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The House ought to have the information now. The House has no right to let this vote go through until the information has been made available. If it is a fact that the committee were confined in their selection to an area within 20 miles of Spencer's Brook, the reason is obvious. Three or four Ministers represent that particular locality in Parliament. There must have been a fear in the minds of those gentlemen that some more suitable site existed outside that radius of 20 miles.

The Minister for Works: There are not four Ministers representing that locality in Parliament.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The three gentlemen who control the Agricultural Department represent constituencies in that area—the Premier, Mr. Colebatch and Mr. Baxter. Were it not for that fact, I venture to say, that limitation of 20 miles

would never have been imposed. The committee in question is one in which I would have great confidence, if only its members were given a free hand. The object of placing Mr. Monger, the president of the Farmers' and Settlers' Association, on the committee was evidently to keep the Country party well satisfied. However, if the committee's investigations are subject to that 20-miles limitation, their report will not be worth the paper it is written on, in my opinion. Mr. Monger will give the country a fair deal, just as other members of the committee would do. But, if the committee are to obtain the best site in Western Australia, why not let them go over the whole of Western Australia to select a site? During the last 18 months or two years the State farm at Narrogin has certainly improved, and it is today a far better educational institution than it ever was before in its history. Some years ago an area of 1,000 acres adjoining the old farm was purchased by the Government, and on that 1,000 acres of very good land the present institution is established. From time to time the Narrogin State Farm is condemned by hon. members who have not visited the institution since that extra area was added to the farm. Before this country is committed to heavy expenditure in the eastern districts, or elsewhere, in the way of duplicating the buildings already erected at Narrogin, I would ask the Government to conduct another business trip similar to the one which was made through the eastern areas. I would ask them to have a business trip to the Narrogin State Farm. I know that on both sides of the Chamber there are a number of members who are practical farmers. I would be quite content to accept the verdict of the member for Mount Magnet (Mr. Troy) and other members who are experienced farmers as to whether the Narrogin State Farm should be closed up or not. Only a few months ago the Attorney General was good enough to visit that farm, and he was so pleased with it, and with its general management, that he at once sent his boy to be educated there. I do not think anything stronger could be advanced in praise of the institution than the fact that men in high positions, like the Attorney General and Sir Walter James, after personal inspection of the place, send their boys there to get the excellent education in agricultural subjects, as well as in general matters, that is given at the farm, which I think should be converted into an agricultural college. In regard to agricultural education, I cannot understand the attitude of the Government in not providing up to date agricultural schools with plenty of accommodation. The school at Narrogin has accommodation for only 44 boys. We are prepared to give 44 boys a two-years' course, to take in 22 new boys per annum to obtain an agricultural education in a country whose slogan is produce, produce, produce. And this from a Government whose chief claim to

the affections of the people is based on their active policy of land settlement. Concurrently with this we are giving education to as many boys as require it in clerical subjects, making of them clerks and typists. Yet we are not prepared to give more than 22 boys per year a State agricultural education—and I think that six or eight of those 22 annual vacancies are reserved for scholarships. It is a stigma on the Government, and I give credit to the Labour Government for that in years gone by, when Mr. W. D. Johnson was Minister for Agriculture, he approved of the expenditure of £1,000 on accommodation for boys at Narrogin. That money has never been spent. It is absolutely necessary that further accommodation should be provided, preferably at Narrogin, for the agricultural education of at least an additional 100 boys per annum. Already at Narrogin alone over 40 applications for admission into the farm school next February have been refused. A pleasing feature of the education given there is that when a boy has been through that college frequently his parents are anxious to send a second son to take the courses there. I should like in passing to compliment the director of that college, Mr. Shugg, upon the excellent tone that pervades the institution. Boys and parents alike rejoice in the manner in which Mr. Shugg has pushed the school forward, and I hope the Government will find room immediately for another 100 boys there, rather than allow them to be trained in the ordinary State schools as typists and clerks.

Mr. Pickering: What sort of accommodation has Mr. Shugg?

Mr. JOHNSTON: The superintendent has a little box for himself and his wife, and is asked to pay board for his wife. The main feature is that the place has been absolutely starved in equipment. They have not the laboratory that they should have, neither have they the necessary tools and machinery.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do not you think it is justified when the Government are considering the removal of the institution?

Mr. JOHNSTON: It may be said they have been considering the removal ever since they stopped the expenditure of the £1,000 approved by Mr. Johnson six years ago.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Perhaps I have to take the responsibility for that.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Then all I can say is that I thought better of you. However, the point I complain of is the delay. Whilst I think this institution should remain in Narrogin, it is clear that there should be accommodation somewhere in Western Australia for the agricultural education of several hundred boys, since the country puts land settlement in the forefront of its stable policy. The Government are simply using the possible removal of the institution as an excuse for inaction, what time the boys of both town and country parents have to go into clerical occupations for want of opportunity for acquiring a thorough agricultural training.

Even if an agricultural college were established in another part of the State, the institution at Narrogin should be retained as a farm school. A farm school would be necessary as a feeder to the agricultural college, in the same way as the Perth Modern School is a feeder to the University. I urge the Government to keep that point of view carefully in mind before, without inspection and proper inquiry, they say in a offhand way, "You have a lot of poor land on the Narrogin farm school, and therefore we will close it up." The institution is absolutely necessary in the interests of the State, even if it is to be retained only as a feeder to an agricultural college. I was pleased to hear the Minister's enthusiasm in regard to the possibilities of our eastern agricultural areas for the production of sheep and wool. There is no doubt that in this respect the drier portions of our wheat belt have a tremendous future before them. As time goes on, the drier portions of the wheat areas will obtain recognition as a great sheep area, such as has been acquired by the Great Southern and the districts west of the Great Southern. However, I am sorry that the Minister had nothing more hopeful to offer those who desire to grow sheep in the eastern areas than that they should go back to the time of their forefathers and employ shepherds. I know that the Minister only puts that forward as a tentative proposal because of the high price of wire netting, but it would be far more statesmanlike on his part if he brought forward a proposal to supply the producers of Western Australia with wire netting at a reasonable rate. Whether this can best be done by importation, by bringing from the battle areas of Europe some of the huge quantities of netting and barbed wire to be found there, or whether it can best be done by assisting private enterprise to establish a wire netting factory in Western Australia, or even by establishing another of those State industries so dear to the heart of the member for North-East Fremantle and manufacturing wire netting from our Yampi Sound iron deposit—which of these courses is the most desirable I do not know, but I know that the farmers of the eastern agricultural areas can never be fully successful until they are given wire netting at a reasonable rate. I ask some of those gentlemen from the goldfields, such as the member for Menzies, who wished to deny the farmer the world's parity for his wheat, to tell us how they would supply the farmer with wire netting at half the world's parity in the same way as the farmer to-day is feeding the people of Western Australia.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You know that the British Government regulated the price of wheat in England.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I know that the British Government paid the farmer the full world's parity for his wheat and then retailed it at half price, the whole community paying the difference.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The British Government did nothing of the kind.

Mr. JOHNSTON: They did that all through the war period.

The Honorary Minister: At a cost of £45,000,000.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That is so. If our eastern agricultural areas are ever to carry the sheep which they are so well adapted for carrying, there is on the Government an exceptional duty to provide in some way a supply of cheaper wire netting. The Minister also referred to the rabbit question. I do not think his belief that the rabbits have been greatly reduced in numbers is entirely justified. I admit that since the end of the summer there have been very few rabbits about until lately. But each time we have a dry summer the rabbits seem to get poisoned off, especially if, as occurred last summer, there are many bush fires. But, unfortunately, the powers of reproduction of this pest are very great, and as soon as the spring comes the rabbits seem to become more abundant within a very short time. In the Kulin and Kondinin districts last week I not only heard of the great injury the rabbits were doing to the crops, but on the way back to Narrogin, as far as the rabbit-proof fence, we saw evidences of their ravages on every hand. I should like to know the Minister's intention in regard to the trapping of rabbits. Is it the intention of the Government to go on employing a few poisoners who, after all, are only a drop in the ocean in relation to the rabbits on Crown lands? At the present time the rabbits are increasing on Crown lands. That is where their main forces are coming from. The rabbit is a very timid animal. It does not seem to multiply to any great extent when the land is cleared, and when the settlers get their poison carts going very little harm is done by local rabbits. But wherever there are reserves and huge areas of unselected Crown lands the rabbits come along in armies as fast as the settlers poison them off. The poisoning by the Government has been a failure. It has not been done on a large enough scale to be of any lasting use.

Mr. Davies: We do not hear anything about them these days.

Mr. JOHNSTON: You will hear all about them as the crops come on. At present the crops are too young. The rabbit menace is as serious as ever; so much so that at the recent conference of the Primary Producers' Association a resolution was carried by the practical farmers there assembled in favour of permitting the trapping of rabbits for food. I would like to know what are the intentions of the Government in regard to that particular resolution. It seems to me a shocking thing that in Western Australia we should have such a scarcity of meat and very high prices ruling for it in the metropolitan area, and that at the same time nothing should be done adequately to supply the consuming population with the rabbits that are so plentiful and that are doing so much harm in the agri-

cultural districts. At any rate I know that quite a number of people here during the last few months have been buying South Australian rabbits in the metropolitan markets, and I know also that in Western Australia to-day there are probably more rabbits than there are in South Australia. The importation of rabbits should not be necessary.

Mr. Piesse: A train brought down 18 cwt. of rabbits in one consignment the other day.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That consignment, however, would not go very far in the metropolitan area. The Government should give consideration to the resolution to which I have referred in favour of permitting the trapping of rabbits in the agricultural districts.

The Honorary Minister: You cannot have trapping and poisoning as well.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I want the Government to go into the matter and find out the best way in which the matter can be dealt with. I am not prepared to take Mr. Crawford's ipse dixit of several years ago to the effect that trapping rabbits for food as is done in the Eastern States by men who are earning their living in that way, is going to be a bad thing if adopted in Western Australia. The local markets should be exploited by trappers and cheap food thus supplied to the people of the metropolitan area. Unfortunately, trapping is not permitted; the Government will not give anyone a license for this purpose unless he is a local land owner. The matter wants reviewing. I am pleased at the action the Government have taken in connection with the establishment of butter factories. What has been done has been productive of good results. It may interest hon. members to know that for some months past the output of the Narrogin butter factory has been over three tons per week. This factory was established with the help of the Government, but the local people subscribed more than half the capital. Unlike Bunbury and other parts of the South-West, the Government did not have to find the whole of the money for the Narrogin factory.

The Honorary Minister: It is a private company at Bunbury.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I understood when I was shown over the factory by Mr. Clarke that the Government had found the capital. At any rate I may be permitted to express the belief that the Great Southern and the districts to the east and west of the Great Southern railway have a great future before them as butter producing areas.

Progress reported.

BILL—ROTTNEST ISLAND.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

BILL—HIGH SCHOOL ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received, notifying that the amendment made by the Assembly had been agreed to.

RESOLUTION—COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received, notifying that the following resolution transmitted by the Assembly for concurrence had been agreed to:—

That the appointment by His Excellency the Governor of Lieutenant-Colonel Harold Pope, C.B., as Commissioner of Railways, at a salary of £2,000 a year, in the terms of the Executive Council minute laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly on the 25th day of August, 1920, be approved.

House adjourned at 10.10 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 5th October, 1920.

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

QUESTION—IRWIN COAL SEAM.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY asked the Minister for Education: 1, In view of the importance of the boring operations on the Irwin coal seam, will the Government consider the advisability of working two shifts instead of one as at present? 2, What is being done to provide water for boring operations during the summer months?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, This work needs men of experience who can be relied upon to exercise very great care. Skilled hands are not available to work another shift. 2, The work is expected to be completed shortly, and present water supply should see it through.

QUESTION—LAND VALUATION.

Hon. J. E. DODD asked the Minister for Education: 1, Has any valuation of land ever been made by the Government for the purposes of the Land and Income Tax Act? 2, If so, when? 3, If not, upon what valuations is the tax assessed?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Yes, of all the lands of the State. 2, In 1909, and thereafter revaluations have continually been made by officers of the Department to keep values up to date. 3, Answered by 1 and 2.

QUESTION—ESTATES PURCHASED.

Hon. J. E. DODD asked the Minister for Education: 1, Is there any record of the prices paid by the first purchasers for the properties recently acquired by the Government at Herdsman's Lake and the Peel Estate, and also the land known as the Limekiln Estate, acquired by the Perth City Council for £18,000? 2, What is the area, and how much did the Government pay for the Peel Estate and Herdsman's Lake? 3, What is the value of the improvements effected on these two properties?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Herdsman's Lake and Peel Estate properties were free grants to the original holders. Of the Limekiln Estate, 160 acres were granted at 10s. per acre; the balance of the area, 1,290 acres, acquired by the City Council, being free grant. 2, Peel Estate, 61,005 acres, £24,402. Herdsman's Lake—(a) 1,073 acres 1 rood, £10,732 10s.; (b) 202 acres 1 rood 24 perches, £3,036. 3, Nil.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. F. A. BAGLIN, leave of absence for twelve consecutive sittings granted to the Hon. A. H. Panton (West) on the ground of urgent private business.

HOUSE COMMITTEE.

On motion by the MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch) resolved: "That in order to relieve the President of the duties imposed on him as an ex officio member of the House Committee, the Hon. J. J. Holmes be appointed a member of this committee, to act for him during the period of the present session."