

The CHIEF SECRETARY: He would not have the powers of a justice of the peace. In any case, under this Bill his powers would not become operative until his name had been placed on the justices list; so whatever defects there may be in past legislation will be remedied by this measure.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I rise for further information or explanation.

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. member is speaking under Standing Order No. 386, which allows a member to be heard a second time in explanation.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Clause 7 of the Bill says that Section 155 of the principal Act is hereby amended by the addition of Subsection 2 (a). I have before me the principal Act, and I find that Section 155 deals with execution. How can the Minister reconcile that?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Would it not be better if this matter were considered in Committee? I have not had time to go through the original Act and make a comparison. If the Bill were in Committee it would be taken clause by clause, and I could then handle the matter properly. I have a full explanation of every clause in the Bill, but at this stage I certainly cannot refer to sections of the Act at a moment's notice.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNMENT—ROYAL SHOW.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 4.30 p.m. on Thursday the 7th October.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.4 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 5th October, 1926.

	PAGE
Question: Auditor General's Report	1242
Motion: Government business, precedence	1242
Bills: Reserves (No. 2), 1R.	1244
Special Lease (Esperance Pine Plantation), 1R.	1244
Wire and Wire Netting, 1R.	1244
Roads Closure, 1R.	1244
Ejandlag Northwards Railway, 1R.	1244
Lake Brown-Bullfinch Railway, 1R.	1244
Boyp Brook-Cranbrook Railway, 1R.	1244
Timber Industry Regulation, 1R.	1244
Shearers' Accommodation Act Amendment, 1R.	1244
State Insurance, 3R., amendment six months	1244
Metropolitan Market, 3R.	1253
Weights and Measures Act Amendment, 3R.	1253
Land Tax and Income Tax, 2R.	1253
Road Districts Act Amendment, 2R.	1254
Stamp Act Amendment, 2R.	1257
Married Women's Protection Act Amendment, returned	1268
Annual Estimates: General debate	1257
Adjournment: Royal Show	1268

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

QUESTION—AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH (for Mr. E. B. Johnston) asked the Premier: When will the Auditor General's report be laid upon the Table of the House?

The PREMIER replied: I am informed by the Auditor General that he hopes to make it available during the first week in November.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.35]: I move—

That on Wednesday, 13th October, and each alternative Wednesday thereafter, Government business shall take precedence of all motions and Orders of the Day.

I do not think the motion requires any justification.

Mr. Thomson: But why bring it forward so soon?

The PREMIER: It is about the middle of the session and, as a rule, at that period we reduce private members' days to one per fortnight. I really think I would be justified in cutting them out altogether this session, but I desire to offer every opportunity to hon. members to bring forward their private business. The fact remains that on private members' day during the session so far we

have usually reached Government business at an early hour. I think the provision of one day in a fortnight will be adequate to cope with the business brought forward by private members.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [4.36]: I have no intention of opposing the motion, but it has been brought forward much earlier this session than heretofore. As a rule, the motion moved by a Premier is that public business shall take precedence over all other business on each of the three days. At the same time a Premier always gives his assurance to hon. members that every opportunity will be given for the consideration of private business. In the past no Government has failed to give effect to such undertakings. It is a fact that private members' business has not been in evidence much during this session, but it has also to be remembered that the Government measures to date have been, for the most part, small and unimportant Bills. I presume we shall have a considerable number of Bills introduced shortly by the Government. I do not desire to sit later than is necessary, nor do I desire to see the time of the House taken up with private members' business unless it is important. In statements appearing in the Press, Ministers have explained that they have been so busy that they have not been able to prepare all the legislation they desire to bring forward. That applies especially to the Minister for Works.

The Minister for Works: I did not make any such explanation.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I read that statement in the Press.

The Minister for Works: That was the explanation by someone else; it was not mine.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: At any rate, Ministers, apparently, have not had time to prepare the legislation they desired to ask the House to deal with.

The Premier: There has been sufficient business to keep the House going.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But it has not been urgent business.

The Premier: It has been necessary business, otherwise it would not have been brought forward.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Much of it was quite unnecessary for the people. If the Government do not intend to bring down more important legislation than we have had

so far, I suppose, as the Premier said on another occasion, it will not do any harm.

The Premier: It may do a lot of good.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If some of it may not do much good, it may not do much harm.

The Minister for Railways: I think I have heard that before.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That may be the position.

The Premier: You seem to be in a wilful mood this afternoon!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope the Premier will give the House an assurance that he will provide opportunities for the consideration of private members' business. If he were to move for Government business to take precedence on each Wednesday, he could give us the assurance I suggest and we would be with him.

The Premier: I am giving private members' another chance with one more day.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It may be inconvenient for a private member to wait a full fortnight before his motion may be taken into consideration.

The Premier: And some we have dealt with have been really urgent.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Quite as urgent as some of the Government legislation.

Hon. G. Taylor: Perhaps that is not saying much.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope that the Premier will give us his assurance that should the necessity arise, he will afford every opportunity for the discussion of private members' business.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [4.40]: Members are asked to agree to the motion at an earlier period than is usual. It is generally an indication, when such a motion is moved, of the early closing of the session. I do not know whether coming events are casting a shadow in this instance, and that we may look for an early closing of the session and an early election. I am pleased that the Government intend to allow private members to have every alternate Wednesday for their business. Seeing that the Government could move to cut out private members' business altogether, I suppose we must be thankful for the small mercies provided by the motion. I re-echo the request of the Leader of the Opposition and I trust that the Premier will give the assurance he asked for regarding the consideration of private members' business. I hope to bring forward

a Bill to deal with amendments to one Act and if I give notice on one day I presume it will be a fortnight later before I can proceed with it. I trust the Premier will give us the assurance requested by the Leader of the Opposition.

The Premier: Yes, certainly I will give the opportunity for consideration as suggested.

Question put and passed.

BILLS (9)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Reserves (No. 2).
- 2, Special Lease (Esperance Pine Plantation).
- 3, Wire and Wire Netting.
- 4, Roads Closure.
Introduced by the Minister for Lands.
- 5, Ejanding Northwards Railway.
- 6, Lake Brown-Bullfinch Railway.
- 7, Boyup Brook-Cranbrook Railway.
- 8, Timber Industry Regulation.
- 9, Shearers' Accommodation Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Works.

BILL—STATE INSURANCE.

Third Reading—Amendment "Six Months."

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.50]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [4.51]: I move an amendment—

That "now" be struck out and the words "this day six months" be added.

I do so in order to record my protest against the establishment of a State trading concern. As one of the planks of the Country Party's platform is opposition to State trading, I should be wanting in my duty if I failed to secure a vote of the House upon this question. This is the only opportunity I shall have to voice my objection. I am prepared to admit that State trading is the policy of the Government. The nationalisation of industry is the goal at which they are aiming. State trading, in my opinion, is not in the interests of the State and is certainly not in the interests of the workers.

Mr. Lutey: What about the miners who are primary producers?

Mr. THOMSON: It is not in the interests of the workers that every activity should be brought under a nationalised policy. Could we have any better illustration than the Railway Department or the Civil Service? The men in the Railway Department are classified, and they have very little opportunity to improve their financial position unless someone holding a senior appointment in the department happens to die. I favour the railways being in the hands of the Government, and only mention that department as an illustration. If the principle of State trading were applied to all industries, all the workers would have to be classified, and they would be put in certain grades where they would have to remain.

The Minister for Railways: Would you have each man running a bit of railway on his own account?

Mr. THOMSON: We probably have competent men in the Railway Department who, if given an opportunity, would be able to obtain very much better results for the State, but they are not able to secure the more responsible positions because other men are ahead of them in seniority.

The Minister for Railways: Nothing of the kind.

The Premier: I do not see how you can discuss that on the question of State insurance.

Mr. THOMSON: The same thing would apply if all industry were brought under State control. I am opposed to that; it is not in the interests of the State that the Government should embark upon these various enterprises. Already we have a considerable number of insurance companies doing business, and there is no need for the establishment of this new State enterprise.

The Minister for Works: What would you do about the miners?

Mr. Lutey: He would sacrifice them.

Mr. THOMSON: I cannot permit the statement of the member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe to pass, because I am not in favour of sacrificing the miners.

Mr. Lutey: That is what you mean.

The Minister for Works: This is the only way in which we can help them.

Mr. THOMSON: I can speak feelingly regarding miners afflicted with the dread disease.

The Minister for Works: Go on!

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister might laugh, but from the point of its having taken some of one's own loved ones I can speak with a certain amount of feeling as to the

effects of the dread disease. The hon. member cannot make it appear that I am unsympathetic towards those suffering from miner's disease.

The Minister for Works: Then why oppose the Bill? How could they be given relief otherwise?

Mr. THOMSON: When the disease overtakes them, we know that it is tantamount to signing their death warrant.

Mr. Lutey: I like to see those crocodile tears!

Mr. THOMSON: I am surprised at the hon. member interjecting as he is doing, especially in view of his being the Chairman of Committees.

Mr. Lutey: If you knew as much about the disease as I do, you would realise what I mean.

Mr. THOMSON: I realise what the disease means, but I am not discussing that phase. The responsibility for the afflicted miners should be a charge upon the revenue of the State. I have no objection to that course being adopted, but I am opposed to the establishment of another State enterprise, and being a member of a party opposed to State trading, I am justified in voicing my objection. The insurance companies pay by way of direct taxation £42,261, salaries £108,179, and agents' commission £136,211, while they also disburse by way of office rent, stationery, etc., £69,471 a year.

Mr. Chesson: Where do they get all that money?

Mr. THOMSON: It is all very fine for members who favour State trading concerns to object to my attitude.

Mr. Sleeman: The next thing you will be doing, I suppose, will be to oppose the Government's supplying wire netting to the farmers.

Mr. THOMSON: State trading concerns do not pay rates or taxes of any description. The establishment of a State insurance office will be one more step in the direction of nationalising all industry, which is a plank in the platform of the party now in power. I raise no objection to their endeavouring to put on the statute-book measures embracing the policy for which they stand, but I am just as much entitled to voice my protest in opposition.

Mr. Lutey: It will be interesting to hear you when the question of wire netting supplies comes up for discussion.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [5.0]: I cannot congratulate the hon. member upon his amendment. It is well known that the step taken was with a view to protecting the miners. The hon. member's opposition to the Bill shows that he is not consistent in his actions.

Mr. Thomson: That is not correct.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have no personal animus against the insurance companies but my honest belief is that everything that could be done to arrange with them to do this work was done by the Government.

Mr. Thomson: They say that was not so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member does not represent the farmers in the matter of State insurance. He may represent a few of the larger farmers who are interested in outside insurances but he does not represent the farming community in this matter.

Mr. Thomson: We are opposed to State trading.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It does not matter what the hon. member is opposed to.

Mr. Thomson: Our association is opposed to it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It represents only the large landowners of the State.

Mr. Thomson: That is not correct.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Many questions have been asked during the passage of this Bill with regard to I.A.B. insurances which are being effected by the board and which are not a State insurance matter. Others connected with insurances in times gone by have found it necessary to send to the I.A.B. clients circulars asking them to voice a protest against the board doing this work. Special means have been taken to induce these men—there are over 2,000 of them, and they ought to be able to represent the views of the small farmers—to lodge protests against this method. In actual fact only five very weak protests have been lodged.

Mr. Thomson: They are not game to make them.

The Premier: Are the farmers so cowardly as that?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The last letter I received I handed to the member for Williams-Narrogin to read, to show him what the feelings of the farmers were.

Mr. Thomson: Then you received only one letter.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I received several, but this one was sent to me at Parliament House, otherwise the hon. member would not have seen it. Upon the file only five mild objections have been lodged. That is fair prima facie evidence that the farmers are not opposed to the State entering into the business of insurance. The hon. member will no doubt support a Bill I shall introduce next week, which is on all fours with the State Insurance Bill. The Government have no more right to supply wire netting to the farmers than they have to deal in insurance policies, if we are to accept the views of the hon. member.

Mr. Thomson: Why do you supply them with money? It is a sop.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is in the best interests of the community that this wire netting should be provided, and the same remarks hold good with regard to State insurance. The hon. member would leave the private companies to take on the best cases, and would doubtless have the Government place a special tax on the farmers so that the State might insure all the worst cases. He has stated that the farmers pay all the taxes; therefore, they must carry the whole weight if the State is obliged to insure only the worst cases. I am surprised that the hon. member should oppose the Bill on the third reading. Perhaps I should not be surprised, because I have always maintained that he represents the big men in this House. I said that when I had to fight on behalf of my friend the Leader of the Opposition, and I repeat it now. This question had very close consideration at the hands of the Government. It remained in abeyance up to within a few days of the proclamation of the Workers' Compensation Act. Up to the last moment endeavours were made to settle the question, but we could not get a single quote from the insurance companies.

Mr. Thomson: They say you would not give them the information.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They were told they could get the information, but they refused to quote.

Mr. Thomson: That is not correct.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the Government had not taken up this question the miners alone would have suffered, so far as putting into effect the desires of Parliament were concerned.

Mr. Thomson: Not at all. They could have been provided for.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I was about to catch the train one morning to proceed to the office, when a gentleman passed by in his motor car. He said he wanted to see me, and asked me to accompany him. He produced a circular and said, "As you know, we are managing a small mine. We cannot carry this insurance. It means that unless we can make provision to insure our men we shall have to close down. We cannot carry the risk."

Mr. Thomson: What does the cost amount to per man per week?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Let the hon. member wait till I have finished. I said to the gentleman, "All your men are insured with the exception of those who are suffering from miners' diseases mentioned in the Act. As the insurance companies will not do this work, the Government are making some arrangement to do it themselves." He said, "No, I have received this notice to the effect that the companies will not insure for miners' diseases, and cancelling every insurance under the Workers' Compensation Act and Employers' Liability Act." I had not heard of that before.

Mr. Thomson: That is only one instance.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There were numbers of such instances.

Mr. Thomson: I had men in my employment, and did not know of it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Was the hon. member working a mine?

Mr. Thomson: No.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am speaking of mines. That was the first intimation I had received of the companies' action and I immediately reported it to the Minister for Works. The result was that we had not time in which to organise our scheme. In order to prevent the mines from closing down, and in the interests of the large community connected with mining, and of the men who were suffering and had been on the mines for many years, we found it necessary to appoint Government officials to effect these insurances. That had to be done at once, and it was done at once. The insurance companies then found within a week or so that they had made a mistake, that they had done wrong in cancelling all insurances under workers' compensation. They then tried to put the matter right. In the meantime—this has never been men-

tioned before—over £40,000 worth of insurances were brought into the State office. This shows the urgency of the position so far as the mines were concerned. The mining industry which has done a great deal for the State, was on the eve of closing down through the action of the companies.

Mr. Thomson: That is not borne out by the evidence.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But it is true. This is not merely a statement. I got this from the Government Statistician. The mines came in with over £40,000 worth of insurances in order to save their position. The Government had no option but to carry out the desires of Parliament in this way, and bring forward these insurances for the relief of the men who were suffering. It was also done to give the mine-owners who were compelled to insure, an opportunity to carry out the provisions of the Act. That being so, I am extremely sorry the hon. member should have thought fit to move the amendment.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [5.10]: We discussed this measure very fully.

The Premier: Every aspect of it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We voiced our protests against the Government starting another trading concern, and censured the Government for starting without the authority of Parliament a State insurance office contrary to the law of the land. We have to remember, however, that we made this insurance compulsory. There is no doubt the mines must have closed down when the insurance companies refused to give them cover. It is an offence against the law to keep men at work who are not covered by insurance. This House passed that law only recently.

The Minister for Works: Both Houses passed it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It became the law of the land. The Government naturally realised, when the insurance companies refused to take the accumulated risk, that they must take it, and accept the risk of the past 30 years. There were men connected with the mines who were suffering from miners' phthisis and had to be covered, or they had to be found other occupations, otherwise it would have been ridiculous to tell them that they were covered by insurance. For 30 years we have collected no premiums for

insurances against disease. This represents a considerable sum of money, though I hope it is not as great as has been stated. We are told that 500 miners may have to be compensated before long. There must be trouble there, and considerable trouble, because it is a dangerous life and a dangerous occupation. We are all agreed that these men must be provided for. No one has said anything else. To-day the Premier is paying £300 or £400 a week to men who have left the mines because, after examination, they have been found to be diseased. No one objects to the men being properly cared for. I applaud the desires of the Government in this direction. We have to take the risk.

Mr. Thomson: I am with you in that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Since we have made it imperative, we have to take a further risk and insure these men if they are to continue at work. If to-morrow morning those men are not covered, they must leave their work at once; otherwise the companies would be fined. Let us remember that that is the position created by this Parliament, a position that has to be faced. The State trading concerns we have are of very little advantage indeed to the people. The persons employed in them are not a penny better off than they would be if employed by private employers. Neither is there anything in this Bill for the ordinary worker. He does not come into the picture at all. What does it matter to him where he gets his cover or his compensation from? Not a jot. But it does matter to him that he should be insured. This Parliament, having passed the Workers' Compensation Act, was bound to find means by which the miners could continue to be covered. The Government must take the risk. They could now take the risk of collecting the premiums from the mine owners. When we remember all that the mining industry has done for Western Australia, we cannot object to that. At all events, the position has to be faced, and so far as I am concerned it shall be faced. To start another State trading concern, however, is quite a different matter. The Bill as it now stands is very different from that which was introduced. The original measure set up a monopoly, and at the same time gave the insurance commissioner the right to refuse to cover in certain cases.

The Premier: I explained that that was an oversight.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I accept the Premier's assurance.

The Premier: I intimated as much to the member for West Perth.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am glad it is so. At any rate, there is no monopoly now. The miners could have been covered by the Government without the introduction of this Bill. The Government, however, considered that if they took this great risk they should have other business which would give them a profit. We have got over that stage, which was discussed at great length; and the question now is as to the covering of the men referred to.

The Minister for Works: How are they covered now?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They are covered without this Bill.

The Minister for Works: But how are they to be covered?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Government sought insurance business with other people.

The Premier: How could these men be covered unless we went on, as you would say, illegally?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The question of covering the men in the mines has not been the whole question by any means. The Government sent out circulars asking for insurance business from ordinary people. Indeed, we were told by the Minister for Works that in future we could not insure with companies. The Minister's proposal was to establish a general insurance business. Before the last election he said that the Government would establish State insurance. Because I am opposing the establishment of another State trading concern, it is not to be supposed that I am against the issue of covers to the miners in question. They must be covered. Let that be done and no more. It will be quite sufficient. The Premier, I am sure, is not any more anxious than I am to establish another State trading concern. Those concerns are the bane of a Minister's life. The money now invested in the State trading concerns would have done much more good to the workers of this country if it had been used in private enterprise. However, those concerns are established. I hold no brief for the insurance companies or anyone else. If the companies compete with one another, we are not tied to any one of them for insurance, but can go where the best terms are offered. The only trouble, in my opinion, is that the men on the fields will not be covered except by the Government. Still, those men can be covered without the setting up of a State insurance office.

Mr. Lutey: And without the necessary machinery?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It might have been necessary to put through a short Bill empowering the Government to collect such premiums as they thought fit from the mining industry, and to accept the accumulated responsibility with regard to those men. That accumulated responsibility is no small matter, and undoubtedly mining is a highly dangerous occupation. We all want to see the miners properly cared for. Even at this last stage it would be better for the Government to adopt the attitude suggested than to pass the Bill. Ministers will have my whole-hearted support in protecting the industry and the men working in it, but it is quite another matter when we are asked to agree to the establishment of an additional State trading concern. This is not a question of the insurance companies against the Government at all; such a consideration does not influence me in the slightest degree.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [5.25]: I do not wish to give a silent vote, and I have no desire that my vote on this Bill should be regarded as indicating my feeling towards State trading concerns. I am, however, in favour of the measure becoming law, and shall vote for it. The argument as to State trading concerns does not appear to me to have much value in the present instance. This Parliament decided that we should have compulsory insurance for certain industries. That being so, people were compelled to insure. We know there was great difference of opinion between the Government and those who were doing workers' compensation insurance before the proclamation was issued. It would be unwise for the Government to come to Parliament for the authority they desire without making any provision for the people whom they compel to insure their employees, and who would thus be left to the mercy of any insurance companies operating. Accordingly, the Government have stepped in. To compare State insurance with an ordinary State trading concern is to use an argument which I conscientiously think will not hold water. This Bill cannot be called a Bill for the establishment of an additional State trading concern.

Mr. Lutey: What is it, then?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is a Bill making provision for employers who are compelled to insure their employees. It provides that such employers shall be enabled to insure

their employees at reasonable cost. Moreover, there is no compulsion on the employer to go to the State insurance office if he can get better treatment elsewhere. I realise that my views on this question conflict with the views of members sitting beside me. I am not ashamed of that. I have held and expressed these views for 20 odd years, and I am pleased to-day to see some of them being brought into operation. I support the third reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder—in reply) [5.28]: I do not think it at all necessary to make a defence of the Bill at this stage. The whole question was exhaustively debated in this Chamber on the second reading and during the passage of the measure through Committee. Although the mover of the amendment states that this is the only opportunity he has of voicing the opinion of those whom he has the privilege to represent, and his own strong opinion against State trading, still, if my memory serves me rightly, he was not altogether silent when the Bill was passing through its earlier stages. He had opportunities then, and I think he availed himself of them fully. It would be difficult indeed to imagine the hon. member allowing this or any other Bill to go through without his taking the opportunity to voice the opinions of the people whom he has the privilege to represent. It is very hard to imagine the hon. member remaining silent. I rather think one of his motives is to carry into effect his policy of speaking more frequently and at greater length than any other member of the Chamber. It is that policy which is really responsible for his present action. The hon. member need have no fear of failing to secure first place at the end of the session in that respect. He is many laps ahead now. In fact, he might have allowed this Bill to pass its remaining stage without endangering his prospects of speaking oftener and at greater length than any other member of the House. The hon. member is much concerned about State trading. The present Bill, according to him, is a measure through which the Government are endeavouring to further the policy of State enterprise to which he is strongly adverse. The hon. member's opposition to State trading, I am inclined to think, is on a par with the opposition of the members of his party in the Federal Parliament to Protection. They are Freetraders, and are opposed to the policy

of Protection; but they participate in equal numbers in the Government of the Commonwealth, the most highly Protectionist Government in the world. They continue to voice their opposition to the policy of Protection, just as the hon. member voices his opposition to the policy of State trading. I am justified in believing that his attitude on State trading need not be taken more seriously than that of his Federal colleagues on Protection. I think I am justified in making that statement in view of the fact that the party to which he belongs participated in the government of this State for many years; and the hon. member himself and every member of his then party sat behind that Government, and had their members in the Government. Evidently the influence of his party was very little in the counsels of the Government of that day, for throughout all those years no attempt whatever was made by those who are so strongly opposed to State trading to abolish any of those iniquitous losing concerns. They administered and carried on the State trading concerns established by a former Labour Government.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What else could they do?

The PREMIER: Well then, the electors who are opposed to the principle of State trading may take that interjection as an intimation that it will be useless for them to return members opposite with a view to their abolishing State trading. The hon. member asks what else could they do. Those electors opposed to State trading may be sure that even if members opposite are returned, their policy will not be put into effect.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You know that the House would not authorise it.

The PREMIER: That is the weakest statement I have ever heard uttered in the House. Members of a party professing to believe in a certain principle had the opportunity to give effect to that principle, to say, "We are going to abolish the State trading concerns, at least one or another of them." Yet they refrained from attempting to carry out any phase whatever of their policy. Now the hon. member says the House would not authorise it. But could the House, unasked, be expected to authorise it? The only way to test that is to give the House a chance to express its opinion. That is precisely what the party opposite did not do during the eight years they were in office.

Mr. Teesdale: If we had sold the State trading concerns we might have been sitting where you are to-day. But we wanted a fair price for them. We did not want to throw them away.

The PREMIER: I am surprised at the hon. member. The then Minister for Works had opened up negotiations for the sale of the sawmills. From this very seat he said the price was quite satisfactory to him. He approved of the sale of the sawmills. That is to be found in "Hansard."

Mr. Teesdale: That is very unfair from you. You know it was a dud sale.

The PREMIER: I do not know any such thing.

Mr. Teesdale: You would not have gone on with the sale.

The PREMIER: The then Minister for Works said the price was quite satisfactory. He would have sold, but the Government did not ask the House to endorse the sale.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You know full well that the French people could not put up the money.

The PREMIER: I do not know any such thing. What I know is that the Government failed to ask the House to approve the sale because their own supporters would not back them in it. That is what was behind it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No.

Mr. Teesdale: They did not have the money. It was public talk at the time.

The PREMIER: The hon. member does not know anything about it.

Mr. Teesdale: I know as much about it as you do. That French crowd were not worth going on with.

Member suspended.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! These interjections must stop. If I have to call the hon. member's attention to this again, I shall have to take sterner measures.

Mr. Teesdale: Well, on a point of order.

The PREMIER: The hon. member cannot rise to a point of order while I am speaking, unless indeed he take exception to what I am saying.

Mr. Teesdale: I am taking a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr. Teesdale: I was told I knew nothing whatever about it.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. It is an explanation. The hon. member can say it at some time when he will

not be interrupting a member who is speaking.

Mr. Teesdale: Of course the Premier can say anything he likes, but I must not answer.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Teesdale: Then there is the Chairman of Committees, too.

Mr. SPEAKER: I ask the hon. member to leave the Chamber for the remainder of the sitting.

Mr. Teesdale: I will bow to your decision, Sir.

Debate resumed.

The PREMIER: I am very sorry that this should have occurred, but I do not think I said anything that ought to cause any member to get excited. I was stating what is a fact, namely, that the then Minister for Works declared himself perfectly satisfied with the offer he had received for the sale of the sawmills, and that had he had his way he would have submitted the question to the House. I repeat that the reason why the Government did not, in compliance with the provisions of the State Trading Concerns Act, ask for the approval of the House, was because they knew perfectly well their supporters would not support them, and that they could not have carried the motion. That was the reason; it was not because of any defects in the offer.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, it was.

The PREMIER: I knew what was taking place at the time. I knew what members supporting the then Government told me, and I knew it also from opinions expressed by them in this House.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The Premier is wrong.

The PREMIER: I am not wrong. I am speaking facts. A number of members supporting the then Government expressed their opposition to the sale of the sawmills, and that is why the House was not asked to endorse that sale.

Mr. Davy: Suppose it were so, where does that get us?

The PREMIER: It is up to any party always preaching opposition to State trading and declaring their intention of abolishing State trading to ask the House and let the House decide upon an offer of sale; to let the country know who is opposed to it and who is in favour of it. We should not then have a number of members sailing under the colours of private enterprise, as opposed to State enterprise, and all the

time not willing to give effect to their so-called principles, not willing to carry out the policy upon which they declared themselves to have been elected. The way to test it is, not to assume that the House would not agree to such sale, but to give the House an opportunity to decide. In eight years no attempt was made to dispose of any one of the State trading concerns. Moreover, although the member for Kataning talks about his opposition to State trading, more State trading concerns were inaugurated or extended by the Government he supported than have been introduced or extended by this Government in 2½ years.

Mr. Thomson: That does not necessarily mean that we should support this one.

The PREMIER: But I do like a little consistency. On this occasion the Government were forced to do as they have done, without one thought in their minds of the extension of their policy of State trading. I have given the House that assurance before, and I say it is a fact, that in taking on this insurance to cover the miners the question of our policy of State trading generally did not enter the minds of the Government. It was only in the last extremity—I repeat it—that the Government embarked upon this business.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But the Premier first asked for a monopoly of all insurance.

The PREMIER: That does not matter. We are talking now about what is here in the Bill.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: He relinquished it only because of the opposition to it.

The PREMIER: Not at all; we could have beaten the Opposition had we wanted to do so.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The Premier admitted that it was because of the opposition of the member for Mt. Margaret.

The PREMIER: Hon. members opposite, when in office, extended State trading. Yet they had won to office pledged to abolish those concerns, declaring to the electors that they would sell up the State trading concerns even if, as one member said, they got only half-a-crown for them. The late Mr. Frank Wilson declared on the hustings that if he were returned his first act would be to abolish the whole of the wretched State trading concerns, irrespective of price. His party won to office, but sat down for eight years and did not

abolish any State trading concern worth half-a-crown.

Mr. Stubbs: That is why we are on this side now.

The PREMIER: But they extended the State trading concerns to the measure of scores of thousands of pounds. Now we are having the same old tale trotted out that was fed to the electors before, the same old story—"Only return us, and we will abolish the State trading concerns. Continue the Labour Government, and they will nationalise all industry." If we may judge by past performances, there is not a scrap of sincerity in that profession.

The Minister for Agriculture: They are the party of freetrade and protection.

Mr. Thomson: The nationalisation of all industry is in your platform.

The PREMIER: We do not share office with people who are opposed to State trading; we do not take into our Government members pledged to a policy the opposite to that for which we stand, as do the hon. member's party with its freetrade-protection policy. This State insurance is not in the same category as ordinary State trading concerns. Governments elsewhere in Australia and other parts of the world have adopted Government insurance, governments that are as wholeheartedly opposed to the principle of State trading as is any member on that side of the House. Would anyone accuse the Government of Victoria of being other than entirely opposed to the principle of State trading? Would anybody accuse successive Governments of New Zealand, in none of which there has been the influence of a Labour member, of being in favour of State trading? Yet they have had State insurance for the past 25 years. It is mere idle talk to put this up, to scare the people into believing that this is the beginning of a big advance in State trading.

Mr. Thomson: It is another step towards it.

The PREMIER: It was an essential thing to do, however the hon. member may describe it. Every member of the Opposition agrees that provision should be made for the miners; but they say "You should have done it in another way." All agree that it is a proper charge against the State revenue. That is all that the Government have done, and we have done that, having no other alternative.

Mr. Thomson: That is a matter of opinion.

The PREMIER: It is a matter of fact, not a matter of opinion. We all agree that for these unfortunate men, it is the responsibility of the State to provide compensation. But during the eight years hon. members opposite were in office their hearts did not then bleed for these unfortunates, and no attempt was made in that period to pass legislation which would provide compensation. No shadow of an attempt was made during those years to raise one finger, to provide a penny of compensation for the men for whom the Opposition now say their hearts bleed. In 1912 the Labour Government endeavoured to make the provision that has now been made in the Workers' Compensation Act for the compensation of miners. That was opposed by those who to-day say they support the principle of the State assisting those men. The effort made by the 1912 Labour Government was opposed in this House, and it was rejected in another place. Had the policy this party stands for been given effect to, these men, for the past 12 years, would have had the compensation that hon. members opposite now declare ought to be given them. And so, since the day Labour went out of office in 1916, until Labour came in again in 1924, not a hand was raised, or an attempt of any kind made, to do anything to provide for these men. One may judge of the sympathy shown to the afflicted miners by the lack of effort during the eight years members opposite were in power.

Mr. Latham: All rot!

The PREMIER: It is not all rot. It would not be politic to say that members opposite had no right to embark upon this enterprise, no matter even if it was for the miners. Every word now spoken is prefaced by an expression of overflowing sympathy for the miners, but we are told we are providing compensation in the wrong way.

Mr. Davy: Did you not admit the other night that the Miners' Phthisis Act was put through by the party on this side of the House, and that the delay in bringing it into operation was not their fault?

The PREMIER: The Miners' Phthisis Act has nothing to do with the question of compensation, and it has nothing to do with miners' complaint. It has to do only with men suffering from tuberculosis. When an attempt was made 12 years ago to provide

that miners' complaint should be a matter for compensation, it was opposed, resisted and defeated.

Mr. Davy: Defeated where?

The PREMIER: Defeated in another place, but opposed here. I suggest the hon. member read "Hansard."

Mr. Latham: Who opposed it? I was not here.

Mr. Richardson: You are talking through your neck.

The PREMIER: You are talking through something else.

Mr. Richardson: Probably I am.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not interrupt.

Mr. Richardson: I apologise. The Premier said I was talking through—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: It is very easy to say that I am talking through my neck; I am talking solid facts; I am talking of political history in this State extending over the past 12 or 14 years, and I repeat that the member for Katanning, who now professes so much sympathy for unfortunate miners, is finding fault with the way in which the Government have dealt with the subject. The Leader of the Opposition said that we could have made provision for the men without this insurance. How could it have been done?

Mr. Thomson: Of course it could have been done if you had wanted to do it.

The PREMIER: It might have been done in the manner mentioned during the course of the debate, by the Government allowing the companies to insure the men, and the Government guaranteeing the companies against loss.

Mr. Davy: It was done in a different way in South Africa.

The PREMIER: Even so, our method is just as good as the method adopted in other places. This Parliament set out in the Workers' Compensation Act the method by which it should be done. It was the only method open to us, and we complied with an Act passed by this Parliament.

Mr. Thomson: That is where we differ.

The PREMIER: Thank God we do, and I hope we ever shall. It was the only method by which we could do what Parliament said ought to be done. I do not blame the member for Katanning who wants to make this last desperate effort to secure a little publicity, a little political propaganda. He is carrying his brief for the insurance compa-

nies right down to the last ditch. He quoted the amount paid in salaries by the insurance companies and the amount paid by them in taxation. But who pays that money? The farmers of this State, whom the hon. member says he represents, paid to the companies £140,000 during the past 10 years. The hon. member told us that the companies paid in salaries £108,000 and in taxation so much. But the farmers paid £140,000 of it, all clear profit to the companies! Those are the philanthropists who pay taxation to the State, and who pay salaries for the good of the country! They collect it all from the people and a large proportion from the farmers. And not the farmers who have city investments, but the genuine farmers, those who are mighty glad to be given the opportunity to effect insurance with the Government. I meet farmers as well as hon. members opposite, and I get letters from them also. The position with regard to the Industries Assistance Board has been accepted unanimously by the farmers. If the member for Katanning elects to fight the case for the insurance companies, that is his concern.

Mr. Thomson: I am fighting a principle.

The PREMIER: A wonderful principle! The hon. member becomes keener with that principle as election day approaches. I do not know how keen he is—

Mr. Thomson: Just as keen as you are.

The PREMIER: There has been no deviation so far as the Government are concerned with regard to the principle whether it be a day before or a day after the election. The hon. member is desperately anxious to get in a little political propaganda, but for eight long years he has stood solid and remained silent.

Mr. Thomson rose to speak.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has not the right of reply.

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

Ayes	16
Noes	24
				—
Majority against	..			8
				—

AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. North
Mr. Barnard	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Davy	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Denton	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Latham	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Sir James Mitchell	Mr. Richardson

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lamond
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Collier	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Millington
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Pantol
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Heron	Mr. Taylor
Miss Holman	Mr. Troy
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Kennedy	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. Munzie
Mr. Maley	Mr. Withers

Amendment thus negatived.

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

Mr. MARSHALL: I think, Mr. Speaker, you forgot to put the motion for the adoption of the third reading.

Mr. SPEAKER: There was no necessity to do that. The amendment was rejected and the motion, therefore, stood.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Metropolitan Market.
- 2, Weights and Measures Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [6.5] in moving the second reading said: This is the usual Bill necessary each year to reimpose the land tax and the income tax. It was not brought forward last year because, as hon. members will remember, the tax fixed in the previous year was imposed for two years. Thus no Bill was necessary last year. This time, however, it is necessary to provide the authority to impose the land tax and the income tax. The Bill is exactly similar to those that have been introduced for many years past except, of course, that it makes provision for the reduction of 33 1/3rd per cent. in the income tax, which was announced in the Budget Speech last week. The maximum rate of tax of 4s. will remain in the Bill as formerly, but a proviso to Clause 3 is included which will allow of the

reduction of 33 1/3rd per cent. That reduction will bring the maximum rate down to 2s. 8d. in the pound. I do not think it necessary to say anything further regarding the Bill. It is well understood that the tax will be similar to that of previous years, but with the provision for the reduction by 33 1/3rd per cent.

Mr. Sampson: The Bill is for one year only?

The PREMIER: Yes; without the Bill there can be no taxation. We have been enacting the legislation from year to year and the right to levy a tax disappears with the close of the financial year.

Mr. Thomson: Are you not dealing with the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act at all?

The PREMIER: No, that has nothing to do with this Bill.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course the present Bill would not be of much use without the Assessment Act.

The PREMIER: That is so.

Mr. Thomson: There are one or two anomalies in connection with the Assessment Act.

The PREMIER: There may be, but an Assessment Bill is very difficult to deal with. I do not know of any Bill concerning which there can be such widely divergent opinions, as on an Assessment Bill dealing with taxation. No matter what anomalies there may be at present, irrespective of what the House might do, there would still be anomalies under any Assessment Bill that might be dealt with by Parliament. The present Assessment Act is fairly equitable.

Mr. Thomson: It is very unjust in one or two directions.

The PREMIER: It might perhaps be made more unjust if we were to attempt to wipe out some existing anomalies. At any rate, it is not proposed to deal with the Assessment Act, but merely to provide for the land tax and income tax as I have indicated. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell, debate adjourned.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon.

A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [6.9] in moving the second reading said: This Bill

is similar to that which was passed by this House last session, but failed to pass in another place. Under it the powers of the local authorities will be considerably enlarged. It will be agreed that that is an essential. The powers vested in local authorities under the existing law were granted to them when the State was in its infancy. With the present-day development and progress, particularly in the outback parts of the State, it is necessary that road boards should have greater powers than they possess at present. As I have said, considerably extended powers are granted under the Bill. I was amazed to read the reason furnished by a member in another place who voted for the rejection of the Bill last session. He said that the Bill gave the Minister extended powers and made him autocratic. Surely the hon. member who made that statement never read the Bill! That measure stripped the Minister of a great deal of the authority he possesses to-day and gave to the road boards power they do not have at present. For years past representatives of the various road boards have met and held inter-district and inter-State conferences. They have discussed their various ideas and carried resolutions. The Bill now before hon. members embodies what was contained in the great majority of the resolutions adopted by the local governing authorities. With some of their decisions I could not agree, nor do I think any Minister would be able to concur in everything that the local authorities decided to bring forward. The differences between us are very small indeed, but there are very few points dealt with by the local authorities that have not been included in the Bill.

Mr. Thomson: Have the local authorities agreed to everything that is included in the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Every local governing authority was supplied with a copy of last year's Bill. Each of them has had 12 months within which to examine the proposed legislation. The annual conference of the local governing bodies was held recently, when various resolutions were carried and were submitted to me. When the Bill was under discussion last year, the local authorities were opposed to the change of name from "road board" to "district council." At their recent conference, however, delegates agreed to the change of name and endorsed the scheme set up in the Bill. Similarly the road boards were opposed to

the method of election proposed. It was suggested that the election should be triennial and that the whole of the members should retire at the same time. Although that was opposed last year, the recent conference agreed to the proposal. Those were the two outstanding difficulties, apart from the question of the franchise, but that, in my opinion, is not for road boards but for Parliament to decide. The extended powers proposed will allow road boards to advance in many directions that are impossible to-day. They will enable them to carry on the real work of local government and be the head of most of the social activities in the various centres.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Social?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, social, commercial, and industrial. The powers are very wide. They can acquire recreation grounds or other land, erect buildings, conduct agricultural and other shows and so forth.

Mr. Sampson: There will soon be justification for the payment of road board members.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not suppose the time when that will be done is too far distant.

Mr. Thomson: Certainly they should have some recompense for their work.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Road board members have often to attend to their duties at great inconvenience.

Mr. Sampson: Some travel many miles to attend meetings without having their expenses covered.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Only a comparatively few years ago we were denied the principle of payment of members of Parliament. In fact to-day some people hold the view that members should not be paid.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That was many years ago.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, some hon. members hold that view to-day.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Oh, no!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not say they hold that opinion, but they express those views.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: At any rate, payment of members has been in vogue for 25 years or more.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, Sir John Forrest introduced the Bill for the payment of members.

Mr. Sampson: In South Australia payment of members has been in operation for over 30 years.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was only quite recently that payment of members was agreed to in Great Britain. Should the principle be applied to members of local governing bodies it will be a recognition of the work they do. We are not in a position to do that now.

Mr. Sampson: The first thing is to get money for roads.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Amongst the extended powers that this Bill proposes to give to local authorities is to acquire, establish and carry on ferries and other transport services on land and water. At present the local authorities have power only to subsidise and not to conduct transport. Power is also to be given to establish and maintain a hospital. Local authorities may now subsidise a hospital, but this Bill will give them power to acquire, establish or maintain a hospital as they may deem fit. They will also be able to carry on a cinematograph entertainment if they think fit. Power is also proposed to provide and maintain saleyards for the sale of stock. Road boards have urged that this power should be given as stockyards have meant much to the districts where they have been provided. The boards will also have power with the approval of the Minister to raise money for the purpose of building workers' homes in their districts. At present difficulty is experienced over drains that may join or overlap at the boundaries of different road board areas. If the contour of the country necessitates a drain being carried through one road district to another, the boards have no power to unite and expend money outside their own areas. This provision will give them power to unite and carry drains beyond their own boundaries or through other territory, provided the joint interests of the districts are conserved. The exercise of this power will also require the approval of the Minister. The power that municipalities possess to restrict the use of hoardings is to be given to the road boards, or district councils as they will be termed under this measure.

Mr. Sampson: That will be greatly appreciated.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I was pleased to see the question of the High Court

upholding the Cottesloe Council in its attitude to this question. The trouble is that on the opposite side of the road, where there is a road district and not a municipality, the hoardings have been erected and the road board have not the power to control them. The hoardings have simply been changed from one side of the Perth-Fremantle-road to the other. It is well that the road boards should be invested with the powers that the municipalities now possess.

Mr. Sampson: That will enable them to prevent the disfigurement of the landscape.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The road boards will have power to impose a lighting rate similar to that existing in municipalities. Quite a number of country districts are having lighting schemes installed. The road boards will be able to strike a lighting rate, but the application of the rate will be confined to the particular district served by the light and will not extend to the whole of the district. Road boards will be permitted to rate at a higher figure than under the existing law, but whereas the minimum rate for one block at present is 2s. 6d. general and 1s. for loan, under this measure it will be 5s. for general and 2s. 6d. for loan. Under the unimproved value, the Act provides for a rate of not less than 1d. and not exceeding 3d. in the pound, though with the consent of the Minister a board may rate up to 6d., and on the annual value not less than 9d. and not exceeding 2s. in the pound. This Bill provides that the unimproved value may be rated at not less than 1½d. and not exceeding 4d. in the pound, which amounts will increase their rating power by 1d. Whereas at present a road board may rate up to 6d., with the consent of the Minister, under this measure they will be able to rate up to 6d. in the rural districts and 9d. in the metropolitan area, while the rates under the annual value may be not less than 9d. and not exceeding 2s. The lighting rate is not to exceed 2d. on the unimproved value and 3d. on the annual value. We propose to give the boards power to prevent buildings and structures being removed from land prior to the payment of rates owing on the land. On the goldfields there has been difficulty owing to some of the towns languishing considerably.

Mr. Thomson: Are not the poor beggars losing enough without their being slugged in this way?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What are the local authorities to do? The land has

no value, and rates are owing; the only thing of value is the house and that is shifted off the land. So the local authorities are left without the debt being paid.

Mr. Thomson: It is pretty hard on people who have to sacrifice their houses.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Some people probably are sacrificing their houses, but I do not think it should be held that the local authorities are not entitled to get the rates due to them.

Mr. Thomson: A house might be empty for years.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: And a considerable sum of money might be owing for services rendered. The Bill provides that where a municipality is converted into a road board, there shall be no break in the continuity. This has a big effect on the basis of rating. When the South Perth municipality was converted into a road board it was necessary to continue for years before the board could establish their system of rating, because the period during which the district existed as a municipality did not count. Under the present Act the power to borrow is on the basis of seven times the average income for the preceding two years. We propose to increase that power to ten times the annual income for the preceding two years. That will place district councils on the same footing as municipalities. We also propose to alter the present method of taking a loan poll. The Bill provides that a majority of the resident owners voting at the poll shall decide the question instead of requiring a majority of the resident owners to decide it. At South Perth, it was almost impossible to get a majority vote although an overwhelming majority of those who voted were favourable to the proposal. Consequently the board could not raise the money they required. This will place the loan polls of district councils on the same footing as are Parliamentary elections, so that a majority of the people going to the poll shall decide the question. We propose to give the road boards power to establish brick, stone or wood areas, the same as municipalities can, and to fix districts as residential and factory sites. I am sorry this is not more actively carried out by the municipalities, instead of their having factories mixed up with residential areas. The Bill provides that a road board secretary shall have power to record absent votes at all elections. At present he has power to record absent votes at only extraordinary elections. I do not know why

that distinction was made originally. The road boards are also to have power to declare a building line. This is similar to the power we gave to the Perth Municipal Council and the Fremantle Municipal Council in the amending Bill passed last session. Most of the other provisions are similar to those in the Bill of last session; in fact, it is practically the same Bill as members considered last year, save that one or two additional resolutions carried at the latest road board conference have been given effect to. There was not much difference between the parties in the House regarding the Bill last session, and I hope we shall succeed in placing this measure on the statute-book. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell, debate adjourned.

BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [7.45] in moving the second reading said: This is a small continuation Bill, another of the annual Bills that is a legacy of the war. In 1917 the Stamp Act was amended to provide for an increase in the rate of duties on transfers and conveyances, and it was enacted for one year only, having been re-enacted each year since. So this Bill is here for the purpose of continuing the higher rate for another year. After all, our stamp duties compare favourably with those of the other States, and I see no reason why we should go back to the rates that existed prior to 1917. The rate is now 5s. for every £25 of value, and £1 for every £100. Without this continuation Bill the rate would revert to 2s. 6d. for each £25, and 10s. for £100.

Mr. Sampson: Keep going the good work of reducing taxation.

THE PREMIER: We must continue taxation in some directions. I do not think this is excessive.

Hon. G. Taylor: There is no graduation at all?

THE PREMIER: It is 5s. for £25 and £1 for each £100, regardless of the amount. It would, for instance, be £10 for £1,000 and so on. The Bill merely seeks to continue the rate that has been in operation since 1917. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1926-27.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from 30th September on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates: Mr. Lutey in the Chair.

Vote—Legislative Council, £1,555:

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [7.47]: We cannot approach a discussion on the Estimates with quite the same degree of pleasure that one would do in ordinary circumstances, because the Premier's statement was rather a presentation of a balance sheet without the directors' report, which is to be left to the Ministers. The Premier's Budget Speech certainly dealt fully with the past to some extent but it should not only have dealt fully with the past, but should have set out the policy of the Government for the future. It should have dealt with those things we have accomplished, and informed members and the country of those things it is proposed to do in the future. This is the one opportunity the House has of dealing in a broad way with the finances of the State. It is important that we should have a general debate untrammelled by detail on these questions. It is the great opportunity of the year of informing the public, not only of the things we have done in their name, and at their cost, but the things we propose to do. At this season of the year we are in a position to create an outlook and set up "a way of thinking." Someone has said "everything depends on a way of thinking." If we keep the public cheerful, make them realise that the future is assured, that opportunities are ahead of us, that it is good to do things, and right to do things and that the time is now, we must have something to back this up. The figures in detail are supplied in the many statements submitted with the Budget, both as to revenue and expenditure. The Premier contented himself with giving us the totals. He said that the policy of the previous Government had in the main been continued. The land policy of the previous Government has been adopted and has been carried on, perhaps not quite as well as

we could have carried it out, by the present Government. It is good to have a continuity of policy. Members will recollect that by every means in my power I sought to induce the Government to take an interest in the work we are doing. My friend the Minister for Lands very often travelled with me about the country, particularly in the South-West. He was good enough to do that at my request in order that we might have continuity. Nothing is so bad for the country as to have a policy set aside even for a time. We have had great experience of that in the past. Although the work has not been carried out as well as it would have been carried out by those who originated it, it is the policy of the Government, and that is the main thing. When they adopted the policy before the last elections they promised better results. I do not think that promise has been quite achieved. At the elections the Government also made many other promises. There is a great difference between promise and performance, between the policy as set out and the methods adopted for carrying out that policy. The work of Government is important. In a country such as we are governing the influence of government counts for far more. I do not propose to deal with the great mass of figures set out in the Budget, but I shall show, I think, before I sit down that the financial position has not continued to improve as it should have done, that unemployment has been too much with us for the last two years. I shall endeavour to show that the Federal Government have afforded us substantial financial help, and that it is the first time in the history of the State they have done this in a generous fashion. We cannot deal with departments. It would be hardly right to do so, because we must first hear from the Government under each head. The Premier said that Ministers would each introduce their own departments, and that members would then have an opportunity of discussing the departmental proposals and departmental work. We cannot discuss these things now because we do not know what they are. We must wait for Ministers to give members the lead, and I think members will then take full advantage of the opportunity afforded to them. The Premier's way has many disadvantages, and some advantages. I think his way of dealing with the Budget will prolong the discussion on the Estimates. There is this advantage from the

Treasurer's point of view, that Ministers will suffer criticism instead of his doing so. After all, as Ministers are largely responsible for the expenditure, perhaps that is not altogether wrong. I do not envy Ministers when their turn comes, as it will come in the course of a few weeks. The intentions of the Government are not known to us, and we shall have to get these from Ministers bit by bit. The advantage, if it be an advantage, as I hope it will be, if members on both sides speak their minds, is that the work of each Minister and each department will be closely inquired into. Ministers must stand alone. It makes my task comparatively easy to-night. The Budget usually occupies a great deal of time, and means a great deal of work. I cannot do more than deal with matters that have been touched upon by the Premier at this stage. The Federal Government's grants for last year and for this year have been taken into this year's account and very properly included in the Budget. The Premier told us we would have an opportunity of dealing with the disposal of £565,000. We thought at one time that a Bill would have to be introduced, but I think the Premier has dealt with the matter in quite a satisfactory way, and left it to this House to appropriate the money. The Federal Government stipulated in regard to the first year's grant of £350,000, that the approval of Parliament should be obtained before the money was dealt with. I believe it was held in trust for some months awaiting the assembly of Parliament. The proposals set out by the Premier ought to satisfy the Federal Government. The total of the grants for last year and this year, taking off the special grant that we received in each case, is £565,924. Mining is to get a special grant of £165,924. That is to be set aside, and a trust fund is to be created, but the Premier did not tell us how the money was to be expended. I hope the Minister for Mines will be able to tell us, because we ought to know. There must be something in the minds of Ministers that will enable them to indicate to the House what will be done. I am quite satisfied that mining should have this amount, and I am sure that members generally are in accord with the proposal. There is a reduction of the accumulated deficit of £200,000. That will wipe out our deficit for the last two years, and leave a little over. There is to be a reduction of income tax of £200,000. I entirely approve of that, too. I urged before the Disabilities Commission, and have done so here on many occasions, that under

Federation we should live taxed more or less at the same rate throughout the Commonwealth. We know that the Commonwealth rate of tax is the same in every State, but the States vary tremendously, and very much to our disadvantage. We see the case of a poor State linked up with very rich States. The poorer State that is told to live by direct taxation has no chance of carrying on except by means of a high rate of taxation. It can easily be understood by the people of the country that the collection money from people who are earning small incomes to carry on the work of education, which we insist upon shall be done as well as it can be done in any part of Australia, to afford police protection which is better here than it is anywhere else in the Commonwealth, to look after the administration of justice as we do, and to carry on other functions of Government, is made imperative for any Government or any self-respecting people, in order that this work may be properly done. The ordinary functions of government make it imperative in our case to impose a high income tax. There are many taxes; and although we were the second lowest taxed people in the Commonwealth, second only to Victoria, our highest rate of income tax was by far the highest in Australia. The Premier knows, and every member knows, that high taxation is a great disadvantage to us. Men who made their money in this country, sometimes easily, because of the cheap rate at which land was leased or sold to them by the Government, send their money out of the State for investment, because the tax collected in the East would be so much less. I do not know that we can blame them for doing so. If I had a great income from, say, the squatting industry, I should be sorry, at a time when Western Australia needed money so badly, to send it elsewhere for investment. However, one can understand the anxiety of a man with money to invest to do the best possible with it by remitting it to, say, Victoria. Since we entered Federation we have had to live under Federal conditions, and in consequence have suffered disadvantages. Surely the people who urged us to go into Federation should have explained exactly what the position would be. The Premier during the past two years has found it impossible to reduce taxation and carry on. Last year he could not very well propose to reduce taxation. But this year he rightly proposes to use £200,000 of the special Federal grant,

which is practically an annual grant, in reducing the rate charged on incomes. I entirely approve of that method of dealing with the grant. The result will be a great deal of good. It is impossible for this State to expect manufacturers to come here and invest considerable sums when the Western Australian income tax is very much higher than the Victorian, for instance. The Premier has told us that whilst under his present proposals our taxation will be a little higher than that of New South Wales, and certainly higher than that of Victoria, it will be lower than that of South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania. That is very good news for the people of Western Australia, and also for the enterprising persons who wish to establish themselves in business here. I hope the reduction of taxation will bring its reward. After all, people cannot spend money twice over. If we take it from them in taxation we reduce their opportunity of employing or spending in other ways, and so progress must be retarded. One cannot blame the present Government, or any other Government, for the taxation of the past, because it was unavoidable. Certainly, however, it must have had a bad effect on our development by taking away money required for other work. Since the discussion of this afternoon I hesitate to return to the subject of disabled miners, but I have here a note which I made before coming to the House at half-past four. I consider that the £200,000 of the Federal grant utilised for the reduction of the accumulated deficit might advantageously have been set aside to assist in the compensation or relief of disabled miners. In that respect we are faced with a serious responsibility. I hope the Premier realises that in saying this I mean it, and do not desire merely to render lip service to an unfortunate class of our people.

The Premier: Though of course it does not bind us, Senator Pearce said that miners' disease was not a disability of Federation, and that therefore the grant should not be used for that purpose. That was an opinion he expressed.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Who has had most of the wealth created as the result of the work of these miners? Surely the people of the Eastern States to a greater extent than the people of Western Australia. Undoubtedly the production of that wealth has been for the benefit of all Australia. Most of the millions of sovereigns dug out

of our mines have found a resting place, temporarily at all events, in the Eastern States. For years and years we bought from the Eastern States most of the food consumed on our mines. If a new mine is discovered, the head office of it is most likely to be located in Adelaide or Melbourne. A great deal of the money invested in our mines, profitably invested I hope, has been Eastern money. There are in Western Australia 120,000 people who were born in the Eastern States; and most of them came here in the days of the gold rush. They have all helped to swell the revenues of the Eastern States. Food supplies, manufactured goods, and machinery of all sorts have come here from the Eastern States because of the development of our mining industry. Indeed, the gold produced by our mines last year would hardly pay for the import of food from the East. Undoubtedly the Eastern States have had most of the benefit from our mines, and they might well share in the responsibility now cast on us. The disabled miners have produced the wealth of which the Eastern States have received so large a proportion. It would not concern me, nor do I think it would concern the Premier, what anybody might say on that score.

The Premier: I do not feel bound to accept Senator Pearce's view of the matter.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Federal grant has been used as stated to reduce the accumulated deficit. I find no fault with that, but at the same time I consider that the money would be put to a proper use if it were devoted to the purpose I have suggested. The Federal contribution is to be for a period of five years. The Premier remarked that he hoped it would be for the 25 years recommended by the Federal Disabilities Commission. I hope so, too, and I do not know why there should be any haggling about it. The Federal Disabilities Commissioners were appointed by the Federal Government, and were men from the East. One of them was a retired civil servant, one an ex-Commonwealth Treasurer, and the third a South Australian. We had no representation whatever on that Commission. The Commissioners inquired into our disabilities. They came here only because the Tariff Board, realising the disadvantages under which Western Australia suffered, made certain recommendations. First we have the Tariff Board, and then we find the Federal Disabilities Commission definitely recommending a grant of £450,000 a year or alternatively the local control of our cus-

toms. We are getting £300,000 of the amount stated, but the remaining £150,000 is subject to the transfer of part of our territory. I do not think that was in the minds of the Federal Disabilities Commission, and I do not think the proposal is right. We should have received the full amount without stipulation. It is not possible for us to discuss what is proposed as to the transfer of part of our territory, because the Government have not yet stated their views. I can say, however, that Western Australians will be greatly disappointed if this State does not get £450,000 a year for the next 25 years from the Commonwealth. The deficit for the year ended 30th June, 1919, was £652,000. The outlook then seemed rather hopeless. The gold yield was falling, and something had to be done to stem the tide. After all, the deficit had been growing steadily from 1911 onwards. It had been growing for years, and eventually this amount of £652,000 was reached. To break down a deficit of that magnitude, and to meet the interest on the accumulated deficit—included, it is true, in the £652,000—was a severe task. It was then decided that we could not impose any more taxation, and so a policy of active land settlement, more active than had been the case for some years previously, was embarked upon. We had the advantage of the Soldier Settlement Scheme, through which we obtained considerable help from the Commonwealth. Certainly we had to pay a high rate of interest for the Federal money, but still the help was material. The Commonwealth set aside 12½ per cent. of the total amount spent so as to enable us to cover any losses. In any case, the Soldier Settlement Scheme was an important means towards rectifying our financial trouble. Over 5,500 soldiers were settled on the land, and for the most part they speedily became producers, producing more and more as the years went on. Their work has meant a great deal to the added production of Western Australia. In addition we had the ordinary land settlement, which was encouraged to the full. It will be remembered that all the land offered was speedily taken up once we got to work again to supply the public demand. Then there was the encouragement of people already upon the land. Liberal advances were made for clearing and other improvements. A great deal of money was spent to enable the people on the land to produce the wealth that would put us in a position to wipe out the deficit.

The policy has succeeded. Those men did the work under the encouragement afforded them by liberal advances. Hon. members will remember how many men were installed in the work of clearing and preparing land. Men to an equal number are now engaged in farming the land, creating the production brought about by the liberal advances in the years that followed 1919. Previously we had advanced to farmers only 16 per cent. of our total borrowings, and had spent 84 per cent. on public works. But in 1923-24, of our total borrowings we advanced 65 per cent. to farmers for farm making, and from 1919 to 1924 we averaged 64 per cent. for that purpose. During those years we borrowed roughly about four millions per annum, and I think something like eight millions were advanced to farmers in that period. That meant the clearing of a couple of million acres of land. It meant more than that, for the policy is at work, the vast areas have been cleared, and so we should have increased production each succeeding year.

The Minister for Lands: A large portion of it was used for purchasing the holdings of private settlers to hand over to soldiers.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, a good deal of the money was used to purchase holdings for soldiers. Of course it would not take eight million pounds to clear two million acres of land. But, notwithstanding that some of the money was used for the purchase of farms for soldiers, the money paid to the individual who sold the land went back into the land. The result was an additional two million acres of cleared land. Last year, I am sorry to say, the percentage of our borrowings advanced to individuals was reduced to 50 per cent. The Minister will say that, the soldiers for the most part having been settled, they are not getting any very large amounts advanced from the Government.

The Minister for Lands: There is very little going for repurchased estates now.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Probably not. At any rate it is down to 50 per cent. I have no objection to the Minister for Lands justifying the reduction; no doubt he can. I wish to acknowledge to the fullest extent everything that has been done by the Government. Of course this result took some years to bring about. Starting in 1919, we could not expect to achieve any result for several years, for it takes some time to clear and develop land to bring it

into production. As the Minister for Lands knows, there was very little way on in 1919; but the result of this work came to the Treasury in the shape of additional revenue in 1922-23. In 1922-23 and 1923-24 the deficit was reduced from £732,000 to £229,000, or an improvement of £503,000 in two years. This is the point I wish to make, namely that in two years the deficit was improved by £503,000. That, of course, was due entirely to increased production, and to the greater use of our railways and other public utilities owing to increased trade, the result of the creation of this wealth by the man on the land. No other activity of the State showed any great development. The gold output was decreasing, although certainly timber was not less actively worked than before. But this advantage came from the land, the advantage that enabled us to wipe off half a million of the deficit in two years. The present Government found the deficit at £229,000 and reduced it to £99,000 last year, an improvement of only £130,000 in two years. If we compare those two years with the previous two years, we find a result worse by £370,000. One naturally wants to know why we have not done better during the last two years. We shall know more about it when each Minister presents an account of his stewardship for that term. The Premier has not dealt at all with departmental work, but merely with the totals as they appear on the Budget sheet. We have been told that last year was a bad season. Certainly it was not quite as good as we expected, but still it was a good one. The railways carried a great deal more wheat. During 1922-23 and 1923-24 the total tonnage of wheat carried was 781,780 tons, but for the two years ended on 30th June last the quantity of wheat hauled by the railways was 1,066,485 tons, or 284,705 tons more than during the previous two years. So it is not because the work of the farmer has not gone on apace that we have managed only to reduce the deficit by £130,000 in two years. During the last two years we had 36 per cent. more wheat than in the previous two years, and it brought £180,000 more in freight to the railways. Altogether as the result of the activities of the men on the land the railways carried 857,000 additional tons of goods and earned £550,000 more in freight. So one wonders why it is we have not wiped out the deficit altogether. We are told, and with truth,

that wages have increased, that we pay more in wages to the people we employ. Of course wages have had to increase with the ever increasing cost of living, due largely to the tariff. But then wages have been going up for some time. During my term of office the average increase in wages to the men in the railways was £58 per annum. During the past two years the average increase has been £16 per annum. So if increased wages are a disadvantage to the Government, we suffered from it in our years. Then we are told that the public servants are being better paid. That is true. But the salaries of the civil servants in the grade classes were increased during my term of office by £60 per annum, whereas during the present Government's term, owing to the classification they have gone up by £24 per annum. We cannot account for the difference in the results of the management of the affairs of this country between the last two years of my term of office, when we wiped off half a million of the deficit, and the last two years under the control of my friends opposite, when they have managed to get rid of only £130,000 of the deficit. The present Government also had special help in several ways last year, as for instance, by increased revenue from taxation to the amount of £194,000, and also from sandalwood, if 6,000 tons were taken—I do not think quite so much was taken—to the extent of £49,000. Then, too, last year for the first time, very properly—I decided to do it myself the year before I left office—interest was charged on works under construction, which meant £42,000 for the Treasury that it had never had before; because the general revenue had had to stand this cost, and so we had never known the true cost of our work. A great deal represented by interest had been taken from the general fund, instead of being debited to the work. Now, however, we shall know just what the cost is. Then there is the interest on £796,000 written off the State debt to the Federal Government on account of soldier settlement loans. We saved £25,000 by that. So there is £116,000 of unexpected revenue from those three items alone. Yet the deficit was increased last year by £40,000. Again I should like to know why. I think it ought to be explained. I have shown that during my last two years the deficit was reduced by a little more than half a million. From the same sources of revenue

we have made no improvement at all during the last two years. Why? The revenue, of course, has been very much greater year by year as the result of increased production. This money has been spent during the last seven or eight years, and is still being spent. So it means an accumulation, which must bring a great advantage to the Treasurer. The addition of those cleared acres as they are brought under crop, meaning greater production, must bring more money to the Treasury. Yet we have not made any improvement from the ordinary sources of revenue during the last two years. This, notwithstanding that our gross revenue has increased by £943,000 per annum in that time. That is gross revenue of course; I wish that to be understood. But out of that enormous sum, surely something might have been written off the deficit, something more than we have had written off it. Turning to this year's Estimates, we find it is expected that we shall have a credit balance of £10,960, or an improvement of £110,000 for the year. That is only satisfactory because it shows an estimated surplus. Again this year we are getting advantages. We are paying interest on our loans, of course, and the interest is debited up to revenue. Under the migration agreement we borrowed towards the end of last year £1,500,000 at one per cent. For the next five years the revenue will benefit to the extent of £60,000, due to the 1 per cent. money we get under the migration agreement. The Premier referred to the loan of £2,500,000 raised in connection with the goldfields water scheme maturing in January next, and he said it was a splendid thing to know that we were able by means of the sinking fund to liquidate that loan. I think too he said that it was the first time in the history of Australia that a loan had been taken up from the sinking fund, and he mentioned that few of the other States had a sinking fund. Our sinking fund is invested with advantage by trustees in London. During the time I was Treasurer, the Premiers of the other States sometimes wired to me to inquire how the deficit was getting along. It mattered not to them, however, that I suggested time and again that Western Australia had a sinking fund and that we were setting aside a great deal of money each year for the liquidation of our debts. They scorned to follow that course. The payment of the goldfields water supply loan in January

next will mean a saving of £40,000 to the revenue. Then we shall transfer the balance of last year's amusement tax to the extent of £10,000, and those three sums will give us £110,000. From ordinary sources there is to be no improvement, even though we expect a record harvest. I am sorry to say it is difficult to know where the money goes. It is spent in small amounts and is collected in small amounts. It disappears unless the management is keen and unless Ministers are alert. The increase in the gross revenue last year was £938,000 including the Federal grant of £565,000. Including this amount in the two years that have gone, and with the estimated revenue for this year, we should have increased our gross revenue by £1,926,000, or apart from the Federal grant, by £1,360,000, due again to the earnings of our public activities and to the activities created by the handful of people in the State. It is a wonderful result, and for the life of me I cannot see why our finances are not in a better position. It is hard to see just where the money has gone. I suppose we have not been getting value for our money in some directions. It is a serious matter to which the House should devote its attention. Our railways in 1923-24 showed a loss of £31,000. In 1925 there was a profit of £32,000; in 1925-26 the loss was £188,000, and for this year the loss is estimated at £121,000. In each instance we have allowed for sinking fund to the extent of £126,000. But from a profit in one year of £32,000 to a loss in the next year of £188,000 is a very big fall. This year, notwithstanding a record harvest, it is expected that the improvement will be only £60,000 as compared with last year's operations. If we turn to the operations of the three months just past, we find that the Treasurer shows the deficit for that period to be £268,000 as against a deficit for the corresponding period of last year of £351,000, an improvement of £83,000. We cannot bank very much on these monthly results because of the transfers that inevitably follow in each half year. The result of the collection of interest from money lent to individuals, which is something over £14,000,000, has also to be taken into consideration. This is what I cannot understand: the Treasurer has taken into credit one-fourth of the Commonwealth grants, £140,000. So far as I can see, not one penny should have gone into revenue up to date, but if it had not

gone in, we should have been worse off by £57,000 in the three months. In the Estimates we set out that we are to pay £165,000 to a special fund for mining, £200,000 to reduce the total deficits, and £200,000 to come off this year's income tax. This should be taken to credit, because income tax will not be collected for some months, so we are writing off long before we are receiving what is to come from taxation. We have not done very much in the last three months and we are not improving our position. That is all I have to say in regard to the deficit and revenue and expenditure. The position is serious and I hope it will occupy the attention of members, not only those who are in the Chamber to-night, but members who, I hope, are enjoying themselves somewhere else. When we come to loan moneys, there is a much better tale to tell. There are some people in this State who think that we live on loan money. They are right in respect of the loan money that we waste, but they are wrong when they refer to that part of the borrowed money that is properly spent and creates an asset. Where we create an asset by the expenditure of borrowed money, we surely live by work. This is a sound policy and should be encouraged. We expended on loan works in the last two years £3,800,000. Added to that we have had £250,000 or more as a road grant from the Federal Government. Over £4,000,000 has been spent on public works in the last two years. I am afraid we have not had a good return for all that money, but if we have created an asset of equal value, then we are living by work and not on borrowed money. We have spent this money on roads, water supplies and railways. By the way, the Minister for Works, when opening a railway at Williams-Narrogin said that the Government had opened 300 miles of railway. He was applauded when he made that remark. And he went on to say, "What will you do for the Labour Government?" Driving the last spike is a very easy matter. Of the 300 miles to which he referred, only two lines were started by the present Minister for Works, and those two lines total 70 miles. The others were nearing completion when the Government took office. In connection with water supply expenditure, I am afraid we have not got value. A good deal of money has been wasted at Churchman's Brook. I know we have not value for the £500,000 we spent on roads. We should not require to make roads to stand the sum-

mer traffic, but we must make roads to carry the winter traffic. Even in my district the roads are very sloppy in the winter time. We have spent money on railways and I hope we have had value in that direction. People should disabuse their minds of the idea that this country exists on loan money. We do not do anything of the sort. True, we borrow at the rate of £1,000,000 a year, but the production from the farms this year will be well worth between £15,000,000 and £20,000,000. We shall be able, I hope, to live on that.

The Minister for Railways: That will improve the railways, for a start.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: What we have to do is to create wealth to make work and carry out improvements that are required. Improvements that are carried out only because they pay a little more than interest must for the moment be avoided. We are not in a position to do other than spend our money in the direction of creating work and wealth. More wealth is required in order that additional work may be found. When we pull up a line and put it down a few yards away it means that we can haul a little more cheaply than before. The fact remains that we have been handling for years past with improved conditions all round. There is expenditure however, that we cannot afford to face even with money so easy to borrow as at present. Money borrowed must be put to profitable use in developing our primary industries and in doing other works that are urgently necessary. There comes a time in the life of each one of us when it is better to make the old hat, or the old coat last a bit longer, although it would be nice to have a new one to wear.

The Minister for Railways: The member for Perth quoted a speech of mine some time ago on those lines.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope the Minister will live up to his statements. We should enable some of our works to carry on for a while yet. Our investments in railways and so forth are on a sound basis. We have got wonderful value for the money expended. The railways and other public works are quite equal in value to the debt we owe. Our revenue, which amounts to well over £9,000,000 would enable the payment of a deposit of £1 on each Ford car turned out during the year. People do not appreciate that our total indebtedness is not equal to the debt on one great soap works in the

Old Land. Yet there are some who think we have come to the end of our borrowing for public purposes! That, of course, is absurd. So long as we can create an asset representing the value of the money expended, the position is sound. That is the position with our railways and that investment is sound so long as we get value for our money. It will probably take hundreds of millions of pounds to develop the State properly. That money will be spent before many years are over, fortunately not by the State alone.

The Minister for Railways: The sooner the better.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. Western Australia is an undeveloped State and all that I claim is that if we borrow a million pounds, we must get a million pounds' worth of work done for it.

The Minister for Lands: What is the good of continuing like that? Why harp on that all the time?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I intend to deal with this subject in my own way.

The Minister for Lands: Do you think that all the workers are loafers?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I did not suggest anything of the sort.

The Minister for Lands: You are inferring that all the time.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the Minister consoles himself that it is only the working man who does not give value for work done, he should realise that there are others. It may be that some Ministers do not give value for the money they receive.

The Minister for Lands: Don't make any mistake about that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I will deal with this question in my own way, and no display of bad temper on the part of the Minister for Lands will deter me from doing so. If the Minister does not like it, he need not sit here and listen to me.

The Minister for Lands: I always remain in my seat and listen to the debate.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the Minister remains here, he must keep his temper. Already one of my supporters has been lost to us because his good temper departed from him for a minute, and I do not want the Premier to lose one of his Ministers in a few minutes.

The Minister for Lands: Well, you have dealt with that matter 20 times already.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I shall say it 20 times more, for I do not think that we are getting the value for our money.

The Minister for Lands: I think we are.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I advise the Minister to keep quiet. There is much development work to do and it has to be done. Unfortunately we are developing our State at a time when all long-term credit loans to individuals must come from the Government. There is no other means of getting those long-term loans. We should adhere to the policy of two-thirds of our borrowed money being devoted to agriculture, leaving one-third for public works. By that means the taxpayer is protected. By the way, it should not be forgotten that our sinking fund amounts to £10,654,000 and that last year we added to the fund £676,000, including the amounts from revenue. That fact cannot be too often stated.

The Premier: Hear, hear!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The benefit of that is always with us. When one discusses finances in the Eastern States, politicians say, "What about your deficit?" I made the retort, "What about your sinking fund?" They had to admit they had not got a sinking fund and therefore we were all to the good.

The Premier: That is a good counter to their criticism.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I repeat that statement here in order to please the Minister for Lands. Under the migration agreement we are to receive £10,600,000 at 1 per cent. for five years and at one-third of the cost for a further five years.

Mr. Lindsay: Is that settled?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, we have only to get the people and we can get the money.

The Minister for Lands: That is, if the Commonwealth can find time to look over our schemes.

Mr. Thomson: How much have you collected so far?

The Minister for Lands: Nothing.

Mr. Thomson: But you have got the cash!

The Minister for Lands: But we may have to pay it back.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We have to bring in the men in order to collect £75 per head.

The Minister for Lands: We get 2¼ million pounds.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That represents 30,000 migrants.

The Minister for Lands: That is not right.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Is it not?

The Minister for Lands: No, £1,000 per farm and £75 under the public works heading.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: At any rate, we can get the money at the remarkably cheap rate of 1 per cent. No country in the world has ever had such a wonderful opportunity before. The development of the South-West is proceeding. I do not think it is realised by the people that this will represent quite £2,000,000 to the State, to cover the losses on £6,000,000 expended on farm making. We can now get money that will be sufficient for the work we have to undertake. I will not discuss group settlement matters because the Minister for Lands will deal with that later on.

The Minister for Lands: I do not know that I can tell you more than I did the other day.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister can always try. I will turn from the financial position to deal for a moment with agriculture. I repeat that I shall not anticipate anything that the Minister for Lands may say. We have to deal with the problem of the growth of the world's population, which is a matter of real importance to us. We must also take cognisance of the growing desire amongst the nations of the world to become great workshops. A most interesting extract appeared in a recent issue of "The World's Work." It appeared in an article entitled "The Money Value of a Scientist," written by French Strother. Half the people to-day seem to disregard the growing opportunity ahead of those who are producing food. They do not seem to realise the position. In my opinion the lot of the food producer will be much brighter than that of the manufacturer before many years are over. French Strother wrote—

Unless pure science speedily learns more about nature's processes of turning inorganic matter into organic foods, the growth of industry will definitely stop as soon as the people employed in industry become so numerous that they must eat more than the farmers of the world produce—and that day is not more than a century ahead, at the present rate of industrial growth.

Other authorities believe that before the century is out it will be more and more difficult to feed the world. That is important to us, because it strengthens us in our desire to settle people on the land. It means

that there will be growing markets for us and that the people who own land to-day, or are going on the land at present, will have a much brighter outlook than those who went on the land a few years ago.

The Minister for Lands: To-day I came across a man who was bankrupt eight years ago and who has now sold out for several thousand pounds.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is very good.

Mr. Thomson: He was one of the lucky ones.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: He was lucky to make that margin in a short period of eight years. Fortunately the State can look forward to a record harvest this season. It will mean that a great deal of wealth will flow into the State. It will also mean that the price of land will be advantageously affected and the demand for our agricultural holdings will become much keener. People are coming from the Eastern States in greater numbers and bringing with them capital and new ideas. They have been coming here for years past but now they are coming in increasing numbers. The farms are being fenced and stocked more heavily. I am sorry to say that horse breeding is not indulged in to any extent. In my opinion, those who are giving up horses and going in for motors are making a mistake. I am certain, too, that the people who are breeding horses to-day are engaged upon profitable work.

Mr. Marshall: You are prejudiced against motors.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, I think not.

The Minister for Lands: At any rate, you are not the only one.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I prefer a horse every time. I would sooner own Manfred than the best Rolls-Royce in the world.

Mr. Clydesdale: You mean you would sooner back Manfred!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, own him. Our banks are taking up agricultural bank advances as they did in 1910-11, and money made on our farms is being put back in developmental operations. Our people have confidence, and I believe that we shall become the largest wheat growing State of the Commonwealth. We have in Western Australia about one-quarter of the total area under wheat in Australia to-day. While I will not discuss matters concerning the

South-West I cannot refrain from emphasising that that part of the State is progressing. More fertiliser is being used and more stock are being procured by the settlers. We must produce the butter, bacon, potatoes, apples and other foods that we require. We cannot afford to go on sending £2,000,000 away from the State in order to buy goods that could be produced in the South-West. We tried to do it for years with the result that the other States have grown richer, while we have grown poorer to the same extent. I noticed with a good deal of satisfaction that Mr. Amery, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, recently dealt with the question of the use of dominions produce by British people. That is a very happy sign. We ought to exchange our food for the goods we need from them. I hope the result will be that the trade between the Old Land and the dominions will increase. We certainly would not lose by it and it is right that the people within the Empire should trade their food and manufactured goods within the Empire. We must have more people for the land.

Mr. Marshall: At present we want more land for the people.

The Minister for Lands: There is plenty of land but it is distant from railways.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Land selection is proceeding actively and never again shall we have more land than there are people to take it up. If every surveyor in the State could be kept busily at work all the time, we should not have more blocks than the people would select. To-day we are selling light land and so long as the price of wheat keeps up to 5s., we can use the light land profitably. I see no reason why the price of wheat should not keep up, and so long as it does the light land can be brought into use. The light land at present is being selected in large areas. I hope we shall have an opportunity to discuss the North-West when the Premier brings down the proposal of the Federal Government regarding the £150,000 grant. I hope, too, that secondary industries will increase, but we must see to it that our people are kept employed. Probably one of the causes that has helped to lessen the financial progress which is being made is that men are not always employed. The man in employment contributes to the revenue of the country: a man out of employment cannot do so and he often becomes a burden on the State. Ministers, I hope, will be prepared to

give us the fullest possible information about their departments. The Premier has not touched upon the departments at all; he has not touched upon policy; he has left it to his Ministers to do that. It is essential that this be done. I hope it will not prolong the time occupied in the consideration of the Estimates, but I am afraid it will have that effect.

The Minister for Lands: I cannot tell you any more than I told you on the Address-in-reply.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the Minister means that he will not give us any more information—

The Minister for Lands: No, I said I cannot tell you anything more. Anything you desire, I will give you.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: When the Minister asks the House to grant him funds, he must justify his request. We must know just what he proposes to do with the money.

The Minister for Lands: The Minister to-day is in a happy position in that both sides agree on the land policy.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We want to know what has been done with the money granted in the past. The Minister for Lands is not going to get off lightly. I am determined to see that he gets slightly less criticism than he deserves. When we reach his department I shall endeavour to discipline him a little.

The Minister for Lands: If you cut the vote down it will mean less money to spend on development.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, my object is to obtain some information. I am sorry the State has not made greater progress, and that greater improvement is not shown in the financial results of the last two years. This is very hard to understand because advantages and money have fairly rained on the State during the last 12 months. The Federal Government have been most generous, and from many sources money has been received, this, too, without much effort on the part of the present State Government. The road grant alone was a wonderful thing for this State; we had a special road grant of £48,000 last year.

The Minister for Lands: The road grant meant that the State had to find more money.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, loan money. If we could not find pound for

pound to subsidise the road grant, it would be time to give up the ghost. In the last three years the Federal Government have given us £250,000 and the State had to find an equal amount, but in future we are to get £380,000 and the State has to find three-fourths of that amount. So, the Government have had advantages the like of which were never known before. I hope Ministers will study the situation because it is not satisfactory. I would far rather talk of the opportunities ahead of the people and the work to be done than indulge in criticism, but we have a duty to the taxpayers and we have to do it, unpleasant though it may be.

The Minister for Lands: You must admit, like other people, that everything has gone on very well.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Other people do not admit that. I have been trying to show the Minister that things have not gone on so well as they should have done. Naturally the Minister himself feels satisfied, but he is probably the only person in the State who thinks that things have gone on well.

The Minister for Lands: A large number of people are thoroughly satisfied.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Not at all. A large number of people know that things should have been better and the Minister himself knows it. Why have we not done very much better? That is the question, and surely it has to be answered. The present Government have enjoyed advantages that no previous Government ever had.

Mr. Thomson: The present Government have been very fortunate indeed.

The Minister for Lands: A large amount of the money is in hand and has not yet been spent.

Mr. Panton interjected.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I should like to hear what the hon. member and his friends think. It is their duty, just as it is our duty, to criticise the Government when they are in the wrong. I shall look forward with considerable interest to the statement to be made by each Minister. The Premier has introduced an innovation and it will be interesting to see what the result is. It certainly will necessitate a much closer scrutiny of the work than has been the case in the past.

Progress reported.

BILL—MARRIED WOMEN'S PROTECTION ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

ADJOURNMENT—ROYAL SHOW.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [9.10]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 4.30 p.m. on Thursday, the 7th October.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.11 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 7th October, 1926.

	PAGE
Assent to Bills:	1268
Motion: Industrial Arbitration Act, to disallow regulations	1268
Bills: Education Act Amendment, 1B.	1268
State Children Act Amendment, 1A.	1268
Coal Mines Regulation Act Amendment, 2A., Com.	1271
Traffic Act Amendment, 2A.	1284

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message received from the Governor notifying assent to the under-mentioned Bills:—

- 1, Plant Diseases Act Amendment.
- 2, Federal Aid Roads Agreement.
- 3, Kalgoorlie and Boulder Racing Clubs Act Amendment.
- 4, Herdsman's Lake Drainage Act Repeal.
- 5, Vermin Act Amendment.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Public Education Acts Amendment.
- 2, State Children Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Chief Secretary.

MOTION—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT.

To Disallow Apprenticeship Regulations.

Debate resumed from the 5th October on the following motion by Hon. J. Nicholson:—

That the Apprenticeship Regulations made (under and in pursuance of the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912-1925), and published in the "Government Gazette" of 20th August, 1926, and laid on the Table on 24th August, 1926, be and the same are hereby disallowed.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [4.40]: I thought after the convincing reply of the Chief Secretary that Mr. Nicholson would have withdrawn his motion. As, apparently he does not intend to do this, I shall have a word or two to say on the question. One would imagine from the remarks of the hon. member with regard to the rights of employers that before the Arbitration Act was passed they had complete control over apprentices. The hon. member is an eminent lawyer, but I would like to inform him that even in the old days—I can go back for 35 years to the time when I was an apprentice—when trade unions did not exist in my trade, apprentices had rights and were very keen on preserving them. An indenture was a promise or a pledge, on the one hand to give full and faithful conduct and attention to business on the part of the apprentice, and on the other a sacred promise on the part of the employer to do all that was possible to see that the apprentice properly learnt his trade. Unless an apprentice was convicted in the court, he could not have his services dispensed with. We used to work on that a little. There were two apprentices in the shop in which I worked. The firm was a progressive one, and had instituted certain innovations. We were called upon to work on Sunday nights. We promptly went on strike, because my colleagues and I were constant attendants at the Presbyterian Church. We successfully resisted the attempt of the boss to make us work on seven days a week. I remember when I got free of the Factories Act. In those bad old days apprentices were protected by the law until they were 15½ years of age. On the day when I was freed from that protection, my employer informed me that he had the right to work me as many hours as he liked, and that he intended to take full advantage of the opportunity. In those days, before the Arbitration Court or