

Bill will not compel people to deal there. I believe, however, it will be good for all if there are implement works established in various parts of the State.

Mr. PARKER: Why not bind the farmers to deal with the State Implement Works?

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am not prepared to create a monopoly at the State Implement Works although I believe the only justifiable monopoly is a State monopoly. Anyway, I do not propose it; I am giving other parts of the State the chance to have machinery made outside of Fremantle and there will be nothing to prevent anyone starting implement works at Northam, Katanning or anywhere else and thereby keeping within the State the money that is devoted to the purchase of agricultural machinery. I do not expect there will be very much opposition to the Bill, at any rate not from anybody who gives it serious consideration, and the support it deserves.

Mr. Sampson interjected.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I will be surprised if the hon. member supports it because we know that in connection with his own business he imported cards from Great Britain that could have been made in the State. He is not standing up to his job by not supporting local industry. If everybody did as the hon. member does, the State would not prosper. I hope the Bill will go through. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Point of Order.

Mr. ANGELO: On a point of order; I desire your ruling, Mr. Speaker, as to whether or not this Bill is ultra vires the Federal Constitution. I think you will find a section in the Federal Constitution which prohibits any State from giving bounties or assistance in connection with the local production of goods or any preference to the manufacture of goods in other States. I ask your ruling as to whether the Bill is in order.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Gascoyne has raised a point of order as to the validity of the Bill now before the House. Section 90 of the Constitution reads—

On the imposition of uniform duties of customs the power of the Parliament to impose duties of customs and of excise, and to grant bounties on the production or export of goods,

shall become exclusive. On the imposition of uniform duties of customs all laws of the several States imposing duties of customs or of excise, or offering bounties on the production or export of goods, shall cease to have effect, but any grant of or agreement for any such bounty lawfully made by or under the authority of the Government of any State shall be taken to be good if made before the thirtieth day of June, 1898, and not otherwise.

I should like to give the matter consideration before giving my ruling.

Mr. Sleeman: There is no provision in the Bill for a bounty or anything else in any shape or form.

Mr. SPEAKER: There cannot be any discussion on the point of order.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.35 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 18th September, 1930.

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

STANDING ORDERS.

Report of Committee.

The PRESIDENT: I have to lay on the Table of the House the report of the Standing Orders Committee furnished in pursuance with the instructions given by the Council on the 3rd. December, 1929, with reference to certain Standing Orders.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourteenth Day—Conclusion.

Resumed from the previous day.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.33]: At the outset of my remarks, Mr. President, I wish to say that I was extremely gratified when it became known that His Majesty the King had revealed his approbation and recognition of your great services to Western Australia by honouring you with the deserved distinction of a knighthood. Since the receipt of the news I have felt particularly elated in the thought that His Majesty's quest for the recipient of his pleasure has rested in you, our esteemed President. When we asked you, some years ago, Sir John, to accept the Presidency, we were all well aware of your sterling citizenship and knew that we were exceptionally fortunate to secure your mentorship in our deliberations. We are richly endowed by your presence in this Chamber and I trust we shall have, for a great number of years, the advantage of your rare attainments and the guidance of your blending influence in our discussions. I cannot deny my diffidence in following such a naturally able man as Mr. Drew in the Leadership of the House. That honourable gentleman brought to his occupancy of the position marked capacity in the submission of business, and I felt that I would need to strive very hard in my attempt to satisfy in a small way the requisites of the position before I ventured into it. In his notable leadership, Mr. Drew displayed tact, judgment, unfailing industry, and courtesy. In addition to his unusual gifts as a Parliamentarian, the hon. gentleman holds the proud record of having served the State in Ministerial office in the State Legislature for an aggregate period in excess of that of any other person. Mr. Drew has held office as a responsible Minister for 11 years 10 months and 12 days. The late Lord Forrest served for 10 years 1 month and 17 days, and Mr. Gregory, M.H.R., carried on for 9 years 2 months and 25 days. Therefore, besides our personal affection for Mr. Drew and our happiness in his friendship, the State is indebted to him for his service to its affairs and for the wisdom of his administration, under which great progress has taken place. In

an ideal Chamber of Legislature there must be all shades of political thought. In that respect and because of his pleasant fellowship, we are disadvantaged by the absence of our former dear friend, the late Mr. J. R. Brown. The sincerity of the deceased gentleman was unchallengeable and we shall sadly miss the quips addressed to him and his characteristic repartee. Mr. Brown was rich in native ability, devoted to his ideas of duty to the people, and an earnest friend of those in distress. The evening of his life was saddened by great suffering which he bore with wonderful fortitude until the end. Naturally one feels the loss in our proceedings of Mr. Stephenson, but changes are inevitable in the waverings of the electors. Helpless in that regard, I desire to convey my hearty congratulations to the new members and to assure them that the freshness of their views will be welcome in our debates. I am deeply sorry that our worthy Chairman of Committees, Mr. Cornell, is not in his accustomed place, but I am relieved to hear that he is now convalescent and that he will make his appearance in the Chamber in the very near future. Also, I regret the illness of the Clerk of the House, Mr. Bernard Parker. His capabilities as an officer are exceptional, and I do hope that the days will not be many before his extensive knowledge is again at the disposal of members.

In passing to the domain of governmental and administrative matters and to that of the severe financial position in Australia, I do not consider it incumbent upon me to delve into the causes of the present serious depression, or demean the debate by criticism of Federal and State Ministers for indulgences in past years. Such pettiness, if indulged in, would be unpardonable in view of the get-together spirit that prevails and the adamant determination of all sections of the people to win through. As members are aware, drastic and momentous decisions to retrieve ourselves in the financial sphere were arrived at at the Conference of Premiers, which met at Melbourne on Monday, the 18th August, and on the succeeding three days. Subsequent to the conference, a meeting of the Loan Council was held and the resolutions of that body were equally firm. Notable participants in the proceedings of the Premiers' Conference were Sir Otto Niemeyer, the visiting Direc-

tor of the Bank of England, and Sir Robert Gibson, the respected Chairman of Directors of the Commonwealth Bank. Sir Otto Niemeyer was an invited consultant. A financier of repute, he most willingly came to Australia as the result of correspondence between the Bank of England and the Prime Minister, and we are fortunate in having had his earnest advice and fortifying experience in shaping our plans for the recovery of our financial prestige. After a thorough review of our troubles, it was found that the Australian Governments have overseas Loan obligations amounting to £572,282,000 and a floating debt of £36,000,000. This floating debt of £36,000,000 is made up of (a) short term Treasury Bills; (b) bank overdrafts, and (c) loans by banks. In addition, there is an annual burden of £31,192,000 for interest and sinking fund payments, plus an amount of £4,808,000, being outstanding borrowings by semi-Government concerns in the Eastern States. Those amounts represent the sum due overseas by the seven Governments and interest on debts owing by local authorities and other public bodies. To extricate ourselves from those doleful obligations, the seven Governments pledged themselves in no uncertain manner to a common policy for the resuscitation of our previous prosperity. That common understanding carries with it weighty considerations which, in my opinion, will invigorate the energies of our people to the much desired goal of a self-reliant nation. Foremost in the unshakable policy is the decision that Australia as a whole is to remain off the London market until such time as the floating debt of £36,000,000 is absorbed in long-term loans, as the market becomes favourable, which may take two years. In furtherance of that conclusive agreement not to borrow in London, it was decided (1) that revenue Budgets must balance, (2) that commitments falling due in London during that period—that is to say, interest and sinking fund contributions on loans raised overseas—must be met by funds from Australia, and (3) that loan works should not be undertaken until funds were raised therefor. Those conditions will necessitate relentless economy in all governmental expenditure right throughout Australia. The balancing of the Budgets is a paramount necessity because since the finalisation of the Financial Agreement, the Australian Governments, Federal and State,

have been consolidated in financial stability. Therefore the failure of a constituent government will jeopardise the financial standing of all the Governments. If one Government should be remiss in their revenue and loan affairs, the integrity of all Governments will be questioned in the money market of Great Britain. The consequences of neglect are, therefore, too serious for any Government to be careless in their supervision of expenditure. That aspect was emphasized by Sir Otto Niemeyer and all Governments clearly understand the consequences. Hitherto, we have always had the financial help of the London financiers and bankers in meeting the floating debt of £36,000,000 and the deficiencies of the related adverse trade balance. The position is now changed, not because of any loss of good-will by Australia in London financial circles, but because Britain's own depressed internal position prevents her from rendering us the assistance so willingly given in the past. Britain is still as anxious as ever she has been to help us, but in this crisis she is not able to stand by us, and therefore the obligation to meet our London commitments rests with us entirely. There must be no doubt in our minds that that is the position in London. Yet, in the face of Britain's financial stringency, the financial houses will seek to aid Australia, but with the important stipulation that we must shoulder our load. That must be unmistakably understood by the people. Because of our inability to secure money in London and as the exchange position is so unfavourable to Australia, the transfer to London each year of the £36,000,000 to meet Australia's interest and sinking fund commitments was a problem of first magnitude to the assembly, but happily the Commonwealth Bank and the Associated Banks agreed to arrange for the transfer of that huge sum. The next matter dealt with by the conference of Premiers was the question of borrowings in the near future. The subject was taken in two parts, (a) borrowing in London, which is necessary to renew loans falling due from time to time, and (b) new money for new works. In discussing the first point, it is necessary to remember that we must not raise money in London for some time to come, and that we must send to London each year £36,000,000 to clear our responsibilities in interest and sinking fund payments. Moreover, in addition to that huge sum, it must not be overlooked that the internal debt in

Australia amounts to £531,745,000, and that the internal interest and sinking fund on that sum is £32,468,000 per annum.

The Loan Council met afterwards and, in dealing with this phase, consulted the Chairman of Directors and the Governors of the Commonwealth Bank. Finally it was decided to reduce the loan to be raised in Australia for this year's work from £24,000,000 to £15,000,000. Admittedly the reduction was a drastic one, but it was thought that to raise more than £15,000,000 would be asking too much of the people. However, if the Australian money market improves, the Loan Council may reconsider the position later in the financial year, but for the present it has been determined that the loan expenditure of the seven Governments must be restricted to a total of £15,000,000. Our State's share of that amount will be £1,726,000, and we must wait until it is actually in our hands before it can be spent. The decision not to raise more than £15,000,000 will be far reaching in Western Australia. It means that the loan expenditure of last year will be cut by about one-half. It was also decided that loan money was to be expended only on works that will return interest and sinking fund charges within a reasonable time. As previously stated, it is essential that the revenue and expenditure of all revenue Budgets should balance this year and in the years to come, so that good will accrue in London and Australia. In view of that necessity the precarious position in South Australia received special attention, and it was ultimately agreed to make available to that State the sum of £1,000,000 to balance its Budget. Our contribution to the relief amounts to £32,500, which is to be deducted from the £65,000 due to Western Australia on account of the Unemployment Relief Grant from the Commonwealth. I regret to say that we have already spent loan money, financed from other funds, amounting to £3,500,000 ahead of permanent raising. In that expenditure we utilised bank overdrafts, advances by the Commonwealth Government and the Commonwealth Bank, and other funds at the State's command. In other words, we have employed moneys temporarily in anticipation of a loan being raised and of adjustment being made subsequently. This practice, which saved the State a substantial amount of interest charges during the construction of works, will not be permitted in future.

Hon. G. W. Miles: A good job, too.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: In reply to the inquiry of Mr. Seddon, I desire to inform him that State and Commonwealth Treasurers have undertaken that for the future loan work will not be undertaken until the loan money to pay for the work has been raised, or definitely provided.

Hon. H. Seddon: What about the money you have just received?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I shall deal with that presently. At the 30th June last, a very considerable amount of loan expenditure had been incurred without our being able to raise the necessary loan to cover the expenditure. That money was found (a) by bank overdraft, both in London and Australia, and (b) using available trust funds. That practice has been in vogue for many years and, as previously stated, it is economical in saving interest. In the past we have been able to raise permanent loans as required: to-day that is not possible. In answer to the second query by Mr. Seddon, I am advised by the Treasury that a loan was raised during June and July, of which this State received £1,795,199. A portion of that amount is on account of arrears, having been received prior to the 30th June, and the balance is on account of this year's programme. The outstanding arrears to reimburse funds will be met under the funding programme of £36,000,000 of money overseas. Beyond the balance of the money from the last loan, future loan expenditure will depend on the ability of the Australian market to float a loan, or any agreement reached with our bankers to finance us on loan expenditure pending the raising of a loan. The State's loan indebtedness at the 30th June, 1930, amounted to £69,355,449, and last year we paid in interest the sum of £3,164,610. Obviously the decisions of the Loan Council will be a great blow to Western Australia inasmuch as the resources of the State were entirely exhausted in the belief that the Loan Council would be able to borrow for us the £2,500,000 authorised by Parliament to be raised from the 1st July, 1927, onwards. The Premier (Sir James Mitchell) stressed that feature of our difficulties and asked the Federal Treasurer to raise the £2,500,000 for this State, so that the funds which had already been drawn on by the Government could be reimbursed. This he consented to

do when the London market is again open to Australia. In the meantime the State is without any reserves upon which it can draw to meet shortages of revenue or any loss on public utilities or trading concerns. Therefore, as we must finance ourselves from revenue, we must resign ourselves to the unalterable decision that not one penny will be at the service of the community until it is in the coffers of the Treasury.

That necessary precaution places the State in a very serious financial position. In these circumstances, money will not be forthcoming for desirable and, in some instances, even necessary services. The situation must be met with energy. To meet it the ability of Ministers and members, as well as of officials, will be taxed to the utmost. To remedy the desperate position, every person will be required to make sacrifices for the common good. Let us all repay to the State in service some at least of the good we have received from it. If we devotedly serve Western Australia to our utmost capacity, we shall, in addition, achieve something for the Commonwealth. Naturally the situation gives cause for anxiety, but not for pessimism. Ahead of us lies the task, and as we have never yet failed to satisfy our ambitions, I am certain that our troubles of to-day will soon be recollections of yesterday.

A new form of financial return, on a uniform model agreed on at the Premier's Conference, was published in the "West Australian" on the morning of the 10th inst. On the evening previous to the publication of the new form, Mr. Seddon mentioned the publication monthly of a summary of the revenue and expenditure, the position of the short-term debt, and the position of the loan account. Subsequently the Under Treasurer (Mr. G. W. Simpson) informed me that consolidated revenue returns in future would be made in a comparative form, showing (a) the estimate for the year; (b) receipts and expenditure for the number of months already passed; and (c) receipts and expenditure for the current month.

Turning to other topics within the limits of the State and particularly to the advantageous criticism in the course of the debate, I am desired by the Premier to state that the remarks of members during the session will be closely perused and that exhaustive consideration will be given to all the co-opera-

tive views and suggestions offered. In compliance with the Premier's directions, the material utterances in this Chamber will be extracted from the "Hansard" reports and sent to the various Ministers and departmental officials for investigation, in the hope that savings may be effected, or that the people may be afforded some relief from hindrances to their industry. In these days a common duty devolves upon the community to search for opportunities to effect economy in the interests of the whole State and members of Parliament, to justify the confidence of the people, are expected to carry more responsibility in that respect than ordinary citizens. That is my conception of what is required, and I am hopeful that at the end of the session each member will be able to claim that he has contributed something towards the collective task. As time is precious I shall confine my remarks to points of major importance in the speeches of members. Early in the debate, Mr. Holmes and Mr. Hall referred to the use of the coal resources at Collie by the State railways, and contrasted the fuel qualities and cost of the local product with those of coal obtained in New South Wales. I submitted the views expressed to the Commissioner of Railways, and he told me he had obtained particulars of the contracts entered into by the New South Wales Railways for the supply of coal for the period from the 1st July, 1930, to the 30th September, 1931. For large coal from the Northern District (including the Newcastle and Maitland pits), supplied in departmental trucks, the prices vary from 14s. 9d. (less 2½ per cent. for payment within 30 days) to 17s. 5d. per ton. In addition to the supplies obtained under contracts, which are let by public tender, the New South Wales Railway Department has its own coal mine which produces approximately 1,400 tons of large coal daily and at a price considerably less than that paid for coal supplied under contract. Against those figures, the current contract prices for large coal on trucks at the mines at Collie range from 17s. 3d. to 19s. per ton. In support of the statements of the hon. member, the Commissioner said that it is generally considered that for locomotive use, one ton of Newcastle is equivalent to approximately one and a half tons of Collie coal. In the absence of time to look

into the reasons for the variations in the figures, I would point out that if there is a loss to the Treasury in the use of Collie coal, it is more apparent than real.

Although we may pay a little more per ton for native coal, in adherence of our settled policy of preference to local products, it must not be forgotten that the expenditure of the whole of the money with the State creates employment for our own people and that the avenues of revenue are stimulated by the circulation here of all of the money. Therefore, when the local considerations are examined and it is remembered that the State would benefit only to the extent of the wages paid here for handling the Newcastle coal, even though it is said that one ton of Newcastle coal is equivalent to one and a half tons of Collie coal, I am sure it will be ascertained that the consumption of the local product is a distinct source of profit to the Treasury. However, I thank the hon. gentlemen for having mentioned the matter. In vigorous and caustic language Mr. Miles denounced the events leading up to and the finalisation of the recent contracts for the supply of coal to the department. After consideration of the criticism, the Government agree that the conditions regarding the production and use of our native coal are unsatisfactory, and it has been decided that the subject shall be further investigated. In the meantime it is well to remember that the Railway Department is committed, under a legal agreement, to obtain supplies of coal under defined conditions and prices until March 1933. That agreement was made by our predecessors in office. With regard to the Griffin Company, the Railway Department acted entirely in accordance with recognised practice, and the fullest investigation is invited into that aspect and all other matters concerning the coal supplies.

Mr. Holmes drew attention to the disability of the lack of jetty accommodation for the Roebourne district. For some years past he has pleaded for something to be done to relieve the inconveniences suffered by his constituents in the shipment of goods, and he is deserving of every sympathy in his advocacy of the much desired and justified facility. After listening to Mr. Holmes, I made inquiries as to the state of the project and found that the road and jetty works were authorised and that inquiries had also

been instituted in regard to securing the necessary iron work, metal, piles, etc., but that no contracts were actually entered into. As a matter of fact before the work could be commenced or materials sent forward it was necessary to send an engineer to investigate with a view to locating a suitable landing place for materials, a more detailed survey of the proposed road and the provision of water supplies and other matters. This work was not actually completed until the 18th June last. On the 10th April Mr. McCallum, the then Minister for Works, was asked whether it was certain that provision would be made on the next Estimates for the construction of the jetty, and also whether the money for the road work was available, because the two works should be carried out conjointly. Mr. McCallum directed that the question be put after the elections. On the 7th May the Treasurer, stated that he could not yet make money available for the work, and there the matter rests at present. As the Prime Minister and the State Premiers have agreed that no loan money should be expended on a work which would not return full interest and sinking fund payments within a reasonable time after it was completed, I fear that that decision will delay the carrying out of this very essential work.

Mr. Holmes claimed that huge sums could be saved by a reduction in overstaffed departments. That important statement was placed before the Public Service Commissioner, who has assured me that economies are being effected wherever it is possible to do so. In addition, he states that services have been restricted to a certain extent which will result in economy without serious inconvenience to the public. Also, that during the 12 months ended the 30th June last the numerical strength of the Service was reduced by 62, and since the 1st July 80 more have received notice of retirement, and five have retired voluntarily. The Public Service Commissioner does not agree with Mr. Holmes that huge sums could be saved, and in support of that view contends that under normal conditions the Public Service could not be said to be overstaffed, and that it is only owing to the present severe depression that reductions are now possible. Another impressive statement by Mr. Holmes was the allegation that there was a duplication of clerical work in the Metropolitan Water Supply Department in

the preparation of water supply assessments. The seriousness of that complaint caused me to call for a report from the Under Secretary for Metropolitan Water Supply and to send a copy of the hon. member's statement to the Public Service Commissioner for investigation in due course. I have not yet heard from the Public Service Commissioner, but the Under Secretary for Metropolitan Water Supply has written me as follows:—

The clerks in Accounts Office have many other duties besides dealing with assessments for the City, and moreover these officers do not prepare details of water consumption or assessments for the Perth Council. The council is not concerned at all with water consumptions, all accounts for water being rendered direct to consumers.

For reasons of economy and to save duplication of valuation of properties, this department adopts the annual values of each municipal council within its area (9 separate councils). These valuations are copied from the council's books, and constitute the department's rateable values of properties concerned for its year commencing on the 1st July.

Any appeals against municipal council valuations are made to council concerned, and this department automatically adopts the amended valuations from commencement of department's next ensuing rating year. Consequently we avoid the necessity for hearing appeals, and as a general rule there is no necessity for department's officers to specially visit council's offices to verify reduced valuations.

In road districts in the metropolitan area (16 separate road districts) the department has to make its own valuations, as road boards rate on unimproved values. Consequently appeals against valuations in road districts have to be heard and dealt with by the department. All this work is avoided in municipalities.

It will, therefore, be realised that so far as Perth municipality and other municipalities are concerned, we are saved the necessity for making valuations and hearing appeals, and therefore avoid duplication to this extent.

Until the Public Service Commissioner has had an opportunity to look into the complaint, we must accept the denial of the Under Secretary. Lastly, Mr. Holmes referred to the continuance of the State trading concerns, and Sir Edward Wittenoom also spoke in the same strain. Later on, I shall introduce a Bill which, if enacted, will permit freedom of negotiation between the Government and prospective purchasers or lessees of the concerns. If the Bill be passed, the Government will then be in a position to give serious and long overdue

consideration to the disposal of the concerns, but I wish to make it clear that none of them will be sold or leased unless good terms are secured. In other words, the taxpayers can depend upon it that the Government does not intend to sacrifice the concerns. In his contribution to the debate, Mr. Kempton spoke mainly of the Geraldton harbour works and in so doing quoted figures prepared by Mr. Bogle of the Geraldton Chamber of Commerce. In reply, I cannot do better than read a minute handed to me by the Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. Stileman). He states—

The original expectation was that 1,000 feet of wharf would have been completed by January, 1930. It was, however, utterly impossible to complete the dredging to 30 feet by the same date. It was decided, therefore, that in the first place the area within the harbour should be dredged to 25 feet, it being thought better to open the harbour on that depth rather than to wait until the full 30 feet were available.

The provision, therefore, of one berth and a 25 feet depth are merely the first stage towards completion of the first section, viz.:—1,350 feet of wharf and 30 feet depth of water.

The rate of progress throughout has been controlled entirely by finance.

With regard to the draught of wheat ships, Mr. Bogle's figures would appear to be inaccurate. Actually the facts are that in the berth 27 feet of water is available with 25 feet between the berth and the entrance channel. Vessels can, however, leave the berth, taking advantage of an additional 12 inches, due to tide.

Of the 31 vessels which loaded wheat at Geraldton during the past season, 18 actually topped up at other ports, and sailed therefrom with an average load draught not exceeding 25 feet.

Mr. Bogle's figures and the correct load draught for four of the vessels quoted by him, are as follows:—

Mr. Bogle's figures obtained from local paper—

	Draught.	Mean load draught.
"Siljan" ..	26ft. 6in.	21ft. 6in.
"Induna" ..	26ft. 4in.	24ft. 5in.
"Dalveen" ..	27ft. 4in.	24ft. 10in.
"Nyanza" ..	30ft. 6in.	24ft. 0in.

I agree that the completion of the harbour is desirable at the earliest possible moment, but along with other urgent works more rapid progress depends upon the dictates or, perhaps I should say, the fickleness of the financial position. Next, in brief terms, Mr. Kempton urged the amendment of the Municipalities Act and the Road Districts Act, and he was supported in respect to the

Municipalities Act by Mr. C. H. Wittenoom. Replying to both hon. members, I am pleased to state that amendments to the Municipalities Act are contemplated, and that comprehensive amendments to the Road Districts Act have been outlined and are now in the hands of the draftsman. Also, in answer to the direct inquiry of Mr. Wittenoom, I can inform him that provision will be made in the Municipalities Act for the alternative system of rating, but it is not at all likely that authority will be sought to enable municipalities to levy special rates for advertising purposes to encourage the visits of tourists and those holidaying.

My friend, Mr. Hall, in his condemnation of the expenditure of money on roads parallel to railways, touched on what he termed the competition of motor vehicles with traffic the railways should enjoy. Personally, I think the term competition is a misnomer. I consider there is no semblance of competition in that which is going on. In my opinion the motor vehicles are brazenly robbing the railways almost right throughout the system. It is one-sided flebbing, and a little later in the session members will be asked to approve of an amendment of the Traffic Act to suppress the evil to the assets of the people. Sir Edward Wittenoom in his criticism of the expenditure of loan moneys, maintained that money voted for a railway in the current year had been taken to pay for a railway constructed in the previous year, and that he had even heard that loan money voted for a railway had been taken to pay interest on previous loans raised in London. I repeated the utterance to the Treasury and asked for confirmation or otherwise of Sir Edward's charges, and the Assistant Under Treasurer, Mr. Berkeley, very promptly supplied me with the following minute:—

1. Money voted for a particular railway can only be used for that railway.
2. Money is raised under a Loan Act for particular purposes, and must be used for those purposes. Should more money be raised than is necessary, the surplus is transferred under a Loan Bill to another work.
3. Although a railway may be constructed in one year, accounts may be outstanding at the end of the year, and come to hand in the following year. In such case the vote is continued on the Estimates for that year.
4. All votes lapse at the end of each year, and where necessary, are re-voted.
5. Interest on capital during construction is charged up and used to meet the interest on the loan for that period. It ceases as the railway becomes revenue earning.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Has that always been done?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: It has to be done. If Sir Edward will peruse the Loan Acts, he will see that it is the practice of the Treasury to provide for the reappropriation of votes, and I cannot believe that that frequently-resorted-to method of adjustment would be departed from for some obscure purpose. Dealing with pastoral leases, Sir Edward suggested that parties holding the maximum of one million acres should be permitted to take up other areas. On referring this to the Lands Department, I ascertained that the department is aware that certain parties are desirous of securing more than the one million acres fixed under the Land Act, and that in due course a decision will be arrived at.

Mr. Glasheen, in his usual sincere way, gave the House the result of his inquiries into the difficulties of unfortunate settlers who had been compelled to assign their estates to firms of accountants in Perth. Being impressed with the seriousness of Mr. Glasheen's revelations, I requested Mr. McLarty, the General Manager of the Agricultural Bank, to favour me with the views of the trustees. He very readily did so in the following comments:—

We agree with Mr. Glasheen's statement as to the unsatisfactory position of settlers who have been forced to assign their estates. The cost of administering the estates is excessive, and the loss of control has a dispiriting effect on the settler. The trustee naturally is anxious to do the best possible for the creditors, with the result that very often the settler is not allowed sufficient to carry on his farming operations. The operations of any bankrupt are necessarily subject to restrictions, and the trustees of assigned estates cannot be held responsible for the unfortunate position of their clients. Any arrangement having for its object the protection of creditors without forcing a settler into bankruptcy would probably be more beneficial to all parties. I recognise that this may be difficult, and that it would afford protection to the unworthy as well as the worthy. The position might be met by appointing a public trustee to handle the affairs of all settlers who are incapable of meeting their obligations. One of his duties would be to make an equitable distribution of revenue amongst creditors. In my opinion it would be inadvisable for the Agricultural Bank to undertake the business. It has always been the practice of the Agricultural Bank to allow the registration of second mortgages. The associated banks have in many cases financed Agricultural Bank

clients, and have been content to accept a second mortgage as security. Actually this should strengthen our position, as the second mortgagee must necessarily remove any default under the first mortgage in order to protect his security. If the borrower disregards his obligations to the bank, we are always in a position to exercise our powers of sale, and in such case the second mortgagee would be compelled to arrange matters with us.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is quite true.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I have forwarded Mr. McLarty's minute to the Minister for Lands for his information and any further action deemed necessary, and I trust Mr. Glasheen will follow up my action by interviewing the Minister.

Mr. Macfarlane, in the course of his speech, recommended restriction in the declaration of brick areas in municipal and road board districts. In May last, the Timber Merchants' Association of W.A., made similar representations to me as Minister for Local Government, and after consultations with my officers I laid it down that the policy of the department would be strictly to confine the brick area powers of local authorities to portions of towns only. During my consideration of the matter I found that something in that direction had already been done, and I thought it necessary to put it on a firmer basis by the issue of instructions that in future requests for permission to declare brick areas were to be closely examined before action was taken.

Mr. Williams, in his remarks, informed us of the trend of views on the goldfields. One subject dealt with by him was the question of the price for water supplied to the mines from Southern Cross and eastwards to Kalgoorlie. It is true that the present Government, when previously in office, introduced rebates on the water supplied to mines by charging the difference between the rates of the Water Supply Department and the price to the mines, to the Mining Development Vote. In that way the mines have benefited to the extent of over £340,000 in the past six years. The present position is that, in the grave absence of loan funds, the Government must regrettably review their policy in this respect. The Government are not unmindful of the part played by the mining industry in the development of the State, and members are well aware that successive Governments have substantially assisted the industry through

its period of depression. Huge grants in aid cannot continue indefinitely, and when the Government of the day took over the empty Treasury it had to face the most serious financial problem that has yet befallen us. The Government hope that, with the improved treatment methods now being introduced, towards which the State has given very material encouragement, the gold mining industry is now facing an era of great revival. Leaving that subject, Mr. Williams referred to the Third Schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act. As members know, the late Government decided to assist the mining companies by relieving them of payments of premiums under the Third Schedule of the Act for a period of twelve months. At the expiration of that period it was agreed further to assist them, and another twelve months' premiums were met. Then, at the request of the companies, the payments were met for an additional three months and the companies were advised that they would not be paid further. The definite intimation to the companies that there would be no further relief from the liability was given by the previous Government.

Hon. H. Seddon: On what date?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I cannot say just here. I will supply it later. The moneys for the relief were paid from the Federal Disabilities Grant, and when the present Government took office that grant was found to be exhausted. There are now no loan moneys to continue the assistance, and therefore the Government are not in a position further to meet the charges, which are a liability of the companies. The so-called profits of the Insurance Department, although made from one department to another, represent the liability of the Mines Department. The premiums were based on a lower rate than would be accepted by any other insurance company operating in the State. To date the companies have been assisted by payment of premiums aggregating approximately £80,000. Next, Mr. Williams expressed his views on the disposition of the workmen's inspectors. The re-adjustment of the work of the inspectors took place because of the imperative need for economy in administration. To relieve the position, an amendment to the regulations under the Mines Regulation Act has been gazetted so that workmen's inspectors will be required to inspect only those mines employing not less than 40 men underground

as wages men, contractors, or tributers. That amendment is simply a reversion to the regulation which was initiated at the time the workmen's inspectors were first appointed. The inspectors' duties have thus been reduced, and the workmen's inspector at Gwalia is able to visit Kalgoorlie one week in four. The appointment of inspectors of mines is only for the purpose of seeing that the law is complied with, and it is not their duty to instruct the mine managers how they should work their mines, as that is laid down in the regulations under the Mines Regulation Act. By periodical inspections inspectors are required to see that the regulations are being observed. Inspectors of mines are trained for such purposes, but workmen's inspectors are appointed for an entirely different duty. Workmen's inspectors are elected by their fellow employees in certain defined districts, and it was never intended that they should be regarded as inspectors in the same class as departmental inspectors. It is well to emphasise that workmen's inspectors are elected to be largely at the call of the men wherever they feel that the staff inspectors are not properly protecting them. If workmen's inspectors were expected to do the work of staff inspectors they would have to be equally qualified. As practical miners they may be fitted, but as far as technical knowledge is concerned most of them, if not all of them, would fall below the necessary qualifications. In addition there is no object in having a duplication of inspectors; the whole point being that the onus of working the mines for the safety of the men falls upon the mine owners through their managers. The inspector of mines at Southern Cross is responsible for the inspection of the quarries in the metropolitan area, the Greenbushes mineral field, the Phillips River goldfield, and the Dundas and Yilgarn goldfields. Southern Cross is therefore a central position at which to locate the inspector. The Minister has the matter under constant attention, and as necessity arises the boundaries of inspectors of mines districts and their locations are re-adjusted to suit developments. On the question of detonators Mr. Williams does not see eye to eye with the department. In reply to the hon. member's criticism, the Minister for Mines assures me that the detonators were authorised for use after thorough investigation in all the States of Australia, and in New Zealand, South

Africa, India, and Great Britain. The Minister states that the inquiries in the Eastern States and other countries where they have been used extensively, indicate that no trouble has been experienced.

Hon. C. B. Williams: We must have got the worst of them.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: In South Africa 106,000,000 were used during the three years 1927-1929. Also, they have been generally used throughout this State for 18 months, and no reports of accidents have been received from anywhere other than the Kalgoorlie mines. To restore confidence among some of the miners a proposal to supply any of them who desired ordinary fulminate detonators was discussed with the mine managers and the secretary of the A.W.U. Subsequently arrangements were made with Nobel's agents to procure a consignment, which arrived early in April and the detonators were immediately released by the Mines Department, but strange to say recent inquiries show that no applications for them were received until about the end of June last.

Mr. Williams, in earnest words, asked for the continuation of assistance to prospecting. Although I am of the same thoughts as Mr. Williams in that regard, I am afraid that the amount of money available for assisting prospectors, like other loan funds, will necessarily be restricted. At present there are approximately 200 prospectors in the field under the auspices of the Central Mining Board. Another feature of interest to prospectors in their sandalwood getting activities is that the depressed condition of the market for sandalwood must be reflected in a diminution of orders to pullers. Because of the condition of the sandalwood market, orders for pulling sandalwood are not being issued to any extent. When the market again becomes normal the old practice of allocating orders to prospectors will be revived as in the past, with co-ordination between the Mines and Forests Departments. To send men from Blackboy Hill to go prospecting, as was suggested by Mr. Williams, would not be an economic proposition for the outstanding reason that prospecting requires experience and every person is not suited for the work.

Hon. C. B. Williams: There are many mining men in the camp.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Every genuine application for assistance to prospect is closely considered by the mining boards, and money is allotted according to the merits of each proposition. While the loan money position remains obscure it is not feasible to say what proportion of possible funds can be set aside for prospecting. In his remaining remarks Mr. Williams referred to the operations of the mining timber contractors along the Widgiemooltha-Norseman line. I find, on discussing the matter with the Conservator of Forests, that it is the desire of the Forests Department that the large mines, which now draw their supplies of firewood from the Kurrawang wood line, should also obtain their supplies of mining timber from the same source. That would have the advantage (1) of preventing good mining timber being converted into firewood; (2) of reserving the mining timber which will always be accessible to Government lines against the time when, owing to a falling off in firewood consumption, the woodlines may cease to operate. As, however, it is not the desire of the Forests Department that people long established in the business should be caused hardship, the Conservator of Forests is taking suitable steps to investigate the statements made by Mr. Williams. Various speakers, in their references to the financial position of the railways, argued themselves into criticism of the management of the system. In reply to those members and in fairness to the Commissioner, I think the aspects considered by the Commissioner should be placed before the Chamber. As is well known the loss on the railways for the year ended 30th June, 1930, was £404,489. Full details of the year's working have been laid on the Table of the House in the form of the Commissioner's annual report, which no doubt hon. members have read fairly carefully. They will see on looking at the report that earnings decreased by £140,561 when compared with the year 1928-29. That decrease was due mainly to the diminution in passenger travel—£50,000—and goods traffic—£94,000. The former decrease was due to motor competition and partly to the general depression through which the State is now passing. As regards goods traffic, the motor competition, alluded to earlier in my speech, is taking its toll of the more re-

munerative lines of commodities, leaving the low-rated traffic, such as wheat and superphosphate, to the railways to carry. At page 84 of the Commissioner's report there is a most illuminating table which gives the details of paying goods traffic. A perusal of that table will show that the average earning from the whole of the ton-nages carried was 1.67 pence per ton mile, as compared with 1.71d. per ton mile in the previous 12 months. The difference per ton mile, .04 pence, seems a small amount, but when it is shown that the ton miles totalled 362,000,000, the loss of such a fraction amounted to £60,000. No less than 61.28 per cent. of the total ton mileage returned less than the average, which will give hon. members some idea of the difficult job given to the Commissioner to make the earnings meet working expenses and interest.

The interest bill alone is nearing the million mark; in fact, it costs 36s. 2d. for each minute of the 365 days of the year. truly a tremendous sum for such a small community to find. In a young country such as Western Australia developmental lines had to be constructed and it is in no small measure due to those lines that the railway loss is so great. Although they are necessary for the development of the country it will be many years before they return even working expenses, let alone interest. On the expenditure side of the railways, it will be found that although earnings decreased there is an increase in working expenses of £57,449 when compared with the year 1928-29. The incidences of arbitration awards and long-service leave are having their effect on expenditure, and combined with extra staff necessary to man new lines, the wages bill shows an increase. The graph at the commencement of the Commissioner's report is well worthy of perusal; from it will be seen that in the year 1913-14 48.55 per cent. of the total earnings went to pay the staff; eight years later 59.76 per cent. was utilised, while for the year under review the figure had risen to 62.48 per cent. Commenting on the graph, the Commissioner states—

"Had the ratio of wages to revenue remained at the same figure—48.55 per cent.—the year just closed would have more than enabled us to meet our liabilities."

There is little comfort in comparing our loss with the losses experienced in other States, but it would be as well to remind hon. members that all the Eastern States railways show losses of over one million

pounds sterling, and several of them receive subsidies from the Treasury to offset losses on various lines built for developmental purposes and for the purpose of reducing rates. The Commissioner's report also shows that since the inception of the railways the accrued loss, after meeting working expenses and interest, amounted to £787,300, notwithstanding the very many subsidies which the railways have made to assist industries and other Government departments. With such a large State, where there are only 101 people to each mile of railway—this is the lowest population per mile of railway in the world—the task of administration is no sinecure, and the Commissioner should be commended for being able to show such a small loss in view of the very stressful period experienced. Economies have been introduced from the commencement of the financial year which it is hoped will offset some of the loss, and this, combined with the proposed legislation to combat motor competition, and the prospect of a record harvest, should make the outlook for the current year much more hopeful from a railway standpoint. When the various committees were appointed, Mr. Lovekin suggested that before departmental reports were printed the manuscript of the reports should be submitted to the Printing Committee of the House so that the committee could assist the Government in keeping down the cost of printing. I placed that proposal before the Premier and I am pleased to say he thinks that the hon. member's suggestion might be put into practical use, more especially as the Printing Committee contains at least one member who possesses rare experience in printing matters. It is proposed therefore to try out the suggestion and some reports are now being forwarded to the Printing Committee. On behalf of the Government I wish to express thanks to the hon. member, and I trust the outcome of his interest in the matter will result in a valuable saving in the present great cost of printing.

Hon. A. Lovekin: A lot of the mischief has already been done.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Mr. Gray seems to be aggrieved because he was not re-appointed to the Indeterminate Sentences Board. He was not "sacked" from the Board as Mr. Kitson suggests, and as Mr. Gray himself in some measure suggested.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: I did not suggest that.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The fact is the members of the board are appointed for three years under Section 64E (2) of the Prisons Act. They are of course eligible for re-appointment, but there is no slur cast on any member whose term has expired in not being re-appointed. When Mr. Gray's term expired some short time ago the Chief Secretary wrote to him and explained that in his (the Chief Secretary's) opinion a member of Parliament was not the most suitable person to sit on such a board. That is obvious since admittedly every member of Parliament has the same experience, namely, that members of the public, and particularly members of the public living in his electorate, consider it their right to approach him on every matter in which they desire help or redress. The Chief Secretary, therefore, thanked Mr. Gray for his services on the board, and at the same time explained why his services could not be further utilised. In place of Mr. Gray the Chief Secretary appointed the officer-in-charge of the Salvation Army in this State, and, it must be admitted that appointment was a most desirable one. The other point of Mr. Gray's criticism was the exercise by the Crown of the prerogative of mercy in a certain case, and in reply to that aspect of the hon. member's remarks the Chief Secretary maintains that the action taken did not in any way take work out of the hands of the Indeterminate Sentences Board. The Governor did not release the prisoner on probation but remitted the balance of his sentence, which was about 6 months after allowance for deductions under the prison regulations for good conduct. Mr. Gray should know that the Indeterminate Sentences Board has no authority to remit any part of the sentence of a reformatory prisoner, but only power under Section 64E (5) to recommend to the Comptroller General the release *on probation* of a person detained in a reformatory prison; or under Section 64K to report to the Comptroller General that any person detained in a reformatory prison should be permitted to leave such prison temporarily for some specified purpose. In the circumstances it will be seen that the functions of the board and the prerogative of the Crown are entirely distinct, and there is therefore no slur whatever cast on the board

by the Crown exercising its prerogative. Following the lead given by members in another place, Mr. Kitson and Mr. Drew, like moths about a candle light, have unresistingly allowed themselves to be drawn into the flame of the controversy of the election utterances of the present Premier; and in so doing have branded themselves ignorant, in scorching letters, of the true state of the finances when the Premier in good faith expressed his proposals for the future government of Western Australia. Their sincerity is evident. It is apparent that they fondly believed the position was otherwise. In the circumstances they must be forgiven for their lack of knowledge of the debacle in the Treasury when the Premier took over the reins of government. Their remarks are a full and frank admission that they were not aware of the emptiness of the Treasury when they were relieved of office; and as the electors demand that, at all times, at least Ministers of the Crown should be fully seized of the financial position, it is not remarkable that the electors could not do otherwise than place their confidence in someone more zealous in his duty to them. From the remarks of the two ex-Ministers it is abundantly clear that even the members of the late Administration honestly believed that there were at least some moneys with which to carry on the government; and if they were in that state of smugness we must, as just men, forgive the present Premier for the assumption that his inheritance, although not great, was at least sufficient to continue the feeding of the necessary activities of the State. With that complacent thought uppermost he entered office; but, in the exercise of his first duty to the public to examine the Treasury, he was dumbfounded when the disquieting fact was revealed that the Loan account was £3,035,000 to the bad at the 31st March, 1930. Moreover, in disavowal of the statements that the present Premier was aware of the despondency in our financial affairs, members will recollect that the quarterly financial return, with its discouraging contents, was not published until after the elections. It was actually published on the 2nd May, 1930.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is deemed good tactics sometimes.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES. It is frequently as-

serted that the finances had been well managed by the previous Government; yet everyone was dismayed when the financial year ended with a deficit of £518,000. It is now disclosed that enormous sums were spent by the late Government, and although Ministers should have known of the expenditure it now seems that Mr. Kitson and Mr. Drew did not know of the spendings. The deficiency in the Loan account and the deficit total £3,553,000, and the present Government must redeem the destitution of the Collier Government by raising that amount by loans. The stupendous feat of the Collier Government in spending £25,000,000 of loan money in 6 years was an act peculiar to their own ability, and they capped that extraordinary achievement by getting rid of £3,600,000 of loan money in the year 1929-30. An incontrovertible fact in the discomfitures of the opponents of the Government is that the public was told that the loan authorised by the February Loan Council for this State would be £2,800,000. With that amount much could be done by the Government in the employment of the people, but the amount has since been reduced to £1,750,000. That means that the Government will have nearly £2,000,000 less loan money to spend this year, as against the expenditure of 1929-30. The Government are faced with a formidable task, and one would expect that those in great measure responsible for it would lend hearty assistance in the work of reconstruction instead of exerting themselves in attempting to cleanse themselves of responsibility. In concluding my remarks I desire to assure hon. members that the many other matters brought under notice by them have not been neglected. In furtherance of my wish to co-operate, I have caused suitable extracts of the views of hon. members to be forwarded to the various Ministers, who I am sure will welcome the receipt of the opinions.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: You have not told us how to get over any of the difficulties.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Hon. members will be told that next week.

The PRESIDENT: Before putting the motion I wish to acknowledge the extremely kind references made by hon. members to the honour of knighthood conferred upon me by His Majesty the King. It would be

vain of me not to recognise that the distinction has come mainly because of my occupancy, now for more than four years, of the high office of President of this Chamber. Still, the value of the distinction is greatly enhanced to me if it meets with the approval of those amongst whom I have lived and worked. For that reason I greatly appreciate the all-too generous references to myself made by those who know me best, my fellow members of this Chamber, and I thank them very heartily.

Question put and passed; the Address-in-reply adopted.

BILL—WAGIN HOSPITAL VALIDATION.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [5.51] in moving the second reading said: In submitting this Bill for an Act to validate a building contract, for structural additions to the Wagin hospital, I desire to say that its submission has been rendered necessary owing to the contract for the work being signed three weeks before the Hospital Act of 1927 was assented to and in consequence the contract was not covered by the authority of Section 27 of the Act. That section empowers local authorities to borrow money or to expend sums not exceeding 10 per cent. of their general rates for the construction of public hospitals; but unfortunately the two local authorities, the Wagin Municipal Council and the Wagin Road Board, concerned in the very necessary additions to the local hospital, omitted to wait for His Excellency's assent to the Hospital Act before signing the contract, and therefore the transaction is not protected by the provisions in the Act authorising local authorities to expend moneys in providing hospital accommodation. In addition, one of the parties to the contract, the Wagin Municipal Council, exceeded the restriction in the proviso to Section 27 of the Hospital Act by undertaking to pay £3 in interest and sinking fund charges above the maximum of 10 per cent. of the averaged general rates received during the financial years 1925-6 and 1926-7. Briefly the additions were estimated to cost £5,000, but the accepted contract totalled £5,450. The Government found the whole of the money re-

quired, on the understanding that the two local authorities would pay 6 per cent. interest and 2 per cent. sinking fund until each local authority had redeemed its share of the principal, namely, £1,384. Based on departmental figures, the yearly indebtedness of each local authority is £106. In the financial years the average revenue of the local authorities from general rates was—Wagin Municipal Council £1,029, Wagin Road Board £1,879. Therefore the amounts permissible under Section 27 of the Hospital Act are—Wagin Municipal Council £103 and Wagin Road Board £183. On the basis of those figures, the Wagin Municipal Council have to pay £3 per annum more than the stipulated maximum in Section 27 of the Hospital Act. The Wagin Road Board, the other local authority, however, did not transgress in the amount it undertook to pay in interest and sinking fund charges. If this validating Bill is passed, the action of the local authorities in entering into the contract will be legalised. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. Lovekin, debate adjourned.

BILL—STATE TRADING CONCERNS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [5.55] in moving the second reading said: In initiating the discussion on this important proposal for the deletion of the proviso to Section 25 of the State Trading Concerns Act, 1916, I would point out that the Bill does not relate to the principles of State trading; nor has it any bearing on the much debated question of the profits and losses of State trading. Consequently there is no need for me to enlarge the scope of the debate with my views on those vexed subjects. The advantages and disabilities of State trading are not, at this moment, under review, and therefore any explanation of my convictions in that regard would not be helpful to the House in the consideration of the Bill. All I wish to say in that connection is that, in the course of time, the Government and their supporters will be answerable to Parliament and subject to the verdict of the electors for their actions on the major

question of State trading. The aim of this Bill is to dismiss from the parent Act the paralysing restriction that a State trading concern shall not be sold or leased unless the approval of Parliament be first obtained. If an opportunity to sell arises, or an offer to purchase or lease one or all of the concerns is received, the Government believe that they should not be hindered in the negotiations by the unworkable provision that the affirmation of Parliament shall be sought and obtained before the matter can be finalised. Another aspect is the obvious reluctance of prospective purchasers or lessees to negotiate if their rivals and competitors in business are to enjoy the elaboration and criticism of the details in Parliament, and perhaps profit by the disclosures which competitors in business are always so anxious to obtain of each other's transactions. An additional substantial obstruction in the working of Section 25 of the Act is that in any overtures for the purchase or lease of a trading concern the Government would need to be satisfied that the negotiator was in a position to finance the proposal. Such ascertained particulars of his bona fides would appear on the departmental papers. Those papers, if Parliamentary approval had first to be obtained, would necessarily have to be presented; and that requirement alone would stop any business man, no matter how sound his affairs might be, from submitting himself to a heresy hunt of his financial status in the arena of the political vagaries of the day in order to secure the necessary Parliamentary approval. For the latter reason it is vitally necessary, in the interests of the taxpayers, that the conversations should be confined to the Government and the purchaser or lessee, without the intrusion of Parliament. For very good reasons the authority asked for will not be abused by the Government. If there are any misgivings on that point, I would emphasise the fact that the Government are in office as the custodians of the confidence of the electors, and should they, in the disposal or lease of a trading concern, violate that confidence by an act diametrically in opposition to the wishes of the electors, or if they should injure the public Treasury, they would certainly be relieved of office at the succeeding elections. I know of no valid reason why the Government should not exercise complete authority in the disposal or lease of a trading concern. They can make

and unmake and do things of greater importance to the people than the State trading concerns, and to me it seems nonsensical to withhold the authority now required. We all know that a Ministry cannot defy the climate of public opinion and retain office. If an Administration does something dishonest or unjustifiable, it would be impeached by an adverse motion, and afterwards the discredited Ministry and its supporters would have to defend the action before the electors; and if those responsible were found wanting in esteem, they would succumb to the prerogative of the people. Therefore the Government consider they should possess untrammelled power to effect a sale or lease of a trading concern, and in furtherance of that view I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [6.0]: I shall not oppose the Bill, because it is a simple one and is similar to another measure that the House agreed to on a former occasion. I merely rise to point out to the Minister that he would facilitate the passage of a number of these Bills if he had them placed on members' files at the first reading stage, instead of waiting till he moved the second reading to have them distributed. If he did as I suggest, we would be able to look through them and that would tend to shorten debates. The Bill, the consideration of which we have just adjourned, may be quite all right, or there may be something in it that we may desire to discuss. If the Bill had been in our possession a day or two prior to the Minister moving the second reading, we might have been able to pass it through all its stages. As to the Bill the Minister has just placed before us, we have not had an opportunity to look through it. I introduced a Bill in 1924 to the same effect, and therefore know something about it. For that reason I shall not suggest the adjournment of the debate. But some other members are not in the position that I occupy. I place this suggestion before the Minister in order to facilitate the passage of Bills through the Chamber.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I would like to reply to Mr. Lovekin.

THE PRESIDENT: Not at this stage. If the Minister replies, it will close the debate. If it is merely a personal explanation

that the Minister desires to make, he may do so.

The **MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES**: I merely wish to explain to Mr. Lovekin that I have moved the second reading of two Bills, and intend to move the second reading of two more, in order that the measures may be before hon. members who will then have the weekend to consider them. I do not feel disposed to agree to the suggestion Mr. Lovekin has made regarding the distribution of Bills at the first reading stage. I think that would be a dangerous practice to adopt.

On motion by Hon. C. B. Williams, debate adjourned.

BILL—HIGH SCHOOL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [6.3] in moving the second reading said: Last year, when the Bill to provide for the change of the name of the High School to that of Hale School, was under consideration, the Diocesan Trustees of the Church of England opposed the proposal. Foremost in their objections was that fact that Bishop Hale, whose name it was proposed to affix to the school, was a Church of England Bishop, and the school was, by its original Act, confined to giving "exclusively secular" education. The Diocesan Council maintained that it would be improper to give to a school, which was prevented from giving any religious teaching, the name of a minister of religion. After conferences between representatives of the school and representatives of the Diocesan Trustees, it was agreed that the latter would discontinue their opposition to the Bill on certain terms, one of which was that Parliament would be asked to agree to the deletion of the words "exclusively secular" and the insertion in lieu thereof of the word "undenominational." This Bill represents an attempt to fulfil that promise. It may be pointed out that in practice the school has always given some religious teaching, but this has, of course, been of entirely undenominational character. The amendment will not affect in the slightest degree the practice of the school during the whole of its life, but merely

brings the law with regard to it into accord with that practice. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [6.5]: I would like to know something more about the Bill. Is the Bill intended to apply to the High School, the name of which was changed some little time ago to that of Hale School? It is not at all clear which High School is referred to. It may refer to one of the Government high schools.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: Just refer to the parent Act!

Hon. A. Lovekin: We should have time to look into the Bill.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: I have already indicated that that is why I have moved the second reading.

On motion by Hon. A. Lovekin, debate adjourned.

BILL—ROMAN CATHOLIC NEW NORCIA CHURCH PROPERTY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [6.7] in moving the second reading said: In view of what Mr. Lovekin interjected before the adjournment of the debate on the High School Act Amendment Bill was moved, I would like hon. members to understand the position regarding the Bills I am putting before them this afternoon. I am moving the second reading of the measures with the object of giving hon. members ample time to go fully into them. Members will not be asked to discuss the Bills straightway. I cannot understand Mr. Lovekin's objection at all. The presentation of this Bill for the amendment of the Roman Catholic New Norcia Church Property Act, 1929, is necessary owing to the discovery of certain errors and omissions in the list of properties set forth in the Schedule to the Act. Last year's measure vested in the Lord Abbott of New Norcia all the property belonging to the Roman Catholic Church within the territory under his control. Particulars of the various properties are given in the Schedule to the Act. Unfortunately, by mischance between the

Church authorities and their solicitors, incorrect descriptions of the properties appear in the Schedule. In regard to the first property mentioned in the Schedule, the addition of the words and figures in paragraph (a) of Clause 2 of the Bill will remove all doubt as to the land referred to. Certificate of Title Volume 1004, folio 542, was omitted from the Schedule and paragraph (b) of Clause 2 will rectify the omission. Certificate of Title No. 48/1922 was inserted in the Schedule instead of Certificate of Title No. 48/22 and paragraph (c) of the same clause will correct that mistake. The remaining error in the Schedule was the inclusion of Conditional Purchase Lease No. 627/68, which property, the Church authorities state, was wrongly included. That error will be adjusted by paragraph (d) of Clause 2. I regret the need for these corrections and the inconvenience to the House in submitting them. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [6.9]: I support the second reading of the Bill. I rise for the purpose of congratulating the Government on the first indication we have had of economy. I refer to the size of the Bills that are now being presented to Parliament for consideration. They are not printed on such large sheets of paper as formerly.

On motion by Hon. A. Lovekin, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 18th September, 1930.

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

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR.

Messages from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the following Bills:—

- 1, Traffic Act Amendment.
- 2, Main Roads.

QUESTION—WYNDHAM MEAT.

Mr. H. W. MANN asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What was the amount paid in commission for local distribution of Wyndham meat for the years 1928, 1929? 2, Was the meat sold under same conditions this year? 3, Have the meat works an office in Perth?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Commission for 1928—£612 14s. 9d. Commission for 1929—£523 14s. 5d. 2, Yes. 3, Yes, at 419 Wellington Street, Perth.

BILL—VEXATIOUS PROCEEDINGS RESTRICTION.

Introduced by the Attorney General and read a first time.

BILL—INSPECTION OF SCAFFOLDING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 16th September.

MR. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [4.38]: The Minister, when moving the second reading, described this Bill as unique. The only unique phase of it that I can see is that it practically adopts the Bill which