Motion put and passed.

Clause 28—agreed to.

Postponed Clause 4—Amendment of Section 6:

The ACTING MINISTER FOR WORKS: This clause was postponed to permit of the further consideration of paragraph (c) sub-paragraph (i). I move an amendment—

That the words "or the wife or husband of the owner, or any child of the owner or the wife or husband of the owner" be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—"or any member of the owner's family or parent of the wife or husband of the owner."

That should be sufficiently comprehensive.

Mr. Thorn: Could the owner take out his mother-in-law?

The ACTING MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, she is provided for.

Mr. Raphael: What about grandparents?

The ACTING MINISTER FOR WORKS: They would be members of the family.

Mr. SLEEMAN: While I do not object to the amendment, I think it could be made clearer. Under the Child Welfare Act proceedings may be taken in respect of a child against the father, mother, stepfather, stepmother, brothers, sisters and grandparents. If those people may be sued by the Crown for the maintenance of a child, they should be included in this provision.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I think the amendment will include all that you desire.

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

Postponed Clause 5—Annual and half-yearly licenses:

The ACTING MINISTER FOR WORKS: We were in difficulties respecting the license, not for a full year, but for portion of a year, and it appeared that before one could get a license for a portion of a year, one had to deposit the number plates with the licensing authority. On examination it is agreed that that is the position. The drafting was not as simple as it should have been. I propose to submit two amendments. The first is to strike out of Subclause 2, paragraph (b), the words "in the next subsection" and insert the words "in this section" in lieu.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Cannot you put the amendments on the notice paper so that we may consider them?

The ACTING MINISTER FOR WORKS: In Subclause 4 I propose to strike out paragraph (a) and substitute the following:—

Where in any financial year a first half-year's license has not been issued for a vehicle, no license shall be issued for the vehicle for the second half-year of that financial year in any case where that vehicle was licensed (i) for the preceding financial year; or (ii) for the second half-year of the preceding financial year, unless the number plates of the vehicle were deposited with the local authority which issued the same within 14 days after the expiration of such preceding financial year or half-year as the case may be.

I will agree to report progress at this stage to enable the proposals to be considered.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 5.32 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 17th September, 1935.

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Bunbury Racecourse Railway Discontinuance Bill.

QUESTION—ELECTORAL COMMISSION REPORT.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is it intended to lay upon the Table of the House copies of the evidence

taken, and the report prepared, by the honorary Royal Commission appointed to inquire into and report upon constitutional and electoral matters? 2, If so, when?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, Immediately.

QUESTION—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY LEGISLATION.

Position Regarding Mortgages.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: In view of the statement of the Premier that the reduction of salaries, pensions, and grants under the Financial Emergency Act will be terminated at the end of December next, will the Minister advise the House what the Government propose to do with the section of the Act reducing interest on mortgages?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The policy of the Government on this matter will shortly be indicated to Parliament.

MOTION—TRANS-AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY.

Kalgoorlie-Fremantle Section.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [4.35]: I move—

That, in the opinion of this House, before any definite decision is arrived at regarding the construction of the Trans-Australian Railway from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle, a report should be prepared by the Transport Board in accordance with the provisions of Section 11 of the State Transport Co-ordination Act, and be submitted for the consideration of both Houses of Parliament; the Transport Board to investigate particularly a route from Coolgardie, linking up with the Corrigin-Brookton line, thence to Fremantle via Armadale.

My reasons for submitting the motion for the serious consideration of members are two. First, as I will be able to demonstrate, the extension of the trans-railway to Fremantle is in accordance with the established policy of the Federal Government. Secondly, sooner or later, the line must be extended for military purposes, if for no other. On page 9 of a comprehensive report that was prepared by the Hon. W. C. Hill, when Federal Minister for Works, we find this paragraph—

From a military point of view, also, it is apparent that the first consideration is to make the existing railways connecting main centres of population capable of expeditiously handling large bodies of troops.

We all recognise that the line from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie was only constructed on the advice of the late Lord Kitchener when he visited Australia. Probably that astute old general, the late Lord Forrest, secured Lord Kitchener's co-operation in bringing to fruition his life-long dream of securing the construction of a trans-continental line to Western Australia. The first estimate of the cost for constructing a railway line of 4ft. 8½in. gauge from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle was £5,030,000, made up as follows:—Alterations to existing railway and structures, £1,260,000; new lines necessary, £3,120,000; adjustments to rolling stock, £650,000. The quota that Western Australia was expected to find towards the total cost of £5,030,000 was £1,078,103. On page 4 of Mr. Hill's 1927 review of the uniform gauge controversy, we find that a conference was held in Melbourne in January, 1922, but at that gathering no decision was arrived at. The Commonwealth and the States of New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia were desirous of proceeding with the work, but on account of the attitude of the States of Victoria and South Australia, it could not be put in hand. The report of that conference was published in 1927 and it contains a paragraph regarding a motion carried in the 1926 session of the Parliament of Western Australia. It was resolved during that session by both Houses as follows:—

That, in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived when the Federal policy of extending the standard gauge railway be consummated in Western Australia.

A footnote appears as follows:—

It is understood that this has reference to the provision of a standard gauge railway between Kalgoorlie, Perth and Fremantle, which would be a third section of the works recommended by the Royal Commission.

Mr. North, the member for Claremont, moved the motion in the Legislative Assembly and it was agreed to by both Houses. It will be noted that the motion, as carried by Parliament, did not definitely lay down that members favoured the construction of a line running parallel with the present State railway. I opposed the construction of a line along that route and suggested another in lieu. At a conference of Premiers held in Canberra

on the 8th and 9th January, 1929, the following resolution was carried:—

> The Railway Commissioners of the Commonwealth and the States to confer and bring up to date the estimate of the cost of carrying out the proposals for unifying railway gauges made by the Royal Commission on the Uniform Railway Gauge on the 22nd September, 1921.

I desire to deal with those revised estimates and I shall later on quote some letters that I wrote regarding the matter. They will indicate what has actuated me in submitting my motion to the House. As a result of the conference of Commissioners of Railways, in October, 1929, the original estimate of £21,000,000 was increased to £34,000,000. I draw the attention of members to the fact that the recommendation of the Commissioners of Railways—and apparently it referred to the scheme that had been accepted—provided as follows:—

> For an independent 4ft. 8½in. gauge railway from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie running parallel with the existing 3ft. 6in gauge railway for a considerable distance, but deviating extensively through the Darling Ranges between Midland Junction and Northam to secure a satisfactory gradient.

The estimates for the provision of standard gauge rolling stock, as arrived at in 1921, amounted to £5,030,000. The scheme apparently was one accepted by the authorities, and I am endeavouring to find out who was the authority that pledged Western Australia to the construction of such a line parallel with the State railway and to the expenditure of a total sum of £6,211,000, all to secure the construction of a line running parallel to, and in competition with, the existing State railway. On the basis of £6,211,000, the cost of construction of a line through country already served by a railway constructed by the State Government, runs out at a little over £16,046 per mile. The reason I suggest the members of the Transport Board should submit a report is that the board was brought into being to protect the State railways against the competition of motor traffic. Surely if it was considered necessary, in the interests of the railway system, to stifle competition by private citizens, it is much more essential that the board should examine the proposal and submit a report regarding the proposed trans-line extension running parallel for 387 miles with the State railway. Recently I asked the Chief Secretary what had been the cost of the line from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie, and the reply was that to prepare the information would take a considerable time and would be costly. Failure to secure the accurate value from the Railway Department compelled me to turn to the report of the Commissioner of Railways which has been laid on the Table of the House. The capital cost of the railways is estimated at £5,908 per mile. The distance from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie is 387 miles, and a double line running from Fremantle to Spencer's Brook, a distance of 72 miles, makes a total of 450 miles of railway serving the Eastern Goldfields. Therefore the value of the 450 miles of railway that the State has built, calculated at £5,908 per mile, is £2,711,772. Yet it has been agreed by some authority, apparently, that another line of 4ft. 8½in. gauge should be constructed parallel with the existing railway which has cost the State approximately two and three-quarter millions of money. I should like to quote extracts from two letters which I have received. I wrote to the Acting Prime Minister, Dr. Earle Page, and asked if he could send me some information. In reply, I received the following copy of a letter to Dr. Earle Page over the signature of Mr. T. Paterson, Minister for the Interior:—

> With reference to your letter of the 27th December, 1934, with enclosure from the Hon. A. Thomson, M.L.C., of Western Australia, on the subject of unification of railway gauges, I desire to inform you that a reply has now been received from the Commonwealth Railways Commissioner, who advises as follows:—
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> "When the Royal Commission considered the uniform railway gauge question in 1921 they had before them a proposal along the lines of that submitted by the Hon. Alex. Thomson, M.L.C., but the Commission recommended that the standard gauge railway should follow generally the route of the present railway from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie, with deviations on the south side of the Swan river in the vicinity of Fremantle, and on the north side of the existing railway from Midland Junction for a considerable distance through the Darling Ranges. When the estimates were reviewed by the Australian Railways Commissioners in 1929, the Commissioner of Railways, Western Australia, submitted his proposals and estimates on the basis of the route recommended by the Royal Commission.
>
> "The Commonwealth Railways Commissioner conferred on this subject with the Western Australian authorities in 1929, and reported to the then Hon. the Minister that a proposal for a railway such as suggested had been considered by the Western Australian authorities, but the latter were not favourable to the proposal."

Apparently some authority has committed the State of Western Australia to the construction of a line running parallel with the existing Eastern Goldfields railway. On the 12th July last, in answer to my request, I received copies of the report of the Royal Commission on the matter of the uniform gauge, 1921, review of estimates by the Australian Railways Commissioners in 1929, a paper dealing with the history of the movement, and a report of the Royal Commission, estimates, etc., 1927. I wished to get a copy of the conference notes to ascertain who of the Western Australian authorities were not favourable to the proposal in 1929. I wanted to ascertain who was responsible for agreeing to the construction of a line as laid down in the reports. The following reply was received from the Department of the Interior:—

> The Commonwealth Railways Department state:—"There are no notes of a conference with 'the Western Australian authorities who were not favourable to the proposals in 1929.' The then Commonwealth Railways Commissioner was informed while in Perth early that year that the proposal was not favourably regarded by the Western Australian authorities.
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> "The Royal Commissioners on uniform railway gauge do not make specific reference to the route advocated by Mr. Thomson, but after investigation and inquiry on their visit to Western Australia, they provided for a standard gauge railway following generally the existing 3ft. 6in. gauge railway from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie, with deviations in the vicinity of Fremantle and on the north of the existing railway from Midland Junction for a considerable distance through the Darling Ranges."

When the estimate of £5,030,000 was submitted, it was intended to pull up the present 3 ft. 6 in. gauge line from Kalgoorlie to Merredin and lay a line of 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge to Merredin, and to transfer the lifted rails for use elsewhere. Now, apparently, that scheme has been found to be impracticable. I had hoped to have displayed on the wall of the Chamber a map showing roughly the route that I suggest. The route that I consider the Transport Board should report upon is for the trans line to leave Coolgardie and link up with Corrigin and Brookton, and thence follow the route of the proposed Brookton-Dale line, the construction of which has been authorised by Parliament, proceeding thence to Fremantle via Armadale. The distance, according to the scale on the map, is much shorter than the route approved by the Commonwealth authorities, and as far as I can gather it offers absolutely no engineering difficulties, and should be capable of being constructed at considerably less cost than the scheme adopted by the Federal authorities.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: It would not have to pass through the tunnel.

Hon. A. THOMSON: No. Accepting the cost of the Brookton-Corrigin section of State railway as a guide, it was authorised in 1911, and the 56 miles were estimated to cost £1,480 per mile. The actual cost was £1,404 per mile or £76 per mile less than the estimate. This shows that construction along the route I am suggesting would be considerably cheaper than on the approved route. The route I propose would not cause serious competition with existing railways, as the Brookton-Corrigin railway would be the only line affected. The area that would be served by the line is capable of future development. It would pass through the statistical districts of Coolgardie, Yilgarn, Narembeen, Kondinin, Brookton and Beverley. The area it would serve has a population of 8,444 people, and there are in those districts 5,935 horses, 5,565 cattle, 208,132 sheep, and 6,396 pigs.

Hon. C. B. Williams: How much money do those people owe the State?

Hon. A. THOMSON: Not very much, I believe. About 10,000 tons of super was used in those districts last year.

The Honorary Minister: When do you expect the Kalgoorlie-Fremantle section to be constructed?

Hon. A. THOMSON: That is a question which perhaps the Minister can answer better than I can, but I remind him that it is an accepted principle that the line will be constructed sooner or later. My object in asking the House to support the motion is that the route favoured by the Federal authorities shall not be adopted when the time arrives for the Kalgoorlie-Fremantle section of the trans line to be constructed. In the districts mentioned, wool to the value of £408,384 was produced last year, and wheat to the value of £305,495, a total of £713,879. It will be seen that the suggested route would be revenue producing from the

start. The construction of the trans section along that route would also enable other areas to be improved and developed. The rails from the Brookton-Corrigin section could be moved, and used for the construction of the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook line, the earthworks for which have already been constructed. The estimated cost of the Brookton-Dale extension, £106,000, would provide for portion of our quota of the Kalgoorlie-Fremantle section on the 4ft. 8½in. gauge. In my opinion, portion of the line would provide transport facilities for the 3,500 farms scheme. While I admit that to all intents and purposes the scheme is considered to be dead, there is no gainsaying the fact that sooner or later, when the outlook for primary production improves, that land will be settled. In years gone by the primary industries have suffered depression and have recovered, and there is no reason why we should not hope to have those industries restored to a more satisfactory footing in future. Part of the 3,500 farms scheme would be served, and there is no doubt in my mind that, given transport, the land in that area will be utilised in the near future. Later, from a development as well as from a defence point of view, a branch starting east of Billarieay on the Yilliminning-Merredin line and passing through Hyden, Lake Grace, Pingrup, Ongerup, or further east, and thence to Albany would prove of great value from a strategic point of view. I regard Albany, owing to its geographical position and its fine harbour, as one of the key positions from a defence point of view. I hope I have endeavoured as briefly as possible to deal with this important subject, and that I have produced sufficient reasons why the Transport Board should report on the proposal of the expenditure of £6,211,000 on a railway to compete with our own line which represents £2,711,772, money invested by the State.

Hon. C. B. Williams interjected.

Hon. A. THOMSON: It is provided in our law that no new line or road may be constructed until it has been submitted and approved by the board. Whether the alternative route I have suggested is worthy of consideration I shall leave to hon. members to determine. I trust, however, that the House will pass the motion.

On motion by Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

MOTION—MINES REGULATION ACT.

To Disallow Regulation.

Debate resumed from the 10th September on the following motion moved by Hon. J. Nicholson:—

That Regulation No. 17a made under the Mines Regulation Act, 1906, as published in the "Government Gazette" of the 8th March, 1935, and laid on the Table of the House on the 6th August, 1935, be and is hereby disallowed.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [5.7]: In dealing with the question of regulations the House finds itself in the position it has always been placed in when debating this subject. We realise that regulations are framed by the responsible department after due consideration with a view to facilitating the working of the various Acts those departments are administering. The position is that, in connection with various regulations, there may be things that appear to be unworkable or perhaps unjust, and one cannot help thinking that suggestions from the House might prove effective, rather than permit regulations to stand as they are. In this case I am entirely in sympathy with the desire that there should be efficiency in control. At the same time one or two minor points arise and one finds oneself in the position of being unable whole-heartedly to support what is proposed. There are two or three points that appear to me to warrant consideration by the department, certain cases of inadaptability and in other instances incompleteness, and certainly there is the foundation for injustices to occur. The idea of time of service in a mine I entirely support because one realises that in working underground a man must acquire a considerable amount of knowledge, and that that knowledge can only be gained by time. But remembering the conditions existing in the industry, we should ask whether due regard has been given to the question of preparatory education. A man who, by his environment, is familiar with many things connected with mining will acquire knowledge more quickly than a man who may be entirely new to the work. In such a case we should allow a little latitude. For instance, if a young man attends the School of Mines and receives a scientific training there, then, if there is any value in that training, it should assist him to become familiar with mining practice far more rapidly than the man who has not had that

training. So from that standpoint there should be a certain amount of elasticity in the regulations; there should be taken into consideration just exactly what degree of preparation a candidate has had before presenting himself for examination.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What, for shift bosses? A School of Mines for shift bosses?

Hon. H. SEDDON: Many of those who attend the School of Mines acquire a practical training and then work up. A man who is seeking an underground certificate prepares for his examination with that object in view. I am pointing out that in an established method of examining supervisors we should have a certain amount of latitude given to the examiners to enable them to assist in bringing about the advancement of young men. Some men are better adapted than others by environment and ability; some may have had five years' training and so have had wider experience than others. Therefore the question of time might be made more elastic than it is now. May I use an illustration? In the early days of the goldfields, naturally with the expansion of the mining industry many came into the industry as very young men, advanced themselves and assumed positions of responsibility. There is one man at least in this House who, when quite a young man, was placed in a responsible position, and over men older than himself. His appointment was accepted because it was recognised that he had natural ability. I refer to the Hon. Mr. Williams. That illustration, I consider, is proof that natural ability should be recognised. The question of the appointment of supervisors has been referred to by other members. The Minister, too, in his remarks appeared to create the impression that these men were chosen and appointed to responsible positions without due consideration, and also that quite young men were advanced to these posts. It does not appear to me to be consonant with sound management that young men should be chosen to fill responsible positions unless the management themselves are satisfied that those men are capable of carrying out the work. We all recognise that there has been great expansion in mining during the last few years. We have it on the authority of the Acting Minister for Mines that in 1929 there were 4,100 men engaged in the industry and that in 1934 the number had increased to 13,400. In those five years, a number of those men have passed out of the industry, and therefore the number available for positions of responsibility must have considerably diminished. In those circumstances it is quite possible that managements find it difficult to obtain trained and practical men to carry out responsible work. I think Mr. Williams pointed out that many of the best miners will not take on positions as shift bosses or supervisors because so many are doing better in their present work. Therefore there must be a certain amount of encouragement given to those young men at present employed in the industry. There are one or two features about the regulations that I must confess cause me a considerable amount of perturbation, particularly one that deals with the question of the men already acting as supervisors, many of them with many years of experience. In the course of his remarks the Minister said those men would be provided for and arrangements made whereby they would be able to continue in their positions without examination. I cannot reconcile that statement with the text of the regulation, because there is in the regulation no provision for such an action to be taken. The regulation says distinctly that every person employed or acting as underground supervisor shall pass an examination and shall have had five years' experience. There are men with 10 or 15 years' experience in those responsible positions, and I say the department should have made arrangements in the regulation that those men who have had such long experience should be granted exemption from the examination; because obviously they are competent to carry out the work they have carried out for so long. Had that been done, some of the objections which have been raised on the goldfields and a considerable degree of nervousness among the older men would have been dispelled. Again, the latitude which the Minister indicated would be extended appears to me to be rather restrictive in that if a man who, having had 10 or 15 years' experience is quite competent therefore to carry on in his present position, happens to leave that mine and go to another mine, that discretion is no longer applicable, for before he

goes into the new position he must pass an examination. It seems to me unjust and rather out of place because, if a man is competent to carry on in his present position, surely he shall be equally competent to carry out similar duties on another mine. The regulations do not cover such a state of affairs and might cause hardship and injustice to many men who have been associated with the industry for very many years. Another point on which the regulations appear to be entirely silent is the question of arranging for relief men. Suppose a supervisor meets with an accident and is laid aside. There appears to be no provision for making a temporary appointment to fill the position. It is quite possible that some serious difficulty might arise there, because the regulation is very definite on the appointment of supervisors and imposes very heavy penalties on the person who takes the position of supervisor without having first passed the examination, and also imposes severe penalty on the mine management for employing him. The regulation imposes a penalty of £10 with an additional £2 for every day over which an unauthorised man acts as supervisor. So, as I say, considerable inconvenience might arise owing to this lack of any provision for temporarily filling the position. We cannot amend the regulations but must either accept or reject them. I have pointed out these two instances where considerable injustice might arise. Then there is another provision to the effect that if a complaint is made against the efficiency of a supervisor, a certain course of action is laid down. An inquiry must be held into the charges made against the supervisor. Then, after the inquiry is finished, the board of examiners may make such order as they think fit respecting the cost and expenses of the inquiry, and such order shall, on the application of any party entitled to benefit as the result of the order, have effect. So a man might be deprived of his certificate and in addition be fined, or assessed for heavy damages, and be without appeal from the penalty imposed by that court. That is pretty severe. A man could challenge the competency of a supervisor who has not passed any set examination, whereupon the supervisor would be suspended; and, in addition, the examiner may make orders in regard to costs, and so an unfortunate individual might be held responsible for meeting those costs, in consequence of something that had arisen as the result, perhaps, of incompetence. It seems to me that the punishment there is altogether out of proportion. It is already laid down in the Mines Regulation Act that a man responsible for injury or loss of life can be dealt with, but this regulation appears to me to be altogether too severe. In the circumstances, unless we can hear something further from the Minister or the Government in answer to the points I have raised, I will have to vote against the regulations, although I am in favour of the idea that men holding responsible positions should give evidence of their competence, and there should be some system whereby a man occupying a responsible position shall have to be certified competent to fill the position. These are more or less minor points which could easily be included in the regulations, but are not now provided for.

HON. R. G. MOORE (North-East) [5.22]: I am quite in accord with the idea that some regulation should be in force in regard to supervisors and shift bosses on the mines. However, I am not prepared to go so far as to say that I will vote for the disallowance of the regulation. This debate on the regulation will probably be productive of some good, for I am satisfied the Minister for Mines is quite prepared to act on any suggestions that might come from this or another place if he thinks they will make for the better working of the mines. It has been shown that there are weaknesses in the regulation, and probably because of that it will be amended. The point to which I am most opposed is that the regulation makes no provision for the issuing of certificates of competency to those shift bosses who have been serving for a number of years and who, obviously, are competent to do their jobs. Yet many of them whom I know very well would shy at the very thought of undergoing a written examination and committing their knowledge to paper. There can be no question about their ability and knowledge of the work, but for those men written examinations are institutions of the devil, and they would not attempt to undergo any examination in which they had to put on paper the knowledge they actually possess.

Hon. A. Thomson: They could not do it.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: Some of them could not. Yet they could successfully pass an oral examination, or give practical demonstration of what should be done in any or all circumstances; but to sit down and put on paper their answers to questions submitted to them, they simply would not attempt it. Yet these men should be protected and should have certificates to enable them to continue where they are, or go on to another mine on the same class of work, namely supervising. As for the period of five years, I think that possibly a shorter period would meet the case. I do not know that any advantage will result from making the term five years, because, after all, it is not the time but the individual that counts. Some men would learn more in three years than would others in 13 years. And then the young men coming from a technical course at the School of Mines, if they go underground, they should be able to qualify in three years, at the end of which time they would have a far better knowledge of the work than would other men who had been there 13 years. As for underground works, the slogan, in this House at all events, should be "Safety first," and so the term fixed should be too long rather than too short. But in the final issue the choice of man will be for the underground manager, and because a person has served five years and passed an examination is not to say that we will be appointed as shift boss. The regulation will modify the choice to a certain extent, so that an underground manager could not employ a person of ability and knowledge unless he had served five years underground. I think the shorter term would fill the bill, but I do think those older men, who have gained their knowledge from practical experience, should be fully protected, and I am sure that no mine manager would prefer to take the younger men. I do not know what the examination questions will be or how they will be put to the candidates, but I do know that those men I speak of would make no attempt to put the answers on paper: so the best men we have in the mines to-day, men of knowledge and practical experience, would refuse to sit for the examination. One of the main points in this electing of a supervisor is his ability to handle other men. Some men with all the knowledge and experience possible would be the worst in the world to fill the position of supervisor, because there would be trouble amongst the men all the time. The older supervisors should be protected and probably the term shortened from five years to four years or even three years, but I am not prepared to go so far as to vote for the disallowance of the regulation.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [5.27]: I agree with the last speaker that this legislation should be based on the slogan "Safety first." From what we have heard, there are sufficient casualties to disease amongst the miners, without adding the risk of physical accidents. Having listened carefully to the speeches made, I am forced to the conclusion that while some amendment of the Mines Regulation Act is necessary, this regulation does not fill the bill. So much has been clearly shown by Mr. Moore, who says there is a number of good men, the best men, who will not be able to pass the examination, and if they do not pass the examination, they must give up their positions as supervisors. He suggested that the Chief Secretary might bring down another regulation. If we desire to protect these men in their jobs, the only thing to do is to disallow this regulation and bring down another that will meet the case. I am led to believe that five years in any mine is long enough for anyone who is working underground. If a man stays any longer than that underground he is looking for trouble, and yet it is provided that before a man can take an important position in a mine he must have had five years' experience underground. There is no provision for those men who are occupying these positions to-day, have grown up with the mine, and are doing their jobs well. They will be required to pass the examination. We are told they cannot pass it, and that if they fail to do so they will lose their jobs. Either that will be so or their present jobs will become a hell upon earth. So long as they are in their present positions, these men are to be allowed to carry on without examination.

Hon. H. Seddon: The regulation does not say so.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The regulation would not allow that.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Chief Secretary said that so long as they remained in their present jobs in the mine the examination would not be required. If they go to a job on another mine, however, they must pass the examination.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I think the Chief Secretary will correct that.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Fancy any member of this House finding himself in that position. The employers will know that they have these men under their thumbs. If one of these men goes to another mine he would not be able to get a certificate, and therefore could not get the job. That in itself will make his position where he is a hell upon earth. In order to justify his existence, he may make the position of those under him intolerable. It is not by this means that we will acquire what so many people are talking about to-day, peace in industry. That is what I am aiming at myself. When we legislate for some special profession or trade we have always made provision, even in such a difficult profession as dentistry, that those who were carrying on at the time the Act was passed should be allowed to continue to carry on.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: As in the case of midwives and veterinary surgeons.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: And yet in this case it is stipulated that those who have carried on for many years must pass an examination. I agree that the safety of those in the mines takes precedence over all other considerations. I also agree that peace in industry is a very important plank in any platform. If we could amend this regulation as the House desires, all would be well; but as we cannot do so I am compelled to vote for its disallowance in order that some more suitable regulation may be brought down.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

BILL—RURAL RELIEF FUND.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Trustees' Powers Amendment.

2, Fremantle (Skinner Street) Disused Cemetery Amendment.

Passed.

BILL—CREMATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Further report of Committee adopted.

BILL—JUDGES' RETIREMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 12th September.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.37]: I oppose the second reading. The Bill seems to me to be entirely unnecessary. The argument has been used that in other walks of life men have to retire at 60 or 65. I can see nothing that is comparable between the position of a judge and that of a civil servant or even a magistrate. A man is not appointed to a judgeship until he has had a great many years of experience in his profession. It is a profession in which a man continues to improve throughout his life. A man has to be well on in years before he can acquire the qualifications necessary for a judgeship. Some of the most eminent judges in the Empire have been men between 70 and 80, and in exceptional cases over 80. Only on rare occasions is it that a judge does not retire at the first sign of waning powers. I am forced to the conclusion that if the Bill is passed, other Bills must be brought down, because this measure does not in itself go far enough. The Government are asking us to agree that a man, by virtue of his age, is no longer competent to construe the law at 70. If that be so, it is a far greater disability for a man to attempt to make laws at the age of 70. It may be said that the man of 70, before he can be elected to Parliament, must go before the people who will decide as to his capabilities. That is so. When we appoint a judge, whether he is 40 or 60, he retains his position until he retires or dies, or is removed for some wrong practice. According to this Bill, the Government of the day are not to be permitted, however urgent the need may be, to appoint a judge or man who has been a judge up to the age of 70, to be even a commissioner to try a special case. He will not be appointed even as an acting judge, merely because he is 70, however capable he may be. If that is the intention of the Government they must go further, and say that no man may be a member of Parliament if he is over 70. If age is a disqualification it is far more important that the disqualification should apply to a man

who is making the laws rather than to the man who has to interpret them. If the Bill passes the second reading stage, I shall have several amendments to suggest. If it becomes law, the only effect it will have will be to increase the burden upon the people by way of pensions. The Minister for Justice in his second reading speech, referred quite rightly to the qualifications that were apparent in the late Chief Justice, who was over 70 at the time of his death. We had the advantage of two additional years of his learning and experience. The present Chief Justice is also over 70. I do not know whether it is suggested he is not capable of continuing in his position or that he has not ripened with the years. It is found that all judges have ripened with the years. If the Bill is passed a man of 60 will not take a judgeship because he may only be there for 10 years. Furthermore, if the Bill is not amended he will not receive a pension. I do not think it is intended that a judge who retires at 70 shall lose his right to a pension because he has only held office for a few years. The Bill suggests that he will not get a pension. In any case, why should the State have to pay a pension to a man who has held office for only five or ten years?

Hon. G. Fraser: It must be a healthy occupation if we have to legislate for the retirement of judges at 70.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: They have every reason to improve their minds. They are not navvies. No one has ever suggested that a judge requires to have the constitution of a navvy. He has not got to do bullocking work. He has to apply his brain, his mental faculties. It is a healthy occupation. Moreover a judge has vacations during which to recuperate so far as his mind is concerned. No one suggests that a judge actually sits in court for eight hours a day. He has a considerable amount of reading to do, but I do not think the reading is such as to drive him into his grave. He has not to undergo physical exertion. As I was pointing out, if the Bill passes, judges must be appointed before the age of 55 years if the State is to obtain a reasonable amount of service from them, with 70 years as the retiring age. Under those conditions, appointment at 55 would mean only 15 years' service. A great many of our judges have sat on the bench for far longer periods than 15 years, and have given good service. With 70 years as the retiring age, a judge appointed at 60 would give only 10 years' service before a pension would become payable. Why increase the pension bill when there is no need whatever to do so? No stoppage of promotion is involved. Members of the legal profession are not worrying about being promoted, and wanting judges retired for the sake of promotion; and it is only the legal profession which counts in that respect.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: What retiring age do you suggest?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: None whatever. Judges are appointed because they are honourable men. Quite recently in England an eminent judge said that when hearing appeals he always felt very pleased to have available the views of a judge of ripe years of experience, and that judge was then 82 years of age. Further, the same eminent judge stated that it always happened, when a judge was beginning to fail, that one of his colleagues gave him the tip and he retired.

Hon. J. Nicholson: You are referring to Lord Hewart?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Yes. For some reason or other we here want to cut down judges in their prime. I cannot understand why. I see no reason why a judge should be retired. If he is not fit for his position, the Houses of Parliament can remove him. We know very well, however, that this procedure is not one which anybody would care to adopt. On the other hand, we can feel quite assured that the Attorney General or the Minister for Justice of the day would give a hint where necessary, and that the judge would undoubtedly retire. But to declare that we cannot employ a judge over 70 years of age, however capable, is absurd. Under the Bill the Governor in Council would not even be allowed to appoint him as a commissioner for a temporary job. That seems to me absolutely ridiculous. He might be a man at the very best of his faculties, and yet the Bill will debar him from employment. I personally am strongly opposed to the measure, and shall vote against the second reading.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [5.50]: I support the second reading of the Bill. I cannot agree with the previous speaker, who declared himself in favour of deleting the 70 years. In effect that deletion would mean

leaving it to the individual judge to say when he shall retire, as is the case to-day. The system of giving a tip to a judge to retire may have acted well enough in some cases; but, still, it rests with the individual whether he will take that tip. Should he happen to be a little cantankerous, he might say, "No; I will continue on the bench." Generally speaking, I am not a believer in a retiring age whether for the manual worker, the judge, or any other person. The capabilities of a person cannot be judged merely by his age. Those are the lines along which I have thought all along. One man at 65 may be absolutely played out, whereas another man of the same number of years might be quite capable of carrying out his duties.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Then you should support Mr. Baxter.

Hon. G. FRASER: No. At 70 years of age a man has had a pretty fair spin.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You judge a man by the age of 21.

Hon. G. FRASER: In what way?

Hon. G. W. Miles: You fix his wage at the age of 21, whether he is fit to earn it or not.

Hon. G. FRASER: There must be starting-point.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Yes. Is everyone a man at 21 years?

Hon. G. FRASER: It is a pretty poor kind of man who cannot earn a man's wage at 21.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Any number cannot.

Hon. G. FRASER: Not many men are unable to earn a man's wage at 21. I am not so much concerned with the cost in the form of pensions, because it might be much cheaper to retire a judge on a pension than to allow him to continue on the bench giving wrong decisions on account of disability due to age. Wrong decisions would involve hundreds or perhaps thousands of pounds to the suitors concerned. That is a serious phase of the question.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Then a man of 70 should not sit in Parliament to make and amend laws.

Hon. G. FRASER: Such a man could be outvoted by younger legislators if he is wrong. He has to get other members to vote with him, in order to pass a law.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: He can have the same advantage on the bench.

Hon. G. FRASER: As regards Parliament there is safety in numbers, but that does not apply in the case of the judicial bench. I notice a clause excluding the present occupants of the bench from the operation of the Bill. I agree with that clause, because it prevents possible allegations that something was being done from vindictive motives. Still, many persons do not agree with that provision. They hold that there must be something wrong in view of what has happened during the past two or three years with regard to appeals from decisions.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Have you ever heard of the number of appeals where the Lords Justices' decisions have been upset by the House of Lords?

Hon. G. FRASER: But the upsetting of decisions has been so persistent here during the past two or three years.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: It has been more persistent as regard the decisions of the Lords Justices.

Hon. G. FRASER: Speaking from memory, I should say——

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: It is not a question of age, because the judges who upset the decisions you refer to were all over 70, and you will not have any judges over 70 years of age.

Hon. G. FRASER: On the second last occasion of the High Court of Australia visiting this State, out of about six appeals only one was dismissed.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: The appeal was from under 70 to over 70. It was the judges over 70 who allowed the appeals.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am not aware what were the ages of the judges concerned.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: But that is a fact.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am referring to the high percentage of decisions upset during the last two years. This year the percentage is somewhat similar. One or two appeals were dismissed out of six or seven. Many people have suggested that the Bill should apply to the present occupants of our Supreme Court bench.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: It has nothing to do with age.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am prepared to support the clause, because I cannot suggest where the fault lies. I merely mention that phase of the subject. The advantage of having competent men on the bench would outweigh any cost that might be incurred by way of pensions. I repeat, a man of 70 years of age has had a pretty

fair spin. Whilst there may be many exceptions to the rule, whilst judges may be capable of carrying on even at 80 years or over, I consider that, taking humanity right through, the man who has reached the age of 70 years is nearly finished. As I have said, I am not a great believer in any compulsory retiring age; but I hold that in fixing a retiring age of 70 we are giving a pretty fair spin to future judges. I support the second reading.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [5.57]: The previous speaker appears to have overlooked the fact that if a judge who is not giving proper service on the bench refuses to take a tip to get off, that is not the end of the matter. The fact which the hon. member has overlooked is that the two Houses of Parliament can at any time remove a judge for incompetence or wrongful acts.

Hon. G. Fraser: Who is going to prove incompetence or a wrongful act?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: That remark is a reflection upon Parliament. The fact remains that a judge can be removed from the Bench, as I have stated. Having looked through the speech delivered by the Chief Secretary in moving the second reading, I could only discover in it one point in favour of the Bill—that it will bring the retiring age of our judges into line with that of other State officers holding high positions. However, it still leaves the judges years above the retiring age of many public servants. And that is the only reason advanced in the Chief Secretary's speech—to bring the retiring age for judges into line with that for other high officials. I have looked all around Australia for reasons. It seems to me that, for some unexplained reason, this retirement of judges has become part of the Australian Labour policy.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: A similar measure is being introduced in Victoria.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The hon. member can tell us all about Victoria later on. However, this seems to have become part of Labour policy in Australia. It has been adopted in Queensland, I understand. I am not surprised at that. It has been adopted in New South Wales, where many things have been done of which we are not proud. Victoria has a Government kept in power by the Labour Party. From what I read in the Press it seems to me that the Victorian Government have been forced to introduce the Bill fixing the retiring age of judges at 70 years. There may be good grounds for the introduction of measures of that kind by the Labour Party, but that does not justify their introduction. It is true that the Bill does not apply to the present judges. I disagree entirely with the contention of Mr. Parker that even on reaching the age of 70 years, if we pass the Bill, the judges should be allowed to carry on as administrators or acting judges, or in any similar capacity. With all due respect to our judges—I have for them the greatest respect because of their efforts to maintain justice and to keep the Empire together, if for no other reason—I would not like to place them in a position in which the Government of the day could dangle something before them when they were reaching the retiring age. If judges are to finish their work at 70 years of age, that should be the finish of Government work. If judges are unfit for their office when they reach that age—I do not think they are—they should be regarded as unfit for anything else. I would cite the position of the Leader of the Bar, Sir Walter James, K.C., who is well over 70 years of age. I believe his intellect is as bright as ever, and he is quite as brilliant as any other man practising at the bar to-day.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Quite right.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I have not noticed any diminution in his mental powers, but if we passed this Bill, and he were a judge, he would be retired. I understand that the late Sir Robert McMillan was 73 years of age when he died. If the Bill had been law when he was Chief Justice, we would have lost three years of his work in that office. While we would have been paying a pension to him, we would probably have paid a less competent judge to discharge the duties formerly performed by him. Where is the commonsense and justice of it all? I know of what happened at Fremantle. At one time there were two former resident magistrates residing there. They were in receipt of pensions and another magistrate was being paid to discharge the work of that position. I have no hesitation in saying, from what I knew of the men, that the magistrate who was retired first was the best qualified of the three, at any stage of their

respective lives. Is that the way to economise? Merely to force a man out of office for no other reason than that he is 70 years of age? Are we to put some inferior in the position to draw the pay, while a superior man is retired and draws his pension? In many cases, the services of the superior man could have been retained, and the country saved the necessity to pay the pension. If, by any stretch of imagination, I could find any justification for the Bill, I would support it. I oppose the second reading.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [6.4]: The essence of the Bill is a question whether we should fix a retiring age for members of the judiciary. I am inclined to the opinion that we should. To-day we are surrounded by an admirable Public Service, in connection with which there is a compulsory retiring age of 65 years. The Public Service includes the Crown Solicitor and the Assistant Crown Solicitor, who are appointed to their offices in order to advise Governments in control of the affairs of State as to legal procedure. I submit that the position of such legal advisers to the Crown is as important as that of a judge. If there is any virtue in the theory that as a judge matures, his judgments become more sound, that should also apply to the Crown Law officers.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: How can you say it is more important respecting the Crown Solicitor?

Hon. J. CORNELL: The hon. member has acted as Crown Solicitor.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: No.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If there is anything in logic at all, I presume that both parties are supposed to know the law. The Crown Solicitor advises the Crown, and the lawyer who happens to be appointed a judge adjudicates in court.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Judges do not advise; they adjudicate on matters brought before them.

Hon. J. CORNELL: What is the position of the Crown Solicitor?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: He has to advise.

Hon. J. CORNELL: He advises the Crown whether or not a case will succeed. I presume that is his duty. If times does not improve him, what will?

Hon. G. W. Miles: When a solicitor has sufficient experience, he gains a position on the bench.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Men who are in the position to advise the Crown are compulsorily retired at 65 years of age.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: Two wrongs do not make a right.

Hon. J. CORNELL: What is wrong in this instance?

Hon. G. W. Miles: Retirement at 65 is wrong, if the man has special ability.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I do not know that such men are compulsorily retired at 65 years.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I understand that, under the Public Service Act, they are retired at that age.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: What age was the Under Secretary for Law who retired recently?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Mr. Parker is quibbling. We know that the Under Secretary for Law was due to retire on reaching 65 years of age, but he was given a brief extension of office, seeing that his Minister was abroad.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: At what age did the former Solicitor General retire?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I cannot say.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I can.

Hon. J. CORNELL: My argument is that the Public Service Act provides for compulsory retirement at 65 years of age. It should not be possible to pick and choose, and the best has to go with the worst. I want to know why the provision that applies to the civil servant should not apply also to judges of the Supreme Court. The Bill does not apply to the members of the present judiciary, but to future judges.

Hon. L. Craig: They will have to retire compulsorily.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I do not know that they will have to retire compulsorily, any more than some officers have to retire compulsorily. At any rate, future appointees to the judiciary will know the conditions attaching to their appointments.

Hon. G. W. Miles interjected.

Hon. J. CORNELL: They are not always the best men who receive appointments. We know that political hacks have been appointed to the judiciary.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You don't want that here.

Hon. J. CORNELL: No.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: But that is a wrong statement to make.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is not.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: Of course it is.

Hon. J. Nicholson: So it is.

Hon. J. CORNELL: There are instances on record in Australia where political partisans have been appointed to judgeships, and the bar has protested against those appointments.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Such instances are in the minority.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: And even then, those concerned have proved themselves.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Let us be candid and honest, and admit that these things have happened.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: This will not stop it.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Of course it will not, but if it is good for a highly paid civil servant to retire at 65 years of age, I cannot see why a judge should not be retired at 70 years.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Do you suggest that a judge should be appointed at 14 years of age, as is the rule with the civil service?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I do not want to say anything harsh about judges; they are only human.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: That is why they are appointed.

Hon. J. CORNELL: They make as many mistakes as people in other walks of life.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: Hear, hear! I can agree with you there.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Were the Bill to apply to members of the existing judiciary, I would oppose it because its terms are not in accord with the conditions under which the judges received their appointments.

Hon. C. B. Williams: If they are still on the bench for another 40 years, you will not object.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I would attribute that to our splendid climate.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What about members of Parliament?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I will support a Bill making a man ineligible to sit after he is 70 years of age. If I should reach that age and I were privileged to represent my province during that time, I would tell the electors that I would make way for someone else.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: What about all your training and experience?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I do not see why we should retire a judge any more than any other person.

On motion by Hon. L. Craig, debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL—FORESTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [7.30] in moving the second reading said: Section 41 of the Forests Act, 1918, provides that three-fifths of the net revenue of the Forests Department shall be paid to the credit of the Reforestation Fund. In 1924 an Act was passed which provided that 10 per cent. of the net revenue from sandalwood for that year, or £5,000, whichever was the greater, should go to a special Sandalwood Reforestation Fund, and the balance should be paid into Consolidated Revenue. That practice was continued annually until 1930. Experience had then proved that sandalwood reforestation was not practicable. Consequently, the special allocation of the money for that purpose was not necessary, and an Act was passed to authorise the payment of the whole of the revenue from sandalwood into Consolidated Revenue. That practice has since been maintained, and this Bill is to authorise the same procedure for another year. There is still a small balance of £726 left in the Sandalwood Reforestation Fund. Last year an amount of £500 was expended from the fund, mainly representing the salary of one officer. Replanting operations have not been successful. It is found that the rabbits are particularly destructive of the young plants except in one or two parts of the State. The sandalwood industry has been adversely affected during recent months by the difficult trading conditions which continue to operate in China. Furthermore, the silver policy of the United States of America has had serious repercussions on the currency of Hong Kong and Shanghai. In addition, there have been serious floods and consequent crop failures in the Yangtsze Valley, thus further reducing the purchasing power of the principal sandalwood consuming communities. The sandalwood market has nevertheless maintained a position of comparative stability as compared with the market for other commodities in China. This is very

satisfactory in view of the fact that adverse trading conditions in general have caused the failure of many established trading houses and banks during recent months. The revenue received on account of sandalwood for the year ended the 30th June, 1935, amounted to £19,713, and the estimated receipts for the current year are £18,000. Sandalwood pulled for export during the year ended the 30th June, 1935, totalled 1,451 tons, and the total exports amounted to 2,223 tons, the export value being £66,474. In addition, 370 tons of sandalwood was utilised locally for oil distillation. In view of the fact that the replanting of sandalwood has proved to be impracticable, it is inadvisable to pay money into the fund when it cannot be utilised for the purpose for which it was formerly set aside, and it is now proposed to take the money into Consolidated Revenue for another year. I asked for further information from the Treasury and from the Forests Department to assist me in introducing the Bill, but the information did not come to hand until late this afternoon. The figures come from the Treasury and the comments, I presume, from the Conservator of Forests. The expenditure from loan funds on reforestation and afforestation during the past three years has been £433,066, of which sum the Commonwealth Government advanced as a grant £22,590, leaving the State's quota as £410,476. The Commonwealth Government have realised that the work of reforestation is of national importance, and this year are subsidising the work by granting £100,000 on a pound-for-pound basis. The increase in loan expenditure since the commencement of the depression has been the means of the Forests Department's absorbing a large number of unemployed in relief works. During the past three years the number so engaged has never been below 900 and has reached 1,500. This year it is proposed to keep in employment 1,100 men.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The State Government are keeping those men on?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. A certain percentage of the men are not fit for laborious work, and the policy of the Government is to ensure that as few as possible go on the dole. Although some men may be in perfectly good health, they are not strong enough to engage in road or other laborious work, and consequently they are employed in the work of reforestation. Under the supervision of trained overseers, the men have performed willing and useful work. Dealing with the scope of work undertaken during the past five years, the leeway to be made up in reforestation measures, caused by the uncontrolled exploitation and subsequent neglect of attention to the second crop during pre-war years, is gradually being overhauled. The area cut out for sawmilling since the inception of the general working plan in 1929 is 138,882 acres, while the area of forest which has been fire-protected and treated to promote regeneration is 232,752 acres. Previous to commencing regeneration operations proper, a survey of the area to be worked over is made, showing topographical features and roads and tracks. Using this as a base, the country is subdivided into compartments of approximately 500 acres, around which a fire line is surveyed. Of such surveys 6,868 miles have been made. The means of access to the area is provided by roads constructed along old bush-tramline formations and whim tracks, 1,776 miles of which have been cleared. Telephone communication is necessary for fire-control purposes and general administration, and 264 miles of special earth circuit telephone line have been constructed. In order that forest overseers may become thoroughly acquainted with their spheres of operations and be at hand in case of emergency during the fire season, they are housed on their blocks. During the past five years 34 houses have been built. Regarding the reforestation of jarrah, following sawmillers and hewers, the debris resulting from their operations has to be removed from the butts of poles, piles and sapling growth and burnt by a controlled fire before regeneration operations can commence. During the past five years 97,294 acres have been so treated. The major work of reforestation in the jarrah forest—regeneration and cleaning—consists of the removal of useless overmature timber and malformed young growth to allow for the proper development of the young forest. This work has extended over 149,811 acres. In addition there are many thousands of acres carrying young stands of timber which have been scarred and malformed by uncontrolled fires of past years. Thinning, to ensure

that the dominant trees of this crop are of good form and are free from suppression, has also been carried out over 91,238 acres. On all areas so treated, each working unit—a compartment—is surrounded by a green firebreak belt and fireline for fire-protection purposes. In the karri forest, advantage has been taken of the occurrence of seed years to promote natural regeneration, with the result that a young crop has been established over 9,139 acres in the Manjimup district. Here, again, a firebreak system surrounds all areas treated. Reforest operations with mallet on the poor unproductive poison lands in the Narrogin district have advanced very considerably during the past five years, and by clearing and spot sowing with seed, a young mallet crop on 6,211 acres has been secured. No recent sowings of sandalwood have been carried out on the Eastern Goldfields as it is considered advisable to await the results of previous experimental work in this direction. Experimental sowings along the Great Southern railway and in the South-West have been carried out with encouraging results. One feature of those operations is that, although rabbits may be plentiful, they display little or no interest in the seedling sandalwood, whereas, under similar conditions in the Eastern Goldfields, extensive experiments have shown that every young plant would be bitten off. The afforestation of otherwise unproductive areas in the ranges of the South-West, chiefly water supply catchments and on the coastal sandplains, has progressed steadily at the rate aimed at, namely, 1,000 acres per annum. During the past five years 5,262 acres of pines, chiefly pinus pinaster and pinus radiata, have been established. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

BILL—BRANDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 11th September.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [7.44]: The policy reflected in this Bill is a very good one. Only those people who are connected with stock know to what extent stealing has been going on over a period of years. Recently losses from this cause have been accentuated by the advent of motor transport. It is an easy matter for men on a motor truck to travel at night, round up sheep in a corner of a paddock, put them on the truck and leave no trace behind. In the detection of such thefts, the police are practically powerless, inasmuch as there is nothing to guide them. At almost any saleyard one will find a large number of sheep bearing no brands or identification marks, and if they happen to be stolen, there is no possible chance of proving the ownership. If this measure becomes law and is rigidly enforced, I do not expect it to stop sheep-stealing altogether, but it will curtail the evil to a large extent. I have had some unhappy experiences in that respect. On one occasion 200 young sheep were picked up in one night and no trace of them was ever found. I daresay that other stockowners have had a similar experience. The Bill will curtail this. In addition it is necessary to give the police more facilities to cope with the trouble. By that I mean the load they carry should be lightened. The usual country policeman is a Government officer as well and attends to practically everything in his district and fills almost every post except that of Agricultural Bank inspector. In fact, he is overloaded with work. Another matter of importance is the means by which the country police move about. I do not know why it is, but the authorities still compel them to move around on horseback, which is the slowest possible way of getting about, especially when it is remembered that they have an enormous territory to travel over. In connection with sheep stealing, the horse would be of no use at all. There are some improvements which I consider should be made to the Bill, for instance, the branding of lambs. I cannot see any necessity for compulsorily branding lambs until they are old enough to be weaned. If lambs are to be disposed of, we should not brand them because to do so would mean bruising the tender body, and that would reduce the value of the meat. What I might term the unscrupulous drover, more particularly in the northern parts of the State, has not hesitated to pick up the number of sheep he might require to make up any shortage in his flock and mark them with the T brand. What redress can the owner have? I trust that something will be done to pro-

tect owners in that respect. It may be as well to make it a serious offence for anyone to carry stock brands. It certainly is time that those people who have not seen fit to take the trouble to brand sheep will be compelled to do so for their own protection. Some station owners, I suppose, will raise some objection to the extra work which will be entailed by the branding and also the records which they have to keep, but they can well afford to pay for that little extra work. Records should certainly be kept, even though the keeping of the records will involve a little additional expense. I cannot find any fault with the Bill, though, as I have already said, it is open to improvement in certain directions. When it is passed, as I hope it will be, its provisions should be stringently enforced and any person caught stealing sheep should be visited with the full penalty. It has been a difficult matter in connection with sheep stealing to prove the offence. As a matter of fact, the penalty provided is so heavy that magistrates will not convict unless they are absolutely certain of the guilt of the offender. Consequently very few prosecutions have been successful. Stock-owners generally are very timid about proceeding against any person for stealing sheep, because the evidence has to be so very complete before the magistrate can be satisfied. Then if the prosecuting party does not secure a conviction he is placed in a rather invidious position. A difficulty will also arise in the saleyards where there will be found a variety of brands.

Hon. L. Craig: Not under this Bill.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: In the saleyards there will invariably be found small flocks together and the farmer-trader who is buying sheep will start culling until he finds himself with a number of sheep with several different brands.

Hon. L. Craig: I thought you meant several brands on the one sheep.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No, on the different sheep.

Hon. L. Craig: That is inevitable.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I feel sure that when the Bill is agreed to it will do a great deal to minimise sheep stealing. I support the Bill.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [7.52]: The Bill should be read more or less in conjunction with the Droving Bill, the object of which is to minimise, as much as possible, sheep stealing. Personally I do not think there is as much stealing as there is supposed to be. Sheep do die. However, stealing does take place. On our property we happened to lose 8,000 sheep last year, but we knew they were not stolen; they were washed out to sea. Other people may have said they were stolen. The objective of the Bill is good. It is not only necessary to make laws to prevent sheep or stock stealing, but it is important to make laws that are workable and that can be reasonably administered. There are some provisions in the Bill that will be difficult to administer. It is proposed that all sheep must be branded, including sucker lambs for export. I have been in touch with the Minister and he has assured me that he will amend that part of the Bill to exempt lambs under six months old.

The Chief Secretary: I shall have the amendments on the Notice Paper to-morrow.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Lambs for export are taken from the ewes and put into trucks, and the lamb which at the sucker stage weighs about 34 lbs. dressed is very tender. If you catch it by the wool there will be a bruise which will exhibit itself when the lamb is killed. Branding would take place immediately before trucking and the lamb would be badly discoloured by the time it got to the abattoirs. I asked an agent what he thought would be the loss in value through discoloration of the skin and he told me that it would be at least 1s. per head. I am glad, therefore, that the Minister has agreed to exempt from branding lambs under six months old. Another point of importance is that registered stud sheep should also be exempt. Many of these are taken to the show and they would certainly be spoiled by having a tar brand on the wool. These sheep are treated carefully for show purposes and, besides, registered stud sheep are identified by other means. Corriedales and British breeds are marked on one ear and a tattoo is put on the other ear and this cannot be removed by anyone. Therefore, these sheep can always be identified. With merino rams the horns are fire-branded, that is, the brand is burnt into the horn and in that way they are identified. Consequently there is no necessity to brand registered stud sheep and I trust they too will be exempt.

The Chief Secretary: They will be.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I am glad to hear that. The provisions of the Bill will be hard to administer, but I know that they are necessary. I do not know how it will be possible to put on to the skin broker the responsibility of finding out mutilated or cut ears. It is provided that any person who has in his possession a skin the ears of which have been cut off or mutilated will be guilty of an offence and will be subject to a severe penalty.

Hon. A. Thomson: There are only one or two in a thousand.

Hon. L. CRAIG: There were 20,000 skins sent per week into the brokers' stores. From the North they come down in bales, and from the agricultural areas they are sent down in bundles. The provision puts the responsibility on the agents to discover all mutilation. It will be difficult, for the ears are pressed right into the wool, rats perhaps have been at them, and possibly some of them have been cut by the knife when the sheep were killed. I do not know how the agents are to respond to that provision, but it is in the Bill, and the Minister says he will not take it out.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: It is in both the Victorian and the New South Wales Acts, and is carried out there.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I did not know that. It will mean an extra staff, and if an extra staff is put on we know who will have to pay for them.

Hon. A. Thomson: You do not mean in the country agents' offices?

Hon. L. CRAIG: No, but in the wool stores. However, I am not trying to put this through as an amendment, but the provision is going to be very difficult to administer.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Do not stress that, or the agents will raise their fees.

Hon. L. CRAIG: No doubt they will. I am just pointing to a provision that is going to be difficult. The skin brokers pay £10 per annum for a license, but the itinerant dealer, the man who goes about the country buying small lots, pays nothing.

Hon. G. W. Miles: He requires to be cut out.

Hon. L. CRAIG: He is the man who is buying stolen skins to-day. There can be no doubt about that. The man who is stealing sheep and selling the skins waits until a hawker-dealer comes round, and disposes of his skins to him. It seems to me necessary to make the itinerant dealers pay a license fee. I discussed this also with the Minister, and he said he would provide for it in another Bill at some future date. I hope that will not be lost sight of for it is most important. It is of no use watching reputable people when people whom we know nothing about are free to carry on the trade to any extent they choose. I have heard it said that one of those itinerant dealers saw a nigger. Pointing to a sheep nearby, the dealer said, "Tommy, the skin on that sheep is worth 6s." Tommy at once caught the sheep, killed it, skinned it, and sold the skin to the dealer. To-day the police have no power to go on any man's place and say, "I want to look at your skins." It is very necessary that the police and the inspectors should have that power. If they suspect a man of having stolen skins, is it not necessary that they should have authority to go on a man's place and inspect his skins? To-day that can only be done by warrant. Power should be given to every policeman to go to a man without any notice at all and search his premises for stolen skins. Other methods of dealing with sheep stealing will come under the Droving Act Amendment Bill. It is difficult to separate the one from the other. This Bill has the full support of the pastoralist. At present pastoralists with few exceptions do not have registered brands, and no sheep are branded on the stations until they start travelling down to the markets, when they are branded with a T on the back, which means travelling. Under the Bill each pastoralist will be required to have a proper registered brand. He may not use it on his station sheep, but if he intends to send sheep down for sale he will have to brand them with that registered brand. This is very desirable, because at present a drover with perhaps 3,000 or 4,000 sheep is paid on the number of sheep he delivers at their destination. Because of drought or other good reasons he may drop 40 or 50 sheep on the way, but may easily pick up a further 30 or 40 sheep later on. He may then get a piece of wood, make a T out of it, and brand the new comers with it. So I say this new provision is very desirable. I will support the second reading.

HON. H. V. PIESSE (South-East) [8.8]: I will support the Bill, and I congratulate the Government on having brought it down. First of all, the Royal Agricultural Society requested that the

Bill be brought forward, and surely the men on the committee of that society are practical men in the stock business of Western Australia. I had several queries in mind when first I decided to support the Bill, and I was pleased to hear Mr. Craig and the Chief Secretary say the Minister for Agriculture had agreed to the non-branding of lambs under six months. The ear mark will be quite sufficient to register the brand of an owner on a lamb being sent to the market as a lamb. I understand that in New South Wales and Victoria all sheep are registered after sale in an open market, and have to be delivered with the earmarks shown on the receipt that is given. That is most important. Naturally our stock agents in Western Australia will object to this provision, but I think it is essential that it should be there. I remember many years ago buying a mob of 3,000 sheep in the Bridgetown district. The drover I engaged for them remarked upon the branding of travelling sheep, and I told him the most simple brand he could get was the bottle brand. I instructed him to put the bottle brand on the sheep. Later I met that man droving the sheep to Katanning. He told me he had lost 40 or 50 of them, but had picked up another 50 or 60, saying he did not know where they had been picked up, but they had not the bottle brand on them. It would have been perfectly simple for that man to have found any bottle and used it as a brand.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Did you let him do it?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I did not suggest anything of the kind. I am showing how easy it is for any man travelling sheep to defeat the law and increase his mob as they go along.

Hon. J. Cornell: Do not these provisions apply to sheep as they leave the market; is that necessary?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: The condition laid down for the future is that you have to brand those sheep in sending them to the market, to brand them with a wool brand. That does not apply to suckers, for which the earmark will do. Many times in the markets have I noticed the wide diversity of earmarks on sheep. Whenever I have been there to buy a large mob of sheep I have carried my own registered brand and branded the sheep I purchased before they left the yard. I have done that for my own protection. The Bill provides that protection for the owners of sheep.

Hon. J. Cornell: Do you have a fire brand?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Yes, for the horn.

Hon. J. Cornell: Not for the nose?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: No, that is very painful. Mr. Craig has already explained the branding of stud sheep. I have had a great deal of experience with stolen sheep in the Great Southern. I do not say I have received stolen sheep, but I have known of many deaths occurring amongst sheep on properties and the owners declaring that the sheep had been stolen. In one case a little time ago a fire went through part of a big property I control, and in consequence 60 sheep were burned to death in an isolated position. We could not account for them until 16 months afterwards. Many people may have imagined that their sheep were stolen, whereas they may have died a natural death and disappeared. Sometimes it has been assumed that sheep stealing is more rampant than it really is.

Hon. E. H. Gray: People have lost hundreds of sheep in the Gnowangerup district.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I know of one man who was thought to have been losing sheep, and the holder of his bills of sale decided to inspect his flock. He went to a neighbour and suggested that 200 of his neighbour's sheep should be put on to his fallow to eat it down. The neighbour agreed, and when the holder of the bill of sale came along and saw the sheep there, he went away perfectly satisfied that the farmer had his sheep on the property. I am glad the Bill has been introduced, for it will help those people who really are having their sheep stolen. The only contentious point is in regard to agents having to give receipts for sheep that are sold and have earmarks upon them. The point is a good one, and should be included in the Bill, even if it leads to a little more expenditure.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [8.17]: I congratulate the Government upon bringing down this Bill. It is the first measure to be introduced by the present Minister for Agriculture. I am glad he was selected for that portfolio. The introduction of this Bill is a complete reply to Government critics, who said that the present Administration

had no agricultural conscience. I support the second reading.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [8.18]: I congratulate the Government upon bringing down the Bill, whether they have an agricultural conscience or not.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Your own people would not introduce it.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am glad to have the assurance of the Chief Secretary that he proposes to make provision for lambs under the age of six months. If the export trade in lambs is to be built up, we must see to it that lambs are handled as little as possible. Mr. Craig referred to mutilated ears. Most sheep skins are purchased by country storekeepers. I see no great difficulty about the inspection of the skins. I do, however, see a difficulty in keeping visible the brands on long-wool sheep.

Hon. L. Craig: In some places they would have to be branded two or three times a year.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes. The Bill is long overdue. Anything that can be done to prevent sheep stealing, should be done. The Government are to be congratulated upon meeting the wishes of sheep owners and agricultural societies in this way. It might be a bad precedent to allow the police to visit properties at any time and demand to see all sheep skins there may be on the place. I agree that hawkers and sheep skin buyers generally ought to be licensed. I support the second reading.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [8.23]: I agree with Mr. Craig that this and the Droving Bill are dovetailed. It is difficult to discuss one without the other. I congratulate the Government upon bringing down these two measures, as they are long overdue. I am inclined to think that the proposed legislation ought to have been made more strict. Mr. Craig seems to think there is not so much sheep stealing as may be imagined. He assumes that the mortality occurs in the bush or in some other way. I know that sheep have been taken out of cleared paddocks, and, if they had died, their carcases would have been seen. Expert thieves have specially trained dogs. They pull up outside a rabbit-proof fence and, with the aid of their dogs, round up the sheep quietly, lift them over the fence, and take them away. No sheep should be travelled by truck, night or day, except under license. The police should be allowed to visit premises and inspect the sheep skins. If I were a policeman and were refused the right to inspect sheep skins, I would go at once for a warrant.

Hon. L. Craig: And when you got back the skins might not be there.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I would rather arm the police with a general warrant to inspect. All skin buyers should be licensed so that they may be traced, otherwise they may get away not only with the skins but with the carcases. Reference was made to the exemption from branding of lambs under six months. If the lambs are to remain on the station, the owner will brand them. Those that are destined for slaughter and export should be exempt from branding, provided they are sold for slaughter when they reach the market. It is harmful to lambs to brand them. Horses and cattle are branded with a fire brand, but sheep and lambs are branded with a wool brand. When the liquid is being forced on to the back of a lamb, a considerable amount of injury is done to the body. If lambs are going to be slaughtered and sold for export, the branding should be eliminated. Many lambs go into market that are not fit for export. These are sometimes bought by a grazier and taken away.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: That is all right if they are earmarked.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If the police visited the property and saw lambs without any brand on them, some difficulty might arise.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: The owner would have the auctioneer's certificate with the earmarks.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: This legislation should be tightened up and made as severe as possible, but I do not want the House to go to extremes. Sheep stealing has become a menace, although Mr. Craig doubts that. Even in the South-West, larger animals than sheep have disappeared. Cows from the group settlements have disappeared, and no one seems to know where. If people can get away with full-grown stock in the south, they can get away with sheep and lambs in other areas. Sheep stealing is undoubtedly rampant, and the Government have realised the necessity for taking steps to prevent it. I understand there has been a conference between the Police Department, the Agricultural Department, and other authorities. For a long time the police have desired authority to act, but have not had

the necessary power. I hope this legislation will give it to them. I support the Bill.

HON. E. H. ANGELO (North) [8.30]: I welcome the introduction of the Bill, and of its companion measure dealing with droving. If this legislation is passed, it will furnish highly necessary means of checking a crime which is becoming rampant in the State. I quite agree with Mr. Craig's remarks regarding the giving of power to police constables to make inspections in places where skins are being dealt with, and also regarding the necessity for licensing hawkers. I suggest to the hon. member that he give notice of amendments which will enable these matters to be introduced into the Bill. I support the second reading.

HON. C. H. WITTENOOM (South-East) [8.31]: I also support the second reading, and join with other members in congratulating the Government on having brought down the measure. Certainly it has been brought down none too soon, as we all know that, more particularly in the farming areas, sheep stealing has been rampant for years, and has been and is getting worse. I think one hon. member mentioned that the burden was felt chiefly in the farming areas, but I can assure the House that the evil is now getting very bad in the pastoral districts.

Hon. J. Cornell: Then the miner is not the only man ever to do a bit of stealing!

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: I am making no reference to miners. It is recognised by many farmers that the evil is becoming worse and worse. An hon. member has suggested that it is not quite as bad as has been stated, but we know it is pretty bad. On the question of lambs—and I now have in mind export lambs more particularly—I am pleased that Mr. Craig made reference to the question of branding under the age of six months; and I am glad the Minister has stated that branding would not be required under the age of six months. Branding would certainly mean a detriment in the case of export lambs, which should be in perfect condition.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It refers to unshorn lambs only.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Yes. If the measure is passed—as I have no doubt it will be—it will go a long way towards minimising the stealing that is now going on in various farming districts.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan) [8.33]: Probably because I happen to be farming in a more respectable district than some of those which have been mentioned this evening, I have suffered very little loss; and I believe little loss has been suffered in the district as a whole. However, I support the Bill because I appreciate the necessity for it. While sheep stealing may not be so rampant in the Midland as in some other districts, the measure is just as necessary in the Midland district, in view of the facilities to-day existing for sheep stealing. I commend the Government for introducing the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—DROVING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 11th September.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [8.36]: This measure is on all fours with the previous Bill, being intended for the same purpose. Under the existing Droving Act stock cannot be moved over any distance exceeding 40 miles without a waybill. The pastoral areas approve of the proposed reduction of that distance to 15 miles. Under the Bill any stock moved for any purpose over a distance of more than 15 miles must be accompanied by a waybill. The existing Act applies only to districts north of the Murchison River. The provisions of the Bill are intended to apply to the whole State. In farming districts it will be difficult to comply with some of the conditions proposed, particularly as regards sheep sent to the metropolitan area for sale—that is, to the Midland Junction saleyards. To-day approximately 250 sheep farmers are sending in every week approximately 18,000 or 19,000 sheep. The bigger butchers, such as the Anchorage and Lange, may buy 4,000 or 5,000 sheep from 100 to 150 different owners. Under this measure a separate waybill would have to be made out for each separate lot of sheep removed from Midland Junction to Fremantle for slaughter. I discussed this matter with the Minister,

and he assured me that he intended to exempt sheep sent for sale to the metropolitan area. As regards sheep consigned to Midland Junction for sale, the essence of the contract is speed. In fact, sheep commence to be delivered on trucks an hour after purchase.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: But some of the sheep go back to the country districts.

Hon. L. CRAIG: This refers to sheep sent to Midland Junction for slaughter. I understand that in order to meet the requirements of the Bill as it stands, the making out of waybills would take more than 24 hours. One brand of sheep would be bought by four or five different butchers. Those sheep would have to be cut up into four or five separate lots, and a waybill made out for each lot. That would be unworkable. However, I understand the Minister intends to exempt sheep sent to Midland Junction for slaughter. My object is to try to catch the people who are believed to be doing the stealing to-day. It is generally agreed that lorries are one of the prime factors by means of which stock are stolen. A lorry can pick up live sheep or dead sheep and remove them from the district in next to no time. To-day many farmers and dealers are killing their own sheep or cattle and sending them to the metropolitan meat market. There is no means of checking those people. One man, I am told, sends in at least 50 dressed sheep to the meat market every week.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Has not he got to leave the ears on the sheep?

Hon. L. CRAIG: The point is that he has sheep on his farm 30 or 40 or perhaps 100 miles away.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: He has to leave the ears on the carcase.

Hon. L. CRAIG: He has to leave them on the skin. One can imagine the case of a man who has no law whatever to abide by. He buys, breeds, or somehow secures a number of sheep or cattle. He kills them on his own farm. He can, if he likes, destroy the skins. He puts the carcases on a lorry and conveys them to the meat market, and on the same day they are gone. Such people must be checked. They may be perfectly honest; I do not say they are not; but under those conditions it is easy to steal sheep.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Are those people licensed?

Hon. L. CRAIG: They are not licensed. They can bring down mutton with dirty sheep-skins and tallow and fruit-boxes. They have not to comply with any health conditions. They can leave dirty rubbish on the track, and then deliver the meat to the market. They are the people we should go for. The Minister has informed me that under another Bill he will deal with that aspect, either by license or otherwise; and I am sure the hon. gentleman will do it. This Bill is not for legitimate firms, for genuine, honest stock firms. Why should not those other people comply with health conditions? It is considered desirable that all meat sold in the metropolitan area should be killed in the metropolitan area, but that is not as easy to bring about as it sounds. In the dairying areas most bull calves are left on the cow or hand-fed for a fortnight, and then are killed and sent to the metropolitan area as veal. The Bill would eliminate all that trade. It is impossible to send a bull calf down to the metropolitan abattoirs to be slaughtered. However, that point does not enter into the Bill, and so I leave it for the moment. However, it is necessary to explore every avenue with a view to catching men who are believed to be stealing. Under this Bill a man droving stock over 15 miles must have a waybill and must notify the police of his intention to move stock.

Hon. J. Cornell: That condition will be popular.

Hon. L. CRAIG: In the South-West to-day many settlers, especially the older settlers, have a coast range. The settlers themselves live in Bridgetown or Manjimup perhaps, and they have areas on the coast to which they send their cattle during certain periods of the year either to give them a change or to relieve the home paddocks. They go down periodically to see if the cattle are all right, but they do not know until they get there whether they will bring the stock back. If it is found that the cattle have fallen away or, on the other hand, if they have improved to the required extent, the owner will probably desire to move them. Under the Bill it will be necessary for those people to return 60 miles in order to notify the police that they intend to move the cattle from the coast. I discussed this matter with the Minister, but I am not quite sure with what result. I was led to understand that, in that event, the farmer

could make out a waybill and put it in his pocket. If he were stopped, the man could produce a waybill. If that is the position, it may be all right.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The same thing applies now; the farmer would send a copy of the waybill to the Chief Inspector of Stock.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Now he will have to notify the police in addition. Perhaps the growers will observe these requirements, when they know the provisions of the Act!

Hon. J. Cornell: What are the police supposed to do if the requirements are not observed?

Hon. L. CRAIG: I admit it is necessary to deal with this trouble.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: Could not the farmer telephone the police?

Hon. L. CRAIG: There are no telephones in that part of the far South-West. What I do regard as necessary is that the police be notified by the man who is killing stock and selling carcase meat. It would not be too much to ask other than butchers that when killing stock for sale they should notify the police of their intention to kill.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Should they not be registered?

Hon. L. CRAIG: The Government will decide that point. The police should know when such people intend killing. They should have power to go on a property and inspect the brands on the sheep that are killed in this way.

Hon. J. Cornell: Who inspects the stock before the meat is made available for human consumption?

Hon. L. CRAIG: I presume the health inspectors do that.

The Honorary Minister: The meat is inspected before it is submitted to auction, but the system is not as satisfactory as it should be. The carcase is marketed without the entrails, and the health inspector is not in a position to carry out a proper inspection.

Hon. L. CRAIG: There should be a check upon the killing of sheep for sale, and there should be inspections at the places of killing. Recognised butchers have to comply with certain conditions, and obviously there should be some check upon farmers who kill on their farms for other than their own consumption. If such farmers kill regularly they could notify the police that, say, every Tuesday morning at 9 a.m. they will kill.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Are you referring to backdoor traders in meat?

Hon. L. CRAIG: No, not necessarily. There may be some who are receivers of stolen sheep; we do not know. We must explore every method by which we can check sheep-stealing. The Bill will impose a hardship upon recognised farmers who are certainly not sheep stealers. The people who are doing the stealing are those over whom we should have some check.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: How else could we check them?

Hon. L. CRAIG: There is no provision in the Bill for keeping a check on the man who kills and sells his meat in the metropolitan market. I do not know whether any such provision can be made in the Bill. If it cannot, I hope that phase will be dealt with in some other measure.

HON. H. V. PIESSE (South-East) [8.50]: I was pleased to hear Mr. Craig say that he had interviewed the Minister regarding carcase sheep sold in the metropolitan market for delivery for butchering purposes. I am satisfied that the Bill is essential to deal with the sale of sheep in country centres. It is most difficult for any Government inspector to prove the ownership of a sheep, once it is killed and despatched for sale. I consider that a certificate should be available from the local police, as suggested by Mr. Craig. It is a simple matter to dress any beast and put it up for sale.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You would not suggest that everyone who sent carcase meat to the metropolitan market should notify the police and get a certificate?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I know it is most difficult. The method suggested is one way of helping to avoid the defrauding of owners of their sheep. The position is full of difficulty. For instance, if an inspector were to go on a property and inspect sheep that had been killed, how could he prove that a skin he found there was from any particular sheep that had been dressed? It was because of such difficulties that the Primary Producers' Association and the Royal Agricultural Society suggested that all buyers of carcase meat should be given, on their receipt, particulars of the registered brands and so forth.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It relates purely to carcase meat, and it is illegal to sell such meat unless it is passed by an inspector.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: But as the Minister has pointed out, the meat has to be stamped in Perth before it can be sold, but in the existing circumstances no inspection of the entrails or skins is possible. We can send mutton, veal or lamb from the country areas to the metropolitan markets where it is examined before it is submitted to auction. By that means, stolen sheep can be brought in ad lib. That is why we support the suggestion that the man who buys, say, 200 or 300 sheep should have the earmarks and registered brands set out on his receipt. I support the Bill.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [8.55]: I am in accord with practically the whole of the provisions of the Bill, but in Committee I hope some more simple method will be devised for dealing with the handling of stock travelled from one part of a district to another. Reference has already been made to a practice that is extensive in the South-Western areas, that of taking cattle from the highlands to the coast. The beasts are travelled for distances upwards of 80 miles and are allowed to remain on the coast for some time. The cattle are then mustered. They have been allowed to roam away from civilisation or from townships. If the stock are found to be in a condition that makes it inadvisable to move them, the musterers simply have to return to the homestead. On the other hand, it may be imperative to move the stock at once. If the Bill be agreed to in its present form, it will mean that that could not be done as the party would have to return to notify the police of their intention to move the stock.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The owner would have to inspect the stock each time.

Hon. W. J. MANN: But the owner does not always inspect the stock.

Hon. G. W. Miles: He will have to in future.

Hon. W. J. MANN: That is nonsense. The owner himself may be in Perth.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: At any rate, he would have to give notice to the police before he could shift the cattle.

Hon. W. J. MANN: This particular point requires clearing up. If the owner were given a permit to take the cattle to the coast and travel them back within a specified number of months, that should be sufficient. The method suggested in the Bill is certainly not helpful to settlers.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 8.58 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 17th September, 1935.

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Bunbury Racecourse Railway Discontinuance Bill.

BILL—RURAL RELIEF FUND.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—ELECTORAL.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [4.34] in moving the second reading said: It will be recollected that towards the close of last session there were proposals to amend the electoral law. However, the session had reached a stage at which it was thought it would not be possible to have the matter adequately dealt with here and in an-