

posed new clause all offences of contempt, great or small, real or imaginary, are to be punished by a fine of £100.

Hon. T. Moore: Have there ever been any offences?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There has never been a prosecution.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Quite a number of boards have been provided for and there is no protection for them. Is it intended that a board shall be able to fine anyone for interrupting the proceedings, or would the court alone have that power?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Nearly everything stipulated in the new clause is in the parent Act or in the Federal Act. The words "writing or speech," to which the Minister objects, appear in the Federal Act. Provision is made to cover all the men who will be representing the various organisations coming within the scope of the measure. From experience I am satisfied they will need protection as great as if not more than the court itself.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Does the Federal Act contain the words "or of a board or any commissioner or member of a committee"?

Hon. E. H. Harris: No.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: A difficulty might arise there.

New clause put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	8
Noes	..	..	..	..	6

Majority for .. 2

AYES.

Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. E. H. Harris
Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. J. Nicholson

Hon. G. Potter
Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. J. W. Hickey
Hon. W. H. Kitson

Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. R. Brown
(Teller.)

New clause thus passed.

Bill again reported with further amendments and the report adopted.

Read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

House adjourned at 10.47 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 15th December, 1925.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS AUTHORISED.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What is the total length of all railways authorised by Parliament? 2, What is the estimated cost of their construction? 3, Is there any order of priority in regard to their construction?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, The total length of all railways authorised but not yet commenced, including the Pemberton extension, which was commenced and stopped, is 176½ miles. 2, £916,200, including rails and fastenings and water supplies. 3, No.

QUESTION—DEPORTATION BY STATE GOVERNMENT.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Have the Collier Labour Government deported any person or persons from Western Australia? 2, If so, what were the full names and nationality of such persons, on what date and by what method were they deported, and to what destination? 3, What was the constitution of the tribunal, if any, that recommended deportation? 4, What expense was involved in the case of each deportee?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Not compulsorily. In a number of cases, where the interests of the State so required,

financial assistance has been given to enable persons, of their own volition, to proceed to other countries. 2, See 1. 3, See 1. 4, See 1.

QUESTION—MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND DEPARTMENTAL OFFICERS.

Hon. H. SEDDON, for Hon. A. Lovekin, asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Are members of Parliament entitled to avail themselves of the services of departmental officers in connection with their private or personal affairs? 2, If so, will he inform the House as to the conditions relating thereto? 3, If not, will he supply the names of any members who have availed themselves of such services, and state for what purposes the services were availed of?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, No. 2, See answer to No. 1. 3, I am not aware of the names of any such members of Parliament.

MOTION—CLOSE OF SESSION.

Standing Order 62; Sitting Hours.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [3.6]: I move—

That the provisions of Standing Order No. 62 be suspended for the current month, and that the House do meet on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday next at 11 a.m.

It is hardly necessary for me to repeat the reasons for this motion, which were stated by me last week. In order that we may close down on Friday night, it is necessary that we should meet on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday at 11 a.m.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [3.7]: I hope the passing of this motion will not involve hasty consideration of the measures to come before us. There are still on the Notice Paper some important Bills, several of which require a good deal of thought. In previous sessions we have had experience of measures being unduly rushed because of the keen desire to finish within a certain limited time. I feel sure that the Leader of the House will, if he finds that it is not practicable to complete the business of the session by Friday next, arrange with the Government to continue even into next week, or, however regrettable and unusual it

may be, if necessary to continue the business after Christmas, so that wise and full consideration may be given to measures. I feel certain the Leader of the House will have the hearty co-operation of every member. Personally, I shall endeavour to assist him as far as I possibly can.

Question put and passed.

BILL—MAIN ROADS.

Recommittal.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, Bill recommitted for the purpose of further considering Clauses 12, 16 and 31.

In Committee.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 12—Engineers and inspectors to be subject to control of Minister:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Bill, as amended, has been carefully examined by the Parliamentary draftsman, and is correct with the one exception of Clause 12. I move an amendment—

That the word "The" at the beginning of the clause be struck out.

This is really a consequential amendment. The word "The" occurs before "Every assistant engineer."

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

Clause 16—Chief Engineer to conduct experiments:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That the words "The board shall" be inserted at the beginning of the new Sub-clause 1, and that the subclause stand as Sub-clause 2.

This is an amendment suggested by Mr. Stewart.

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

Clause 31—Power to make regulations:

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: I move an amendment—

That the words "the fees and," in line 6, be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu: "regulations to authorise local authorities to grant permission for the erection on main roads, in return for advertising concessions, of highway lighthouses or beacons, and prescribing the."

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Is the amendment in conformity with the Title of the Bill?

The CHAIRMAN: The Title includes the words "and for other relative purposes," which I think will cover the amendment. That has a wide application.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I merely wish to assist Mr. Stephenson and to give the local bodies all necessary power. The relative purposes covered by the Title of the Bill must be purposes relative to the Bill and what it seeks to achieve.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. member remember that the Title has already been amended?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I had forgotten that, but that amendment limits the Title still further.

Hon. J. Ewing: Will not the amendment come within the scope of the phrase included in the Title, "and for other relative purposes?"

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No. The object of the Bill is to make provision for the construction, maintenance and supervision of main and developmental roads.

The CHAIRMAN: Does not the word "supervision" cover the point at issue?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not think so. The provision regarding advertising and the erection of lighthouses is a variation upon the general purposes of the measure.

The CHAIRMAN: If Mr. Nicholson considers that an amendment to the Title is necessary, he can move accordingly.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Perhaps the Minister will agree to the Bill being reported, so that I may consider the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think it is necessary to amend the Title, but if the hon. member, with his legal knowledge, considers it is necessary, he can move accordingly.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: One must look at the main purposes of the Bill and consider what the other relative purposes referred to would be. Can it be considered that the granting of the powers outlined in the amendment can come within the scope of the Title? I do not think so.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: We had a dissertation from Mr. Nicholson on the question of getting on with the business on the Notice Paper. I hope he will follow that course himself. I claim that the word "supervision" covers the point he raised and as one of the members of the Select Committee,

I am entitled to say that this provision has been copied from the New South Wales Act, which has the same Title as the one embodied in this Bill. The hon. member seems to think that it means advertising on lighthouses, such as are on the coast. The lighthouses referred to are merely those that will be erected at cross-roads and junctions, conveying directions to travellers.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: Would Mr. Nicholson object to finger-posts being mentioned in the Bill? The lighthouses referred to serve a similar purpose. His objection seems unnecessary.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am not speaking in any captious spirit, for I do not desire the Bill to be adversely affected subsequently, particularly if a small alteration in the Title at this stage will save the question arising later.

The CHAIRMAN: I rule that the amendment is in order and if Mr. Nicholson considers that the Title should be amended, he can move in that direction later on.

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

Bill reported with further amendments and the report adopted.

Read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—EIGHT HOURS.

Second Reading—Defeated.

Debate resumed from 10th December.

HON. J. E. DODD (South) [3.27]: I do not propose to enter upon a long argument regarding the Bill at this stage of the session, nor to dilate upon the relation of machinery to the working day, especially as the fate of the Bill is a foregone conclusion. There are a few observations that I would like to make before we dispose of it. The agitation for a 44-hour week is not new. As a matter of fact, a 40-hour week has been in vogue in the mining industry ever since, I think, 1860, and 40 hours have been worked during afternoon and night shifts and 46 hours during day shifts. When we come to consider the effect of labour-saving machinery, a fair case can be put up for consideration regarding shorter hours of labour. I will mention a couple of industries—agriculture and mining. I do not propose to go through many industries. When we consider what has been done in connection with

agriculture with labour-saving machinery, to my mind a good case could be put up in favour of shorter hours than are now worked. When we think of all the modern agricultural implements, the harvester, the binder, the tractor, and many other forms of labour-saving machinery, it really seems to me the agricultural worker should be permitted to share in the time saved by those implements. So, too, with mining, much time has been saved by improved machinery, and in my view the worker should share in the saving. Also it has to be remembered that in many instances the introduction of labour-saving machinery has been accompanied not only by a decrease in the manual labour employed, but also by an increase in various forms of industrial diseases amongst the workers. That relates not only to mining, but also to a number of other industries. Labour-saving machinery in mines has effected almost a revolution in mining methods. When we think of what the rock drill has done, the large number of men it has displaced and the rapidity with which its work is accomplished as compared with the hand drill system, we realise what its introduction has meant to the mining companies. Unfortunately, with the advent of the rock drill, the miners have been exposed to the ravages of a terrible disease from which perhaps 90 per cent. are dying to-day. When I think of these things, I come to the conclusion that the worker is entitled to his share of the time saved by machinery that at once displaces men and does very much more work than was possible under the old method. Consider what has been done in our day by the introduction of steam and electricity, marvellous factors in the evolution of transport. When we regard the time saved by railways and by motor traction, surely we are entitled to ask some relief for those who are doing the necessary manual work. It has been said that the first class nations have been built up on low wages and long hours. That may be so, but still we should remember that those two factors have built up something else also, have increased disease both in variety and virulence, and have brought about revolutions that we in our day might well avoid. Only in recent history have we had an example of the indifference and apathy of the employers in respect of the condition of the workers bringing about the most awful revolution the world has ever seen. I refer to that in Russia. In Australia, fortunately, we have the best conditions in the

world. Its people are the best fed and the best clothed, and I really believe its workers are the best housed in the world. Also I believe there is more equality and less snobbery in Australia than in any other part of the world. The workers of Australia have succeeded in building up a high industrial standard, and it is for us to assist them to maintain that standard. While we do that, I do not think we need have any fear of those cataclysms that have occurred in other parts of the world. One other point: I ask where we stand in regard to the introduction of the 44-hour week? To whom will it apply? Consider for a moment who are already exempt from the operations of the Bill and it will be agreed that very little harm would result from the passing of the measure. We have at present 10,000 Government workers enjoying the 44-hour week. They will be exempt from the operations of the Bill. All the underground miners have the 44-hour week, while all the Collie miners, both those below and those on the surface, work only 42 hours per week. The hours of all public servants are 38 per week, whilst most of the office workers in the City and towns work from 38 to 40 hours per week. School teachers may be said to work from 30 hours to 36 hours per week, and several trades, that of carpentry for one, know only the 44-hour week. I understand the linotype operators work from 36 to 38 hours per week, while all the female employees in factories or shops work 44 hours per week. Moreover, under the Bill the agricultural industry is to be exempt. To whom, then, will the Bill apply? It will apply to the surface workers on the mines other than the Collie coal mines, and it will apply also to a number of general labourers employed throughout the country. Notoriously, it is those who have to work the hardest, under the worst conditions, who work the longest hours. So I do not know that we are likely to bring about very much of a revolution if we pass the Bill, while certainly it will give justice to a number of men working the hardest and under the worst conditions. I have frequently referred to the state of the mining industry, and have said that mining is the scape-goat for all other industries. Undoubtedly every measure of this sort falls on the mining industry more than on any other industry. The better conditions obtained elsewhere, in the Eastern States and in other industries in this State, are to a large extent obtained at the expense of the mining industry. I believe that this is

capable of adjustment, and that if improved conditions be introduced the mining industry may be able to adapt itself to the new order of things. If I did not think so, I would not vote for the Bill. Also I think the success or failure that will attend the passing of the Bill depends to a large extent on the workers themselves. If there is to be any diminution of production on account of the shorter hours, it must react on the workers. I repeat that when I come to see the number of workers that will be exempt from the Bill, workers carrying on under reasonable conditions, I feel convinced that not much of a revolution would wait upon the passing of the Bill.

HON. J. EWING (South-West) [3.38]: When the Leader of the House moved the suspension of the Standing Orders with a view of expediting business, Mr. Nicholson took exception to it on the score that matters of great importance might be overlooked if we had only a limited time in which to attend to the business. However, I hold that this measure, although one of the most important brought before us this session, need not be debated at any great length. The Honorary Minister exhaustively explained the measure to the House, and so I think we might at this stage vote upon the Bill as a matter of principle. Personally, I am opposed to the measure. The Bill provides a 44-hour week for all workers under the Crown. But the Government have already by administrative acts granted the 44-hour week to practically all their employees, and have told us that they propose to go right through with that policy. It is understood that they are going to apply it to the Railways, where it will result in a largely increased cost of working. This, of course, is in fulfilment of election promises made by individual members of the Government. However, they shall not apply the 44-hour week where I can prevent it. The letter received by certain members from Mr. Richard Hamilton, the president of the Chamber of Mines, clearly shows what it will mean to the industry if the surface workers are conceded the 44-hour week. Mr. Hamilton says the consequent loss of production by the Kalgoorlie mines alone will mean more than £100,000 per annum. It seems to me an utterly improper thing to harass the mining industry in this economically unsound fashion. In Collie, of course, the miners

have had the 42-hour week for a long time past; but they are all on contract, which is a totally different thing. Mr. Dodd pointed to the industrial conditions obtaining in Russia. But in Australia the miners are the best paid and the most efficient in the world. I hope the conditions of mining underground will go on improving, so long as whatever is done is economically sound. The real reason I have for opposing the Bill has to do with what happened last session. In the Arbitration Bill of last session it was provided that the court should declare that the workers should not work more than 44 hours per week. That was defeated in this House, and we now have before us another Arbitration Bill, but without that provision, and we have in its place this Bill to provide for a 44-hour week.

Hon. E. H. Harris: I thought it was an Eight-Hours Bill.

Hon. J. EWING: That is only camouflage; it is a 44-hour week Bill. The proper body to decide the question of working hours is the Arbitration Court. A majority of members of this House have always contended that they will not permit that power to be taken from the Arbitration Court if they can help it. If we pass this Bill, it will be tantamount to giving a direct instruction to the Arbitration Court to prescribe the 44-hour week for every industry in the State. In fact, one clause provides that if there are some awards prescribing 48 hours, they may be adjusted to provide for a 44-hour week. That would be undesirable, because it would lead to a tremendous dislocation of industry. The Government have, by administrative act, applied the 44-hour week to 10,000 workers, and they intend to apply it to others including railway workers.

Hon. A. Burvill: They have done it.

Hon. J. EWING: I understand it is now being considered. If it is applied to the railways generally, the Commissioner will find that his profits will not be so great.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The railway workers have 44 hours now.

Hon. T. Moore: Your Government granted it to a great section of the railway workers.

Hon. J. EWING: To a section, but not to the whole of the employees.

Hon. T. Moore: Then it should be extended to the whole of them.

Hon. J. EWING: If railway freights are not lowered and conditions made better for

the primary producers, it will be bad for the State. If the 44-hour week were extended to the whole of the railway employees, it would be impossible to reduce freights. On the other hand it would probably be necessary to increase them.

Hon. T. Moore: Do you think the Collie coal miners should be compelled to work more than 44 hours a week?

Hon. J. EWING: It is impossible for this House to decide what hours should be worked in any industry. The court exists to fix hours that are fair to each industry.

Hon. J. R. Brown: But you will not give the court that power.

Hon. J. EWING: We are asked to give the court not power, but an instruction to grant the 44-hour week. If the Bill be carried, the court will be bound to award not more than 44 hours in any industry. How can we, a deliberative body, without having evidence before us, decide whether industries shall work 48, 44, or 42 hours a week? The miners at Collie and the underground workers at Kalgoorlie have been working the shorter hours for some years, but it is not necessary that the shorter working week should be applied to every industry. No member could say what are the correct hours to be observed in any industry. At present some industries work 40 hours, 36 hours, 42 hours, and 48 hours. We have an Arbitration Court which hears evidence and, on the evidence submitted, decides what hours shall be worked, just as it decides what wages shall be paid. The court is the only body to decide this matter, and on that ground I feel justified in opposing the Bill. The Honorary Minister quoted Mr. Justice Higgins as stating that Parliament should fix the hours of work. In another place the Minister for Works quoted extensively, and page after page of "Hansard" contains his recital of the opinions of Mr. Justice Higgins and other authorities. The Arbitration Court, however, has ample time and all the facilities to decide these matters, and I oppose the Bill because I consider the question should be left entirely to the Arbitration Court to settle.

HON. A. BURVILL (South-East) [3.52]: I oppose the Bill. To adopt it would be to introduce a new principle. It has been held that eight hours a day constitutes a fair day's work and that has been the standard adopted by all the Arbitration

Courts. Although this Bill is called an Eight Hours Bill, its object is really to provide for 44 hours as the maximum working week. If Parliament agrees to that, it will be necessary for the court to adjust the working hours for the whole of the industries, because different industries require different hours. The maximum at present is 48. If it is reduced to 44, the Arbitration Court will have to adjust the hours for all other industries.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Not at all.

Hon. A. BURVILL: That is the principal reason why I oppose the Bill. I am quite well aware of the objective of those who advocate the Bill.

Hon. T. Moore: Do you say that 48 hours is the maximum now?

Hon. A. BURVILL: The objective of the party advocating the Bill is a week of five days of eight hours each, and this is the method by which they hope to attain that end. If men engaged in an ordinary trade work only 44 hours a week, other men working in noxious trades will demand a reduction of their working hours. One of the clauses of the Bill provides that the measure shall apply to the Crown and to its workers. Those members who know that the 44-hour week has been adopted by the Government naturally want to know why that clause has been inserted. The 44-hour week is already in operation as regards Government employees. Probably the Minister responsible for the Bill thinks he acted illegally in introducing the 44-hour week without having Parliamentary sanction. The policy of the Government is 44 hours and preference to unionists, but that policy has not received Parliamentary sanction. Another clause states that the measure shall not apply to workers in the agricultural or pastoral industries. Perhaps the Government think that the workers in the agricultural industry are not so industrious and that they do less work than do men on the Government stroke, and that therefore they do not need the eight-hour day. My experience is that workers in the agricultural industry do far better work than do employees of the Crown. If the two were set to work side by side, the agricultural worker would far surpass the other. Yet the measure is to apply to Crown employees and not to agricultural workers. The only conclusion I can arrive at is that the Government foresee the possibility of a deficit if the principle is introduced, and realise that someone must make

it good. Therefore, the agricultural workers are to be required to work the old-fashioned hours and make good any loss of revenue caused by bringing the working week of Crown employees and other workers down to 44 hours. This question should be settled by the Arbitration Court. It would be dangerous for Parliament to interfere with the present standard of 48 hours.

HON. J. R. BROWN (North-East) [4.56]: The principle contained in this Bill was embodied in the Arbitration Bill of last session. This year the Government thought it desirable to bring it before Parliament in a separate measure. Last session so much objection was taken to its inclusion in the Arbitration Bill that the Government thought they would get better consideration of that measure if the principle of the eight-hour day were kept apart, but the Arbitration Bill has been mutilated as much as ever. It seems to me that this Chamber, instead of progressing, is stagnating. The eight-hour day was instituted over 60 years ago when the primary producers had to manage with an old wooden plough hauled by a team of oxen. To-day the farmer has an eight or ten-furrow disc plough drawn by a traction engine, and consequently is in a better position than before. Some members contend that the passing of the measure would harass primary producers to such an extent that they would "go bung."

Hon. A. Burvill: No, they would have to work harder.

Hon. J. R. BROWN: This Bill would permit of primary producers adopting a spread of hours. When harvesting is over, how many agricultural workers work more than eight hours a day in the field? I do not think any such man could be indicated who worked more than eight hours a day all through the year.

Hon. A. Burvill: You are not a farmer.

Hon. J. R. BROWN: No; and I do not think that people who are farmers should advocate longer hours for other workers. We have been working 60 years for the eight-hour day. All we ask is that the worker should receive a half-holiday once a week. Every Arbitration Court allows the worker half a day per week. In some industries he is allowed two half-holidays a week. This applies to the hotel and restaurant employees, for whom a spread of hours is prescribed. Provision is made for agricultural employees to work a spread of

hours so that, after attending to the harvesting, they might work perhaps not more than four hours a day when the wheat had once been sown and there was nothing more to worry about.

Hon. A. Burvill: All of them do not grow wheat.

Hon. J. R. BROWN: An agricultural worker gives a fair return for his wages. If a man is taxed beyond a certain limit he becomes stale. It is the last half-hour after the eight hours' work that fatigues a man. If he is called upon to work reasonable hours very much more can be got out of him. The men who work at the Midland Junction workshops and have to go there from Fremantle every day, put in fully 10 hours a day, and have little or no time for social recreation. The biggest people in the manufacturing world say that with shorter hours the men give greater and more efficient work. Lord Leverhulme advocated a 36-hour week. Mr. Stone and other men have also referred to the better results that are obtained by shorter hours.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Lord Leverhulme did not practise what he preached. There are no 36 hours at Sunlight.

Hon. J. R. BROWN: He did practise it.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: He got control of the soap market first.

Hon. J. R. BROWN: That is only human nature. I know many people who with added means button their pockets tighter. Dr. Vernon says that machinery has reached such a stage now that a man merely watches it with his arms folded. That may be so, but he watches the wheels go round for so long that he begins to go round himself. Dr. Vernon also says that it is only when the machinery breaks down that inefficiency begins, and then everybody is bustling about to set the machinery in order again. In yesterday's paper there is a report stating that the Flying Squadron objected to the 44-hour week, because it would affect the club. They have to keep a man on all night, and cannot work him round the clock on a 44-hour week. That is all nonsense. The club is not open to the general public. We cannot legislate for that kind of thing. I do not see why we should make fish of one and flesh of another. If the Government agree to give their employees shorter hours I fail to see why that should not be applicable to everyone. We should not pick and choose between the people of the community. If one person is entitled to a privi-

lege other persons are entitled to it. The Bill provides that those people who are hardest hit by it can be relieved through the spread of hours. This House should not object to that. We are asking only for an eight-hour day and a five and a half day week. That represents a reduction of four hours a week. One member referred to Mr. Richard Hamilton, who has been opposed to the workers ever since he has managed the Great Boulder Mine.

Hon. J. Ewing: You should not say that.

Hon. J. R. BROWN: He has always screwed them down. The overhead charges on the Golden Mile are just the same as they have been for years past, and the number of permanent heads employed is the same. If the workers had not gone on as they did during the war there would have been no mining industry, but the management of the mines have not altered their way of doing things. It is a constant job for the mine managers and the directors, and they never leave it until they die. The workers have had to stand up to these conditions all the time. Every obstacle is put in their way to prevent their getting shorter hours. Some mines in Kalgoorlie have for 20 years been on the verge of closing. Every month or so the management say they will close in two or three weeks' time, but they remain open because it suits the heads that this should be so. The mines in Boulder could be worked by one legal manager. If he received £5,000 a year he would be well paid. No man is worth that salary.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: We were worth £600 the other day.

Hon. J. R. BROWN: That is not £5,000. If the mines there were worked by one man and all the overhead expenses curtailed, an enormous sum annually would be saved in fees. Members seem determined not to support the Bill. They have spoken against it without reservation. Mr. Ewing said he did not agree with the principle. Is there anything wrong in giving an employee a half-day off in the week?

Hon. J. Ewing: It should be done by the Arbitration Court.

Hon. J. R. BROWN: This Chamber will not allow a workable Arbitration Bill to go through.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The employees already have their half-day.

Hon. J. R. BROWN: We want it established so that it may apply to all who work in our industries. Why should not all the

people be made happy, instead of only one section? The Bill has not been rushed through. We have been 60 years preparing it.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And you are not tired yet?

Hon. J. R. BROWN: No. We will have another try next year. There may be a change in this Chamber by that time, especially in the matter of those who voted for the increased allowance. This is called a House of Review. It is only a house of stagnation. It makes no progress. Since the eight-hour day was instituted 60 years have passed, and now this House will not give the workers a half holiday in the week. Why not give the Bill a trial for a year or two? If it does not prove satisfactory it can be rescinded. When we get rid of this Bill we shall have put behind us all contentious matters. The other Bills will go through quite easily, because they do not affect the pockets of vested interests. As soon as a Bill begins to affect members' pockets, they rush baldheaded into voting against it without giving it the consideration it demands.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [4.10]: The only tangible reason advanced for the introduction of this Bill is that the Arbitration Court cannot deal with the question of hours. We can dispense with all the other bird lime about other countries of the world. We have practically delegated the whole of our industrial affairs and the settlement of industrial disputes to the Arbitration Court. The Act provides for everything, including the hours of employment. It has been said that the court will not reduce the 48-hour week except by the direction of Parliament. If that be so, the only reason that can be applied is that when the court assumed its functions it found 48 hours to be the working week, and did not care to alter it. State and Federal Courts have, however, reduced the 48-hour week. We have seen it done in the case of underground workers and in the case of gas workers the reason for the change being the occupational employment of the worker. Our State court gave a 44-hour week, which stands to-day, in the case of the Midland Junction workshops. This was not given because of the occupational calling. That alone demonstrates that the court has power to fix the hours at less than 48

per week. It can be argued that the court has not reduced the hours in other cases because the evidence did not support a reduction. If we go outside the Act and pass a special Bill of this kind, which will handicap the court, we shall be adopting a dangerous course. That which is sought by this Bill was sought to be obtained in the Industrial Arbitration Bill of last session, but it was defeated. The same principle is contained in this Bill, which has to be read with the Industrial Arbitration Act. All the controversy which has surrounded this Bill has been due to the intrusion of politics and parties into the realm of economics. To-day we have a Government who said on the hustings that they would endeavour to limit the Arbitration Act so that the court could not fix more than 44 hours, and that if defeated in that effort they would extend to all Government employees, as far as possible, a 44-hour week. They have done that by an administrative act, which is purely a political act. If a change of Government should occur in three years' time, we shall probably have a direct reversal of the present policy. If the present Opposition stand to their guns, they can only reverse the existing Government's decision when they are returned to power. Would the Government employees of this State submit to that? I say unhesitatingly they would not. I say further that they should not be made, as they have been made, the battledore and shuttlecock of political parties. The question of the 44-hour week has been dealt with as ably by Mr. Theodore, the late Premier of Queensland, as by any man in the Commonwealth. When fighting the question in the Queensland Parliament he said, "If reduction of hours does not affect the great and only question concerned, that of production, why stop at 44 hours? Why not go to 33?" Why have not our Government made this Bill applicable to the pastoral and agricultural industries?

Hon. E. H. Harris: Some members would not support that.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Why is a worker in the agricultural or the pastoral industry not entitled to the same hours as a city worker? It postulates that all Mr. Theodore said as to the economic factor in Queensland has presented itself here. The exclusion of the workers in the pastoral and agricultural industries faces the Government with the almost absolute impossibility of dealing gen-

erally with the question of hours. The Minister for Works, in introducing this Bill, said that by act and deed and gesture the Arbitration Court had asked for a direction on the subject of a departure from the 48-hour week. What is the direction to be given to the court? That the court shall not apply the 44-hour week to the agricultural and pastoral industries. As regards those industries the Arbitration Court will be no better off under this piece of legislation than they are now. The workers in the pastoral industry to-day have not the 48 hours, and it seems illogical to argue that some workers should get 44 hours while other workers have not got the 48-hour week. I am not at all concerned about the reduction of hours. If, for argument's sake, the workers of Western Australia are giving a certain production from 48 hours and return the same production from 44 hours for the same amount of money, no harm can result from reduction of hours. But if the reduction of hours means a less production for the same amount of money, the difference has to come from somewhere. If that were not the case, we could go on reducing hours until no work at all was done. As regards the mining industry I am faced with a certain difficulty. According to the letter from Mr. Hamilton which was referred to by Mr. Ewing, it is assumed that if the 44-hour week is adopted, then, in order to keep the mines at their present stage of productivity, it will be necessary to work the men on the surface 48 hours and pay them overtime, which Mr. Hamilton said would be equivalent to an increase of 11s. per ton on the present working costs. If the Arbitration Court reduced the miners and the men underground to 44 hours on account of the risk of occupational disease and other disadvantageous conditions, and left the surface workers at 48 hours, the only logical reasoning would be that if the surface workers were reduced to 44 hours the miners and the men underground must be reduced to 40. The arguments put up by Mr. Hamilton in his letter are arguments which he has put up on all previous occasions in regard to increase of wages and reduction of hours. The continuity of a gold mine is based on the quantity of payable ore alone. If we are going to take into consideration how improved conditions granted to the miner will injure the mine, and if we are going to follow that out to the end, we shall arrive at the conclusion that no ore is payable. On the other hand, the mining in-

dustry is handicapped in this respect, that the impost represented by increased wages, reduced hours and improved conditions cannot be passed on to the community, as can be done in the case of other industries. The only question that exercises my mind in casting a vote on the Bill is the political aspect, that is to say, the false position in which the workers of this State have been placed. Let us assume that 100,000 Government workers have had the benefit of the 44-hour week for three years. Are they likely to go back to the 48-hour week if there is a change of Government? Or, worse still, let us assume that the Government workers have had the 44-hour week for six years, and that then the present Government are supplanted by another Government. Is it not in the last degree unlikely that the Government workers will consent to go back to the 48-hour week? To give the Government workers a 44-hour week while all other workers remain on the 48-hour week is absolutely wrong. Who pays the Government workers? Mr. Dodd has pointed out that the hardest worker has had the least consideration and still works the longest hours. That worker has to contribute to the State revenue in order that Government workers may have improved conditions as the result of political action. That is the factor which will decide my vote on the Bill. I really cannot stand for a set of circumstances that gives 10,000 or 12,000 Government workers in this State a privilege for which the other workers will have to pay while not sharing in it. If any vote of mine can give the other workers the same consideration as the Government have given to State employees, it is only right that I should cast it.

HON. W. T. GLASHEEN (South-East) [4.27]: Mr. Dodd made particular mention of the agricultural industry, and spoke of the agriculturist of to-day having the up-to-date methods that invention has brought with it, and because of that being presumably in a position to pay better wages and concede shorter hours. That assertion must be accepted with a good deal of care. So far as I have been able to gather, there is no great extension of the agricultural industry in point of area cultivated; and such an extension would be one of the first results of the application of invention and machinery suggested by Mr. Dodd. In such circumstances there would be a great addition to the wealth production of the agriculturists. My own

feeling is that one might well be inclined to grant shorter hours to the workers if it were possible in the economic sense. My opinion is that if the farmers and pioneers of the early days, with their wives and children, had restricted themselves to eight hours a day, we would not now have an agricultural industry at all, but would possibly be in the position of having to import the flour for our bread from Canada. On the other hand, I cannot subscribe to the view that great nations have built up their wealth under conditions of long hours and poor pay. That view is not borne out by facts. Were the position as stated by Mr. Holmes, I would expect to see China, Japan and India leading the commerce of the world to-day. In point of fact, the nations having long hours and poor pay are relatively nowhere in the commercial sense. If we want to look for expansion we must look to America, where wages, all things considered, are the highest in the world. America to-day is exporting to this country everything that is worth while, the beautiful motor cars we see on our roads, the tractors and all the other devices that make for greater production and increased wealth. These things come not from the countries of poor pay, but from the United States and other highly-paid nations. If the worker were really going to benefit by the introduction of a 44-hour week, I would be inclined to grant him that privilege; but in view of the conditions that are with us, conditions to which we must all bow down, it is highly questionable whether the worker would be any better off. Indeed, it is doubtful whether he would be as well off under the 44-hour period as he is under the present period. For instance, if men in the building trade enjoy a 44-hour week it means that the worker, who has to pay rent for a house constructed under those conditions, will have to pay rent based upon the extra cost of erection. The argument can be carried into every phase of industry. It can be applied to coal mining or other mining as well. If the worker receives higher pay for shorter hours of labour, it simply means that people will have to pay more for coal, for instance, and will have to shoulder a greater responsibility regarding the cost of production for which coal is largely responsible. Thus, the position reverts to that in which the worker finds himself no further ahead than he was under earlier conditions. Mr. Dodd mentioned the evolution

of invention, and said that the workers were entitled to benefit from the results of invention. It is wonderful to think that the more we invent, and the more we progress, we still seem to get nowhere. For instance, when in olden days the cobbler sat down at his last and produced one or three pairs of boots a week, boots then were of better quality and cheaper than they are to-day, when the evolution of industry has resulted in millions of boots being produced where formerly half-dozens were turned out. The same can be said of agriculture. I venture to say that the agriculturists, and the agricultural industry, to-day are not more independent than they were before the application of science and invention. There is no more independence about farming to-day than there was in early times when the man on the land turned over the soil with a wooden plough pulled by an ox. So we can apply it to other avenues. I am inclined to believe that, no matter what we invent, and how we apply science to industry, the workers and the general mass of the people will not benefit at all under present day economic conditions. It is possible to get more per foot of land in some of the privileged places in the city, than it would cost to buy a 1,000-acre farm in the country. No matter what is done to increase production, the overflow of augmented values finds itself represented in increased city values. Until we can devise some more equitable process that will result in some of the benefit going to the workers, they, and the general masses, will be no better off as the result of invention and the advance of science than were the workers of long ago. I would like to see every worker having a 44-hour week and receiving higher wages, but under existing conditions, and under the Bill, it will simply mean that the worker will make a rod for his own back. Thus, we have the same vicious circle re-asserting itself and leaving the workers in a worse position than prior to the introduction of scientific invention. It will mean lessening the opportunities for work, and if there are less jobs available it does not matter what hours are fixed or what wages are stipulated. We are borrowing millions of money in order to settle the people on the land and we are telling everyone that it all depends upon the expansion of industry as to what measure of success will be achieved. If an undue burden is placed upon the agricultural industry, then in turn other industries

besides that of agriculture will commence to decay. If migrants are to be settled on the land, and they have to employ people working only 44 hours per week, they will not be able to carry on. The Government will have to cease endeavouring to carry on with the migration scheme, and then the community will be in a worse position than before the change. Because of that, and until we can devise some better economic process so that the wealth that follows upon increased production will benefit the people, I cannot subscribe to the doctrine of a 44-hour week. I do not think the worker will ultimately benefit by the passing of the Bill and I oppose the second reading.

HON. H. STEWART (South-East) [4.35]: I wish to offer a few words to supplement the remarks of Mr. Glasheen regarding agricultural development. Within the first six months of their establishment I visited the group settlements at Denmark. I saw there some settlers who had been formerly unemployed at Fremantle, while others had come from the goldfields and some were newcomers from Great Britain. Some were engaged in clearing operations and others were developing their holdings. They asked me what I thought of their prospects. At the opening of the agricultural show at Denmark, at about the same time—it was about three years ago—queries along the same lines were also put to me by the settlers. There were three groups there, although at that time there were 40 odd established in the State. I said that, from what I had seen of the work done, and as I realised the immense amount of work that had to be done with borrowed money during the developmental stages of properties in that part of the State, I considered that the necessity for increased application was greater in that part of the State than on a mixed farming proposition along the Great Southern line. I told them that if they wanted to get ahead of it and to be successful, it would be necessary for them to work unlimited hours and to exercise unlimited application in their work. I understand that it is slightly different in the wheat belt area. There, with the advantage of a recently-invented Sun-tyne drill, one man can put in 500 acres and, with a return of 10 bushels to the acre, the operations can be made to pay handsomely. Those conditions, however, do

not apply in the Great Southern. In that part of the State the farmers have to work unlimited hours and they have to be unlimited also in their application of physical and mental energy, particularly during the first five years. With application under those conditions a man on the Great Southern should then be in an assured position, although he might have a healthy overdraft at the bank. I told the settlers that from my observation and, speaking candidly, I considered they would have to make the period 10 years instead of 5 years. I told them that if they were not prepared to work under those conditions, it would be better for them and for everyone else if they got off the land. If that is the position—and I think the present Government know that that is practically the position—there can be no sound reason for bringing forward the Bill now under discussion. It is not right for one section to have the benefit of a 44-hour week and another section to be compelled to work unlimited hours.

HON. G. POTTER (West) [4.40]: I should not like to cast a silent vote on what has been described as an important measure. I listened with rapt attention to the speech of the Honorary Minister in introducing the Bill. He painted a picture of sombre hue and took us back some 200 years to tell us of the position in the mines of Great Britain where women had to work underground under deplorable conditions. If one analyses that picture and has regard to the general question, one can see that his picture hardly applies to present day conditions. Boiled down, the Minister's speech was really an appeal on behalf of the workers, that they might enjoy by legislative act, better hours and better conditions. If at any time Parliament interfered with the civil courts of the country, no one who is a student of social and political affairs would deny that it would lead to social chaos. Can any member point to one political leader who will not say that the industrial courts are of more importance to the wellbeing of the community than the ordinary courts of law? That being so, I feel compelled to vote against the Bill. If we once start interfering with our law or industrial courts, we shall make for chaos. The function of Parliament was to establish industrial courts to deal with the various aspects of the industrial life of the community.

The courts were to consider evidence and arrive at a decision, finally issuing their judgments. I do not think it is wise for the Legislature to take to itself the functions of the machine Parliament itself created. There is no member in this Chamber who would wish the worker to receive an adequate share of the profits from an industry more than I, but the earning capacity of the community must be considered before that of the individual. The Government have declared that the agricultural and pastoral industries shall be excluded from the Bill. That amounts to admitting the impracticability of the measure. With the possible exception of the mining industry, the agricultural and the pastoral industries are the only two real industries we shall have, or are likely to have, for some time to come. The communal earning capacity is of greater importance than the individual earning capacity. The basis of wealth comes from primary sources, and the graduated value is that which is added by the act of transforming the original product into the marketable product. By the present fiscal policy, fictitious values may be given to articles, but as a primary producing country we must look to trade for our development. In doing so, we must look at the imports into the country and bring down the general cost of production where possible. We cannot look for many years to come for any values from the exports of our secondary industries. We have throughout Australia schemes for inducing men to go on the land and encouraging boys to go there too. What sort of an object lesson will it be to them if we say that if they remain in the town, they will have to work only 44 hours a week, whereas if they go into the country they will have to work unlimited hours? Someone must shoulder the burden of the 44-hour week, and the man who will do so is the man excluded from the provisions of the Bill—the man producing the staple wealth of the country. It would be a popular thing for me in the constituency that I in a tripartite manner represent to support the Bill, but I cannot do so because we would be usurping the functions of the Arbitration Court and indirectly would be imposing too great an impost on the only two real industries we have at present or are likely to have in the next 20 years.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [4.46]: I cannot support the second reading. It is entirely the function of the Arbitration Court to determine and fix not only the hours but the wages and conditions of labour. If by legislation of this kind we seek to fix hours we shall, instead of enhancing the prestige of the court, detract materially from it. There are industries in which it might be reasonable to advocate a 44-hour week, but that is not our function. We are not judges to receive evidence or to determine what should be the hours of employment in one industry or another. Yet here we are asked by legislative act to say that 44 hours shall apply to every industry, regardless of whether it is fit and proper to do so. As Mr. Potter stated, we would, if we passed the Bill, be doing one of the greatest injuries possible to the worker himself. The Honorary Minister in moving the second reading, contended that the passing of the measure would lead to greater contentment. Mr. Glasheen and Mr. Stewart have referred to the agricultural industry, which at present is exempted, evidently because the Government recognise the absolute impracticability of including it.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: But indirectly the agricultural industry will have to bear the whole of the burden.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: How could the measure result in greater contentment to the worker? It may result in greater loss and expense to the worker and less contentment, and it will certainly breed discontent amongst the section of the community who do not get the advantage of the 44-hour week. The Minister cited instances of reduced hours of working having been followed by increased output. By speeding up and adopting modern methods of manufacture, it is possible to secure a greater output when work is limited to certain hours. I am not in favour of undue hours of labour, but I am strongly in favour of encouraging thrift in the community. But we shall not attain success by passing legislation of this kind. On the contrary, it would lead to demoralisation and probably bring ruination to many. The mining industry has been mentioned. Members have received a letter over the signature of Mr. Hamilton. The opinion of such an eminent captain of industry should be sufficient to induce every member to put on his thinking cap and consider whether this Bill will be

for the advantage of the worker. Any member who reads that letter seriously must recognise that the Bill will result in no advantage to the worker. On the other hand it will lead to increased costs generally, and so the vicious circle will be increased instead of diminished. Upon what does the success of any nation depend? It depends upon one thing, and that is the thrift and industry of its people. Eliminate thrift and industry and there can be only one result—loss. Is the passing of such a measure likely to encourage thrift or the reverse? There can be only one answer to that question.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The Chinaman is pretty thrifty and industrious.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes, and the aut sets us many fine examples, by which I hope the hon. member will profit.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: The Chinese as a nation have not shown it.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I think there has been a misunderstanding as to the effect of the Bill. The Honorary Minister said its passing would mark the true realisation of the eight-hour day. The passing of the Bill will not mean the true realisation of the eight-hour day. It is an attempt to introduce the 44-hour week, which might be worked in any number of days upon which the employers and workers agree.

The Honorary Minister: In exceptional circumstances.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Precisely. They might work the 44 hours from Monday to Friday inclusive, and omit all work on Saturday.

Hon. A. Burvill: They are doing that in the railways now.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes. This is a Bill to provide for a 44-hour week and not an eight-hour day. Yet eight hours is what the International Conference regarded as constituting a fair day's work. There are exceptional industries where fewer hours than 48 per week might be worked, but in the ordinary industries no man can contend that he is overworked if he enjoys an eight-hour day. I am not opposed to the half holiday on Saturday, but surely the half-day's work on Saturday can apply as at present. I see no reason for doing other than adhering to the principle upon which this House insisted when an amendment of the Arbitration Act was before us previously and we deleted the clause which sought to give statutory power for the court to

prescribe a 44-hour week. We decided against that principle, and I hope we shall do so again.

HON. A. J. H. SAW (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.56]: There is an aspect of the question that has not been brought out by any speaker. The demand for a 44-hour week is based on a very natural desire of the worker to work fewer hours and to have greater time for leisure, an object with which we all have sympathy. It has received a backing because of certain observations made on industrial fatigue, showing the evils of excessive hours of work and the fact that when excessive hours are worked they may be diminished to a point when, instead of lessening output, an increase takes place. These are observations that were made in many factories in various parts of the world, and particularly in the Old Country during the war. It is some time since I read a well-known book on "Industrial Fatigue" written by Dr. Vernon, who made many observations during the war. He undoubtedly proved that where excessive hours were worked, they could be reduced with positive gain to the output, but so far as my recollection goes, the hours were in excess of 48, and I do not think any instance he quoted dealt with fewer than 48 hours a week, unless it was some very laborious work such as smelting or foundry work. Dr. Vernon, too, dealt only with people engaged on piecework, and he expressly disclaimed that the inferences he drew from people engaged on piecework would apply to the ordinary person working on day labour. That is a vital point, because the tendency of people on piecework is to speed up. Undoubtedly such persons might work an excessive number of hours. In certain laborious trades I have no doubt the hours could be reduced from 48 to 44 or perhaps even lower, provided that certain intervals of rest took place between, and that the output might not diminish but might even increase. That, however, cannot apply to the ordinary conditions of labour worked by the average man, and certainly it cannot apply to the conditions pertaining in Australia. The main objection to the Bill is that the fixing of the hours of work is co-related to the wages and it seems to me that the same body that fixes the hours of pay should also fix the hours of work for which that pay is the

reward. I therefore intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill.

HON. W. H. KITSON (West) [5.0]: On previous occasions I have addressed myself at some length on this particular matter and therefore, while I do not propose to do so on this occasion, I cannot let the opportunity pass without making a few remarks in support of the measure. First I would say it would appear from the debate so far as it has gone, that this Chamber intends to live up to its reputation. When a similar measure to this was last before the House, one of the strongest complaints made was that it would be impossible so far as the agricultural and pastoral industries were concerned. On this occasion, because the Government have seen fit to exclude those particular industries for the time being, members say that they cannot vote for the Bill because it excludes those industries. Any stick to beat a dog with. That sums up the attitude of a number of members of this House. One would also imagine that the question of a 44-hour week is quite local, that it affects this State only. The question of a shorter working week and particularly an eight-hour day is world-wide; it is exercising the minds of industrial communities in practically every country of the world at the present time. There have been more industrial disputes over the reduction of the working week than over any other question during the last three or four years, and I venture to say that most of the important industrial disputes of the future will centre around the self-same question. It is as well for us to look at the matter from that point of view and to ask ourselves how it is. The reason has been pointed out by several investigators during recent years, namely, that owing to the system we have adopted in fixing wages, etc., on the cost of living, the worker has no opportunity of getting away from the position he has been in for many long years past, and that is that increases in wages do not give him any permanent improvement in his working conditions.

Hon. J. Cornell: A reduction of hours will not do it.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: It is therefore necessary for him, if he desires to obtain anything of further value, to see that the conditions are improved, that the hours of labour are shortened, so that he will have

more leisure and more time for mental improvement.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: And the race-course.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: And the race-course if he so desires. With other supporters of the movement I claim that there should be no necessity for a man to spend the greater part of his time doing those things that are necessary for getting the bare necessities of life. He is entitled to a little more than that on this earth and the only way he can bring about the improvement is by altering the conditions under which he has to work.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: He can get the improvement if he cares to engage in piece work.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: For a long time past organised labour has been pressing for an improvement in this direction, so much so that in quite a large number of industries 44 hours a week and eight hours a day prevail at the present time. There are other industries in which the effort has been just as keen and as constant to secure this reform, but the failure has come about where they have relied on the Arbitration Court to grant the reform. On many occasions the presidents of the various arbitration courts have said, "This is a matter that should be decided by the legislature and not by the Arbitration Court; why does not Parliament speak on the subject?" A number of Arbitration Court judges have expressed themselves in that way and now, because we as an organised Labour movement bring this matter before Parliament, with a view to making such a reform universal, so far as this State is concerned, we are told that the matter should not be dealt with by Parliament, that it should be left to the court, in spite of the fact that the judges have declared it to be a function of Parliament. The agitation will go on irrespective of what this Chamber desires, and to my way of thinking there can be no escape from the ultimate introduction of the 44-hour week in practically all our industries. But I am afraid if we are to take the attitude of this Chamber as a guide, we will have a lot of trouble. I venture to say that as the result of investigations made by several eminent men, including Dr. Vernon, to whom Dr. Saw referred, it cannot be denied that whenever the eight hours a day or the 44 hours a week have had a fair trial, the re-

sult has been an advantage not only to the workers, but to the employer. When Mr. Holmes was speaking on this measure he stated that the worker to-day was inefficient as compared with the worker of years ago. I do not know on what authority the hon. member made that statement, but I cannot let it pass without challenging it. There is absolutely no ground for the statement. All the inventions that are used in the various industries to-day have been introduced with the object of improving the production of particular articles, and there can be no question that production has not only increased in efficiency, but in quantity has increased many times.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Mr. Brown said this afternoon that the more you pay, the closer they sit.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: There can be no doubt also that while production has increased so many times, the worker is in the position he occupied prior to the introduction of the particular inventions. He seldom obtains any improvement as the result of industrial inventions, and in many cases it has been shown that the actual inventor has received practically no recompense for his labour. It is only the man in possession of capital who has been able to reap any benefit, the benefit that should have been shared by the whole of the community. Consequently we say that the workers are entitled to share in the improvement that is taking place from time to time, and one way in which they can share in those benefits is by shortening their hours and giving them more time for leisure than they now enjoy. The various investigators on the question of industrial fatigue are at one on this point, and it is that industrial accidents occur most frequently after eight hours have been worked in any one day. There is quite a mass of evidence on that particular point, especially where men are employed day in and day out, year in and year out, attending to machinery, especially that class of machinery that is worked at high pressure. It is only natural to assume that after they have worked eight hours in one day they are not quite so keen about their work as they were at the commencement of the day, and it is possible for them to become so used to their occupation that they have a sort of contempt for it. The result is that they are more liable during the closing hours of the day to meet with accidents than would be the case if the hours were fewer.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: That is a very good argument against the five days work in the week.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: That may be so, but I have to agree, in some cases, that it is advisable in the interests of all parties that they should work only five days. On principle I would oppose that, but it has been pointed out that in certain instances, it would not be to the benefit of the worker or the employer to start work on Saturday morning. In such cases at the present time, it is far better to agree for the time being to what is proposed rather than inflict a hardship on all parties concerned. I do not propose to say anything further on the Bill; I can only reiterate what I have said on previous occasions, namely, that the organised workers of this State are convinced that it is the only method by which it will be possible for them to enjoy a greater amount of leisure and freedom than they enjoy to-day. If they have to rely on the Arbitration Court for an improvement of this kind, a considerable time will elapse before we abolish the distinctions between certain trades and callings, distinctions that should not exist. By passing the Bill we shall ensure that the maximum working week shall be 44 hours, and that will give to the court discretion, where they think it necessary, to award a lesser number of hours than 44 in certain industries to which, I claim, even to-day, certain employees are entitled.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. J. W. Hickey—Central—in reply) [5.13]: Dr. Saw quoted from the remarks of Dr. Vernon. If fairly gone into those reports will be found to be exhaustive, and even allowing that Dr. Saw was correct, I am not sure that he quoted Dr. Vernon as referring to countries where they work fewer hours than 44 in the week. Allowing that Dr. Saw was correct, we must remember that industrial fatigue applies in this State in many instances, because more than eight hours a day are worked. Mr. Nicholson attacked the Bill particularly on the score that it usurped the functions of the Arbitration Court. Mr. Kitson has just answered that, quoting eminent authorities, all of whom are opposed to the court interfering with the duration of hours. Mr. Justice Higgins waited for many years for Parliament to fix the hours of labour. When at last he was convinced that Parliament would not do so, he endeavoured to do it with the idea of

bringing the 44-hour week within the realm of practicability. He declared that the workers were paying too high a price for their Saturday half-holiday. Mr. Glasbeen, Mr. Stewart, Mr. Potter and Mr. Cornell all made reference to the agricultural and pastoral industries and expressed surprise that those industries were to be exempt from the operations of the Bill. The agricultural industry may be said to be still in its initial stages. Nevertheless personally I think the Bill could operate in respect of that industry; indeed to-day wherever that industry has reached an advanced stage the 44-hour week obtains. Mr. Seddon has declared that when in Committee he will move an amendment to apply the Bill to the agricultural industry generally. Therefore members will have opportunity to vote upon that proposal. Mr. Cornell expressed the opinion that the Bill was in the nature of political intrusion. He reminded us that at the elections the Government promised to introduce the 44-hour week wherever possible. Last session such a provision was included in the Arbitration Bill, but was defeated in this Chamber. Some of those who helped defeat it invited the Government to put the provision into a separate Bill and bring it down this session. So it was to meet the wishes of hon. members that the Government introduced the 44-hour week proposal in this separate Bill for an eight-hour day. The Government have kept their election pledges by introducing the 44-hour week in practically all Government activities, and it is hoped that at the end of the year 10,000 Government employees will be enjoying the reform. Mr. Cornell declared that he would not vote for a measure having for its object the granting of a privilege to certain sections of the community while others were denied that privilege. If Mr. Cornell wishes to see the 44-hour week observed all round, he has only to support the Bill. Mr. Ewing, Mr. Cornell and Mr. Holmes all took exception to the Bill in its application to the mining industry. The 44-hour week already operates in Collie under a system of piecework, notwithstanding which the output of the Collie mines has not in any way suffered. Reference has been made to the letter received by a number of the members from the Chamber of Mines. Whenever any important measure is before Parliament, we are inundated with correspondence for or against the Bill. But when we get letters from the Chamber of Mines we require to

be a bit sceptical and to investigate them very carefully, for we have had previous experience of such letters. If the management and methods obtaining at Kalgoorlie continue, it may be that the forecast advanced in that circular letter from the Chamber of Mines will be borne out. It will be remembered that Mr. Kingsley Thomas, the Royal Commissioner who investigated the mining industry, made certain recommendations, some of which, if put into effect and accepted by the Chamber of Mines, would remove all occasion for alarm as to the future of the mining industry at Kalgoorlie. As I say, we cannot always accept without question a statement by the Chamber of Mines. I remember that, when a deputation waited on the Minister for Mines asking for a reduction in the price of water, it was emphatically stated that if the Government acceded to the request the most rigid economy would be exercised by the mines and expenses would be cut down to the minimum. Yet very shortly after the reduction was made in the price of water two of those companies increased their directors' fees. If that represents the bona fides of Kalgoorlie mining companies, it behoves us to consider very carefully any proposition put before us by the Chamber of Mines. Quite recently the Golden Horseshoe management asked the Government for assistance to the extent of £25,000, explaining that such assistance would remove serious difficulties and avert the closing down of the mine. The assistance was granted. Yet within five months that same company are again applying to the Government and declaring that short of further Government assistance the mine must close down.

Hon. J. Ewing: They have had a good development there.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, and this application has been received since that development. In common fairness to the Government, members should be acquainted with these facts. We should analyse very carefully any communication from the Chamber of Mines.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It is essential that you reduce the cost of production, not increase it.

The HONORARY MINISTER: As I pointed out, the Government granted assistance to the extent of some £60,000 by reducing the price of water, and have since ad-

vanced £25,000 to one company alone. That has gone, and now that company are again knocking at the door for more. As Mr. Dodd pointed out, the men working hardest and under the worst conditions have to work the longest hours. Mr. Dodd also showed that the passing of the Bill would not mean any great hardship, for the reason that most of the industries are already enjoying the 44-hour week. Mr. Ewing referred to the assistance that, he thought, should be given to mining. But it was pointed out by Mr. Brown that during the war, when conditions on the goldfields were very hard and the cost of living was extremely inflated, the workers, faithful to their responsibilities, refrained from agitating for either increased wages or improved conditions. Now, when things are again prosperous in the industry, those workers should be allowed to share in the time gained by the introduction of labour-saving machinery. When, in moving the second reading, I was quoting certain statistics, Mr. Holmes challenged me to stick to facts and not attempt to veil the position. I have since read through the official report of my speech, and I can see in it no attempt to misquote anything or to hide the real nature of the position. I showed exactly where the 44-hour week obtained and where the hours worked were more than 44. I made no reference to the fact that the 44 hours was not in general operation in France. I merely quoted from records that did not cover that particular point. The hon. member would have the House believe that I had been endeavouring to show that a position had been created in France that I knew to be quite incorrect. The hon. member also stated that we were asked to lead the way in reducing hours. That is not so. I quoted authentic statistics to prove that the 44 hours was in general operation in Queensland, and was the law of the land there. I quoted a long list of industries in Victoria where less than 48 hours operated. I thought it necessary to correct any wrong impression that might have been created by Mr. Holmes's remarks. He also stated that employers should have an opportunity of paying one man 10s. a day and another £1 a day, according to the individual's earning capacity. That opportunity is given in this country. It is also necessary to protect the men against unscrupulous employers, who may want to pay 5s. a day for a pound's worth of work. Many men

in the building trade receive far more than the minimum wage, but the employer is asked only to pay the wage laid down by the Arbitration Court. I think I have shown it is not always good to accept circulars without careful examination. Mr. Holmes referred to happenings in other parts of the world. Mr. Glasheen, in reply to Mr. Holmes, said that if those were the conditions referred to by Mr. Holmes, India, China and Japan would be called first class nations. Mr. Holmes stated that wherever the shorter hours operated, the cost of living must be higher. According to the index figures prepared by the Federal Statistician, the cost of living in Queensland under the 44 hours is less than in any other State. The bulletins prove that contention. The hon. member also said the only way the country could prosper was by more work being done and people being satisfied, possibly, to take less pay for it. Not many members would advocate a reduction in wages, and their only objection to a reduction of hours is that the matter is not being left to the Arbitration Court. In my view it is necessary to safeguard the welfare of the workers and obtain social justice for them. I hope members will seriously consider before voting against the Bill. Apart from the small relief it will give to the workers, it aims at industrial peace and contentment. Those who have had a long experience of industrial life must know that where the conditions are satisfactory the workers are more contented and the industries are more prosperous. I am sure that if any member would try the experiment in his own business, he would receive a satisfactory demonstration of the truth of this statement. It is generally agreed that eight hours is enough for any man to work in a day. That being so, it is not too much to expect that the workers should have their Saturday afternoons off for recreation and social intercourse. Seeing that members have agreed to the eight hours a day, I do not know how they can reconcile their opposition to this Bill. The eight hours has been worked in many industries for years. I appeal to members to support the Bill, feeling sure that 12 months' experience of it will prove to their entire satisfaction that they will have no cause to regret having passed it.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	18

Majority against .. 7

AYES.

Hon. J. R. Brown	Hon. J. W. Hickey
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. W. Klrwan
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. H. Harris	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. G. Potter
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. W. T. Glasheen	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. F. E. S. Willmott
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived; the Bill defeated.

MOTION—METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE DEPARTMENT.

Consideration of Select Committee's Report.

Debate resumed from 9th September on the following motion by Hon. H. Seddon:—

That the report of the select committee on the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Department be adopted.

HON. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [5.42]: After the debate on the Bill dealing with this particular subject, I need not say anything more concerning the report of the select committee, otherwise I shall have to repeat what I have already said. I do hope, however, that the motion will be agreed to, so that the Government may officially consider the report. We have been informed by the Minister that the Government cannot do so until the House has adopted the report.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East—in reply) [5.43]: I wish to draw attention to one or two matters which have been brought to light as a result of the investigations of the select committee. The Press has drawn attention to the fact that a country member

has taken action in this matter, particularly in respect of the Bill that increased the charge for water in the metropolitan area. I brought forward this motion in order to show members the losses that were occurring, losses that the committee thought were preventable. Certain matters were brought under the notice of the department as a result of our inquiry. It has been stated that nothing has been done because the report has not been adopted. That may be so, and it may have been a little premature to put into operation the recommendations of the committee. Those matters that were stressed, however, were matters that one would have thought any efficient administration would have set to work to remedy, without waiting for the adoption by this House of the report. One would have thought, too, that the authorities concerned would have seen to it that these matters were attended to. Reference has been made to the losses incurred in the Eastern States. It has been pointed out that the losses incurred in our metropolitan area are no greater than those incurred in the cities of the Eastern States. I consider that is no argument. There is no reason why we should not at any rate attempt to put our scheme on an efficient basis without waiting for a lead from the Eastern States, particularly when we are inaugurating and extending a scheme. We should extend it on the lines which have been found to make for efficiency of control and proper distribution. As regards the recommendation for garden fees, the reply was made that, owing to the fact that we have a sandy soil and that there is a limited quantity of water available, and also as, in view of the danger of excessive use, there would have to be an excessive charge in the form of a garden fee, it was thought undesirable to introduce the principle. I am not sure that that is a sound argument. At the present time numerous residents in the metropolitan area are enjoying splendid gardens simply because they have not got meter services. The garden system of rating adopted in the Eastern States would, at any rate, ensure that those people would pay something like an adequate amount for the water they are using. There is also this argument, that if a man realised he would have to pay something commensurate with the quantity of water he was using, he would consider whether he was going to have a garden or not, whereas a great many people have them

at the present time, well realising that they get more than their fair return from the Water Supply Department. Therefore the argument in regard to excessive use of water owing to the garden rating system is not in point. Further, our sandy soil requires frequent watering, rather than excessive quantities. In these circumstances I consider that the department's defence in regard to the introduction of the garden rating system will not hold water. References have been made to the committee's recommendation that Mundaring should be used as a source of supply. There is this fact, which I would emphasise, that our report was ready at the end of 1924, because it was stated that if the department pressed on with the Churchman's Brook scheme they would be able to give the metropolitan area an early supply from it. They suggested that they would be able to get a supply more quickly from Churchman's Brook than from Mundaring. On that aspect it has to be borne in mind that had the committee's report been adopted and put into operation then, the metropolitan area would be receiving water from Mundaring during this, the peak period. The supply from Mundaring would have been at least 5,000,000 gallons per day, whereas on the department's own figures the present supply from Churchman's Brook and Canning is only three and a half million gallons per day. From that aspect, therefore, the committee's recommendation was fully justified. If the pipes that have been laid to Churchman's Brook had been laid to Mundaring, they would have ensured a greater amount of water coming into the city at the present time. Reference has been made to the utilisation of the hills water supply works to find employment for the unemployed. There is not the slightest doubt that they served a good purpose in that respect. What we are taking exception to is that the work of the unemployed has not been placed on an efficient basis by putting them on a system of piece work. That would have ensured that the ratepayers, who are paying for the works, would get something like an adequate return in work performed. Moreover, the piece work system would be an incentive to the men to earn the maximum rate of wages provided under that system. It has been pointed out that one cannot dismiss the unemployed, but at any rate one can arrange for efficiency in the work to be done

by them. Various speakers have stressed the aspect that by relieving the metropolitan area of the rate proposed we should be imposing a charge on the taxpayers generally. That is an entirely false piece of reasoning. By removing the losses which are occurring, we should be able to more than make up the extra capital expenditure involved in these works. At the same time, if the select committee's recommendations were given effect to, the capital charges would not be increased to the same extent as is the case to-day. With regard to the report itself, it has to be recognised that the committee's recommendation for the establishment of a separate board to control the metropolitan water supply is meeting with favour in many directions. I hope this House, at any rate, will in no uncertain manner express its approval of that recommendation. The question of metropolitan water supply is one for the metropolitan area, and if the whole of the responsibility for it is handed over to a board, the board will not only be called upon to take over the liability, but the engineers and officials responsible for the carrying on of the metropolitan water supply will be answerable to a board who themselves will be directly answerable to the ratepayers concerned. The Government have expressed themselves as quite willing to hand over the metropolitan water supply to a board.

Hon. H. Stewart: But there is no corresponding move on the part of the civic authorities.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The recommendation is there for them to take up if they so desire. With regard to the question of meter rent, Mr. Moore misquoted some remarks of mine. I stated plainly that the type of meter at present being used is entirely unsuitable.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Why?

Hon. A. Lovekin: It goes to pieces.

Hon. H. SEDDON: There is another objection. The type of water which is being supplied to the metropolitan area contains impurities that get into the meter and stop it. The meter has a very fine clearance, and the presence of a very small quantity of dirt is sufficient to stop the meter. That is what renders the present type unsuitable. There are other meters—the inferential type—which are not open to this objection, and one would think that the department could do better by changing the type of meter.

With regard to metering generally, the committee recommended the system of grouped metering. That system provides for a master meter controlling a number of supplies and thus enabling the department to track down in the various areas exactly what the consumption is. In that way the department would be able to control excessive use or wasting of water. Reference has been made to the Goldfields Water Supply and the desirability of obtaining water from that source. I desire to refer to the finances of that scheme for the last two years. In 1924 there was drawn from the Goldfields Water Supply or the Mundaring reservoir 1,420,000,000 gallons, and the quantity of water sold was 961,511,000 gallons, the loss being in the region of 32 per cent. The income was 3s. 5.8d. per 1,000 gallons sold, and the expenditure 4s. 5d. per 1,000 gallons sold, the loss thus being 11.2d. per 1,000 gallons sold. Although the charges made to consumers were high, yet metropolitan residents received from the Mundaring reservoir 299,000,000 gallons for which they paid at the rate of 2d. per 1,000 gallons. There is a great disparity between this 2d. and the lowest amount charged along the pipe track, 2s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons. The whole cost of pumping, according to my analysis, is 9d. per 1,000 gallons. I am quoting these figures because I want to drive it home that first of all we should obtain a better price for the water which is being sold in the metropolitan area, and secondly that we should extend the consumption of water from the Mundaring reservoir. If the water drawn in 1924, 1,420,000,000 gallons, had all been sold, it would have resulted in considerably increased revenue to the Goldfields Water Supply, and that undertaking would have been in a far better position than it is at present. That leads me to the point that the more water we can draw from Mundaring Weir and sell, the less charge there will be on the general taxpayer. This is an actual charge, not a problematical one. It is an actual increase of income to the State, and it would have relieved the general taxpayer last year of a deficit of £45,000 and this year of a deficit of £49,000. Those deficits would have been entirely wiped out had we sold an additional quantity of water. If we analyse the operating expenses of the Goldfields Water Supply, we find that they fall under different headings. The operation expenses for last year amounted to £38,445, maintenance £49,942, distribution

and local management £20,166, management £2,562, and other expenditure £1,840. On the thousand gallon basis, the basis on which water is sold, while the operating expenses came to 2s. 4.6d. the cost of pumping, the one figure that is affected by the quantity of water passing through the main, was only 9.7d. In other words, if we can increase the demand for water along the pipe track, we increase our operating expenses by only one-third while increasing our revenue by 200 per cent. If we double the quantity of water sold along the track, the cost of pumping will increase by only one-third, and yet the revenue will be doubled. That brings me to a difficulty. Nos. 1 and 2 pumping stations are at present working at their full capacity. It is impossible for them to handle more water than they are now handling. But there is no reason why we should not consider the desirability of increasing the size of the pipe. After all, sooner or later we shall have to increase the size of the pipe; and if we increase the size of the pipe our operating charges will not increase though our maintenance charges will increase to a considerable extent. Moreover, we shall then be able to deliver a much greater quantity of water, and go further towards placing the scheme on a profitable basis than is possible under existing conditions. Therefore I suggest that as the result of the select committee's inquiry the engineers should take into consideration the desirability of increasing the size of the mains and putting out the present Nos. 1 and 2 pumping stations by installing automatic electric pumping machinery, which would abolish a considerable proportion of the expense of operating the pumping machinery. Thus the engineers would be able to place the scheme on a more efficient basis, and to get a larger revenue than it is possible for them to obtain under existing conditions unless they make use of a source of demand which at present they are not inclined to consider. There is no reason why even on the figures given to the Committee by the experts we should not get a supply for the metropolitan area of twice as much water as we are getting at present. If that water were supplied at so much per thousand gallons instead of on the basis of a fixed charge, we should get from that water increased revenue and a fair return that would help the scheme to become payable. At the same time it would relieve the metropolitan area from the

water shortage during the height of the summer.

Hon. A. Lovekin: O'Brien said we could draw 1.2 million gallons from Mundaring during that period.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Yes, that would mean that in addition to the 299 million gallons we have been drawing from Mundaring, we could get an extra supply at the rate of 1.2 million gallons per day per annum from that source during the time the people of the metropolitan area urgently needed it. That can be done only by putting down a pipe line from Mundaring to Perth. Figures have been quoted regarding the cost of the present scheme, as against the proposal to put down a pipe from Mundaring to the metropolis. The Minister, during his speech on the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act Amendment Bill, dealt with various figures. He pointed out that the cost of the Churchman's Brook work so far had been £416,000. The Chief Engineer in submitting an estimate for the construction of a pipe line from Mundaring to Perth, pointed out that the cost would not exceed £400,000. The Churchman's Brook scheme is not yet half completed and that fact should be borne in mind. We are receiving from the Churchman's Brook-Wongong-Canning scheme $3\frac{1}{2}$ million gallons of water a day at a cost of £416,000 so far, whereas we could get from Mundaring over five million gallons a day during the period I have referred to at a cost of under £400,000. That is a state of affairs that the people of the metropolitan area should take into consideration. I have pointed out that the whole country would benefit if we drew water from the Mundaring scheme. It can be made to pay adequately only by increasing the quantity of water supplied from it and most quickly by supplying it to the people of the metropolitan area. That could be done in the way indicated to the Committee in the expert reports furnished to us. Hon. members may remember that I asked certain questions regarding the strength and stability of the Mundaring wall. The answers to those questions have been placed on the Table. I asked the Chief Secretary if he would obtain from the newly appointed Engineer-in-Chief answers to the questions I included in my query. The first of these was:—

What was the factor of safety provided by the designer of the wall of the Mundaring reservoir?

The answer to that was—

The figures indicate that the designer of the Mundaring Weir considered he had provided for a "factor of safety" of not less than two against overturning.

The next question was—

In view of the infiltration of water disclosed by certain bore-holes in the wall by the engineers, has this factor of safety been diminished?

The answer to that question was—

In calculating the stresses in a dam, the assumption usually made is that the stress in a horizontal plane varies uniformly from one face to another. The effect of infiltration of water into the wall would be to increase these stresses, and the factor of safety is thus reduced.

The third question was—

What is the present factor of safety in the Mundaring wall?

Stresses occurring in a dam are not a matter of mathematical certainty, and are calculable only on the basis of certain assumptions. A marked difference is therefore found in a theoretical profile produced by a mathematician and that designed by an engineer. No general figure to represent a factor of safety against any of the three or four possible causes from which a dam may fail can therefore be stated.

I will ask hon. members if they can tell me what the effect has been, due to the infiltration of water in the wall of the Mundaring reservoir as the result of the answers given to my plain question.

Hon. H. Stewart: Did you expect anything else?

Hon. H. SEDDON: I hoped and expected that members would receive plain, straightforward answers to my straightforward questions.

Hon. H. Stewart: After you had heard the evidence before the select committee!

Hon. H. SEDDON: Yes.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: You are indeed an optimist.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Hon. members are entitled to plain and straightforward answers to those questions.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: They are very difficult questions.

Hon. H. SEDDON: That is so, but we have in the department professional men, having the technical knowledge and training necessary to handle these questions. They are able to calculate stresses. They should know the constant stress on the Mundaring wall. That can be determined. The quantity of water in the reservoir is known and the pressure on the wall is known.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: But the strength of the wall is not.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Is it not the duty of the engineers to know the strength of the wall. If that wall were to carry away tomorrow morning, who would be held responsible? The engineers would be held responsible. The engineers determined that there was a line of weakness in the wall. We know there has been infiltration and we should know what effect that weakness has upon the wall.

Hon. T. Moore: You will put the wind up the residents of Midland Junction.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You have O'Brien's second answer on that point, too.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The fact remains that hon. members are no better off now than they were before my questions were put to the Engineer-in-Chief who answered the questions. We do not know whether the wall can carry any extra load and we do not know whether it has the strength to do what it was constructed to cope with.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Or if there is any weakness there either.

Hon. A. Burvill: They were able to do it for the Harvey irrigation works because they made a recommendation there.

Hon. H. SEDDON: We ascertained that the line of weakness occurred because of the way the construction was carried out. It was caused because of a stoppage of work during the construction.

Hon. J. Ewing: You will frighten people.

Hon. H. SEDDON: That weakness has been there since 1902 when the weir filled and the engineers have known all along that it was there. They should know all about the stress and strength of the wall.

Hon. J. Ewing: The wall is safe at any rate.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. H. SEDDON: I think the engineers should have ascertained the extent of the crack and then they could have answered the questions put to them in a straightforward fashion.

Hon. H. Stewart: They should give an answer as far as possible.

Hon. H. SEDDON: To put three drillings down through the wall, one of which was found to have been deflected from the vertical, and to base answers on results of such an investigation, is simply begging the question and not placing the true facts before us.

Hon. H. Stewart: Perhaps the Engineer-in-Chief will deal with this matter.

Hon. H. SEDDON: But I asked that the engineer should reply to the questions and I take it these are his answers.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Why grumble about the answers you got? You did far better than I did.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The Water Supply Department seem to be determined to conceal instead of providing the information sought. They apparently are endeavouring to hide in the guise of technical difficulties, facts that could be plainly stated. In conclusion, I trust that the House will see their way clear to adopt the report and recommendations of the select committee, because I think they will be in the interests not only of the residents of the metropolitan area, but to the State as a whole, while the adoption of the recommendations will result in considerable economies being effected.

Question put and passed.

Sitting suspended from 6.10 to 7.30 p.m.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Miners' Phthisis Act Amendment.

2, Fire Brigades Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [7.33] in moving the second reading said: This Bill contains provisions to enable local authorities to carry out various duties which have been placed upon them from time to time, but for which experience has shown the authorities the need for further machinery clauses or fuller authority. The various conferences of road board delegates, which have met from time to time since the original Act of 1919 was compiled, have requested a majority of the amendments provided in the Bill, although in some cases there has been difficulty through one conference passing a request and some other conference expressing different views. It is intended to alter the

term "road board" to a more fitting designation of these local authorities. The reason is that in many instances they administer or carry out laws relating to road boards, health boards and vermin boards, and they have powers under various Acts, such as the Noxious Weeds, Cemeteries, etc. The existing powers embrace very much wider activities than the term "road board" would imply. Hence it is intended to get over this misnomer by calling them "district councils" which more fittingly expresses the position than does any other term. The several names in vogue in other States, such as shire, county, borough, etc., have all been examined closely in order to find the most fitting designation. The conclusion arrived at is that the origin and significance of the terms are not applicable to the circumstances, but by adopting the term "district council" we are giving an all-embracing title similar to that already applied to the council of a municipality. This will be the first step to a comprehensive local governing Bill in which the councils of municipalities and the district councils will be synonymous because their powers and duties are so very similar. The existing custom of designating the chairman of a road board as such is found to be somewhat difficult, and it is proposed to alter the title to "president." It is considered that that term is more fitting to the many duties that the enlarged powers of a growing country place upon the leading representative of a district. The qualifications for an elector may be one of the most important innovations, as it seeks to give one vote to each ratepayer irrespective of the area of land held by him. This is the first step to abolish plural voting as applied to local government. Substantial alterations are being made in the mode of valuations as a result of experience gained in the working of the existing Act. The custom of allowing boards the option of making their own valuations has been acted upon in a fair and equitable manner in the majority of cases, but it is regretted that not a few boards have sought to subvert the interests of the district to those of the individual and in some cases have adopted the principle of a flat, zone or other general method with a total disregard to the increasing value of the land or the position, productivity or other essentials as laid down by the statute. Section 214 of the Act embraces all those

principles in the term "the selling value." The effects of those valuations have been great and far-reaching. The department, when seeking information regarding the Main Roads Bill, found that while the total valuations made by the road boards throughout the State amounted to £23,732,605, the valuations of the Commissioner of Taxation represent £27,336,148, or a difference of £3,603,543. Some difference might have been expected owing to the adoption of the annual values for certain towns, but not a difference to anything like the extent that is indicated by the figures I have quoted. In the existing Act there is provision for the Minister to adopt a fresh valuation, but it was found that he would have to make it himself or through one of his officers. The Bill seeks to put this matter on a proper footing. Many cases have been brought before the department in which the values adopted by some of the road boards have been based on the original prices for which the land was sold by the Crown. In other cases boards sought to raise the valuations and adopt those of the Commissioner of Taxation and then, on the plea of allowing appeals, altered some of the Commissioner's values before adopting them and allowed so many appeals that the valuations were brought back almost to the original figures. The Bill includes provision to meet this by making it compulsory to adopt the valuation of the Commissioner of Taxation and any appeal against it must be taken in the local court. The original Act also provided power to differentiate in the method of calculations for towns and prescribed areas. This was made for the purpose of meeting the difficulty on the goldfields where, according to the department, there is practically no unimproved value. This power has been extended to so many towns where it was never intended to apply and also to prescribed areas in agricultural centres to such an extent as to modify considerably the intention of Parliament by making the unimproved value a general one. The Bill intends that the general system of valuation adopted throughout the State should be on the unimproved basis, but allowing, as I have already pointed out, a differentiation in valuation on the proclaimed goldfields. Any differentiation that may be found necessary by the boards can be effected by adopting different rates for the different towns, wards, or prescribed areas while keeping to the one sys-

tem of valuation, namely on the unimproved basis. The system of election at present in force is that so many members retire annually. This requires a lot of methods to decide who is to retire, owing to the difficulty of the ward system creating a different majority of ratepayers and basis of electing a member or members representing such wards. The result is that often members are retired unnecessarily. The Bill seeks to remedy this by adopting the Parliamentary system of each election being for three years, and all the members retiring together; a sort of general election.

Hon. A. Burvill: That is the Assembly and not the Council style.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is so. It is proposed to add to the already many and varied powers of these bodies by extending their authority in certain directions and to make entirely fresh powers. For instance, the district councils will have the power to acquire recreation and agricultural grounds, to erect buildings thereon, conduct agricultural and other shows, to acquire, establish and maintain hospitals—at present they have power only to subsidise—to acquire and conduct cinematograph entertainments, to provide and maintain sale yards for the sale of stock, etc., curtailed power to borrow money to build workers' homes with the Minister's approval, power to prevent buildings and structures being removed from land prior to the payment of rates, to increase borrowing power from seven times to ten times the average income of the past two years, the same as in the Municipal Corporations Act; power to define special areas for residences, factories, etc.; increased power over subdivision of estates; to unite with adjoining districts in carrying out drains; restricting the use of boardings, the power being similar to that given to municipalities; and to impose a lighting rate similar to that levied by municipalities, the rate to be confined to the area lighted. With regard to the scope of rating, the existing minimum is to remain, whilst the maximum unimproved is to be increased from 3d. to 4d. in rural areas and 9d. in metropolitan areas. The annual valuations are to remain the same. With reference to the poll to be taken, whenever a loan is to be raised, the Bill provides that instead of a majority of all the resident owners voting, a majority of the resident owners shall vote. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. H. STEWART (South-East) [7.50]: It is altogether too late in the session to submit a Bill of this character, a Bill containing so many contentious proposals, having for its object the amendment of an Act dealing with local government bodies that was passed only as recently as 1919. The Bill proposes to introduce a number of vital changes. We have, for example, the proposal to alter the designation of these boards. I am not aware that this change has been asked for.

Hon. A. Burvill: But it is a good idea.

HON. H. STEWART: The hon. member may think so. I do not consider that it is wise to make such radical changes in our laws in the short space of six years. The Bill does not propose to amend an Act that has been found to be faulty; it introduces important changes of policy. I do not think that the road boards, or even Parliament, require such drastic alterations as are here suggested. Why, for instance, is it desired that the title of the head of the board should be altered from "chairman" to "president"?

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: There will be as many presidents here shortly as there are colonels in America.

HON. H. STEWART: I agree with the hon. member. Useless changes of that description serve no good purpose and are a great mistake. In Victoria for many years there have been what are called shire councils. The head of a shire council in that State is known as the president. In Western Australia we have a different system which has been in operation for many years and, so far as I know, has given the utmost satisfaction. Generally speaking, it is not desirable to make changes of this description unless there be a good reason for them. Then with regard to the proposal to abolish plural voting, we should have time to consider the matter in all its aspects. I am not prepared to say that it is not an alteration to which any very strong exception can be taken, but I do say it is a change that is worthy of thoughtful consideration. If the session is to end at the time the Government desire, I submit that the alterations proposed to be made by the Bill will not get the consideration to which they are entitled. There is also an alteration of tenure. If I had known of some of these intended changes, I might have got into communication with the road boards and found out whether there was actually any desire for them. So far I have not heard that there

has been any demand for them. What is wanted is that a controlling body shall continue to carry on, so that there may not be a sudden change of policy with the advent of a totally new board. The Minister told us that the proposed alteration in this respect would bring the local authorities into line with the elections conducted for the members of the Legislative Assembly. That is no argument for effecting the change in respect of the local boards. The Minister referred extensively to the subject of valuations. Here he showed the need that exists—and he and I agree on this—for a proper and equitable system of land valuation. I sympathise with the Minister on finding himself in the unfortunate position of having to introduce this change, remembering the views he holds in regard to land valuation. This proposed change in itself warrants the House debating the matter at length, or sending the Bill to a select committee. We know that it is too late to adopt either course. When the select committee on the Main Roads Bill were making inquiries, evidence was obtained in regard to valuations in existence. The Minister's remarks on this subject are liable to be misinterpreted, because he pointed out that the difference between valuations of the local authorities and those of the Commissioner of Taxation was a big item. New valuations are being made by the Federal Commissioner of Taxation. The Federal Royal Commission on taxation which sat a couple of years ago considered that the then system was wrong, and that there should be an independent valuing authority. Now the Federal Government are revaluing properties in this State, and the evidence obtained by the Main Roads Select Committee showed that the local authorities intend to adopt the Federal valuations as soon as they are made available. The Minister told us that there was a big difference between the valuations of the Taxation Department and those of the road boards. We know, however, that the road boards are doing the best they can, but they intend to come into line with the Taxation Department when that department are able to give them the results of their work. Again, the Bill proposes to give wide powers to the local authorities to enter into various undertakings. Anyone who has lived in Glasgow is aware of the extent to which the municipality of that city carries on various enterprises to the benefit of all classes of its inhabitants. I submit, however, that we in this

State are not in such an advanced state of development as to justify our giving local bodies the powers proposed in the Bill. Moreover, we have to remember that many of the road boards are only newly formed, and the territory over which they have jurisdiction comprises, in many cases, broad acres, not more than 10 per cent. of which perhaps may be considered to be cleared or cultivated, and on which cultivated acres the people are living in what may be regarded as merely shacks. Therefore, I do not consider it right that we should make such extensive and radical changes. It may be a temptation to the local authorities to vote funds for purposes not justified at the present time. In the circumstances I think it is too late in the session for us to deal with this Bill. The points I have enumerated are sufficient to indicate that the proposed amendments are so far-reaching that the Bill will have to be taken up next session.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [8.2]: I agree with the last speaker that it is regrettable that a Bill of such importance was not introduced earlier in the session. The Bill demands the careful scrutiny of every member of the House. I will not quarrel with the alteration of the title of the local authorities, and the adoption of "district council," for that does not affect the issue. But the Bill revolutionises existing legislation controlling the road boards. To begin with, it provides for one man one vote.

Hon. E. H. Gray: A good idea.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I was taught in my youth that those who pay the piper should call the tune.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The working man pays all the time.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: And that is your one tune.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: No matter how much property a man may have, how much he may pay in rates, he is to have but one vote, the same as another man who pays only the minimum. And the tenant is to have the same voting power. The Minister said the Bill was only a forerunner of a more comprehensive measure. Well, I respectfully suggest that we lay this aside for the time being and deal with the more comprehensive measure next session. The Bill provides that all road board elections shall take place at the one time. It means that the whole of the

existing road boards are to be wiped out in one act, and that under the one man one vote system the whole control of the local authorities shall pass into the hands of an organised party, and that not the party that owns the property, and so will have to pay the bulk of the rates, but a combination of small holders paying practically no rates at all.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It will be a big improvement.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Apart from wiping out all existing local authorities and establishing a new set on the one man one vote principle, the Bill dispenses with what is most admirable, namely, the board's continuity of office. It is also provided that, subject to the consent of the Minister, a road board may dispense with the appointment of auditors. Why that power is to be given is beyond my comprehension. In effect, the Bill puts the control of all road boards in the hands of the Minister. It goes behind the local court. We all know that if the valuation of one's property is excessive one can appeal to the local court; but under the Bill the Minister can make a valuation from which there is no appeal.

The Chief Secretary: Yes, there is an appeal.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: From my interpretation of the Bill, and from notes furnished to me, I find that the Minister can make valuations from which there is to be no appeal. If that is so, the Minister may fix the value of land throughout the State. And one Minister may fix the valuations very low, whilst his successor may fix them very high; and so the State taxation officials and the Federal taxation officials will follow up, anxious to increase the rate. Apart from that, the Bill empowers the local authority to build, acquire, establish, maintain, conduct and carry on hospitals—a pretty large order. The property owners will have to find the money, while the one man one vote board will establish and control hospitals. Also similar powers are given in respect of cinema entertainments. The property owners are to provide the money for the purpose, and probably we shall have an irresponsible body of men constituting the road board elected on the one vote principle, giving free cinema entertainments. Under the Bill these things are not impossible. The Minister, in moving the second reading, said it had been found that some road board members had allowed their

personal interests to dominate the interests of the board. There we have the Minister admitting that anything might happen. There is nothing in the Bill to prevent the same thing happening in future.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The one vote system will keep those people out.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Bill provides that if at the end of a given period it is found that the board's expenditure has exceeded its revenue, the board shall have power to strike a general rate, covering the whole of the lands within its area, to make up any deficiency arising as the result of running hospitals and giving free cinema entertainments. The Bill provides that the board can usurp the functions of the Workers' Homes Board, borrowing money and building homes, and in effect mortgaging the property owners within the district in order to raise the money. There is nothing in the Bill to prevent a road board from being at one and the same time a workers' homes board and the contractors for the erection of workers' homes.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is advanced legislation.

Hon. E. H. Gray: They may be able to build cheap homes that way.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Bill proposes that buildings erected in the district shall be used as the district council directs. If a man erects a building for one purpose he shall not use it for any other. For instance, if it were a large building that by partitioning could be converted into a number of comfortable rooms for an employer's men, the board may say, "No, you erect a separate building for the accommodation of those men." And the Bill provides that the board may put a limit on the time of construction of a building.

Hon. E. H. Gray: What is wrong with that?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Why should not an owner be allowed to erect his building in his own time? It would suit Mr. Gray to crowd on to a building so many men as to be in one another's way; yet what about the owner who has to foot the bill? The Bill provides that a man cannot remove a building except with the consent of a local authority. The Chief Secretary said that means that the owner cannot remove his building until he has paid his rates. But surely the land upon which the rate is owing must remain there! Is it suggested

that, under the Bill, we shall reach a stage where the tax imposed by the local authority will be more than the value of the land? If so, we can see where we shall be drifting to if we pass the measure. It provides that the district council may enter upon private property without permission, and take what they like for road making, etc., without compensation. These are pretty drastic clauses to include in a Bill brought down at this hour of the session, and brought down on the distinct understanding that the session would be concluded on Friday. The Chief Secretary smiles. He knows it may be good propaganda legislation, but that he has no hope of getting this Bill through by Friday next. Why waste time on it? I am not going to waste any more of my time on it and intend to vote against the second reading.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [8.15]: If I were asked my opinion as to what I considered the most important Bill of the session I would say this was.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The salaries Bill!

Hon. J. CORNELL: That is disposed of. This Bill aims at the very foundation of our civic life, which is the basis of our public life. It bristles with innovations and reversals of forms that exist to-day under the Road Districts Act. Some of these I agree with. I have, however, six or seven road boards actively functioning in my province. None of these has had an opportunity to consider the Bill. I do not feel disposed to give vent to my own personal opinions until such time as these local authorities have perused the Bill.

Hon. E. H. Harris: If this Bill passes some will cease to exist.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Bill is of such importance that it would be wrong to put it through in the limited time at our disposal. I do not feel inclined to vote against the Bill. I do not oppose it, but I am opposed to its going through at this late hour of the session. In order that we may dispose of it as generously and as kindly as possible I intend to resort to Standing Order 138, which will, in an expeditious manner, dispose of the Bill so that it may be brought up at the opening of next session. I move the previous question.

Hon. G. POTTER: I second the motion.

The PRESIDENT: The question is "That this question be not now put."

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	19
Noes	7

Majority for	..	12
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AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. G. Potter
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. W. T. Glasheen	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. A. Lovekin	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. R. Brown	Hon. W. H. Kitchin
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. J. W. Kirwan	(Teller.)

Motion thus passed; the Bill defeated.

BILL—LOAN, £4,000,000.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 11th December.

HON. H. STEWART (South-East) [8.25]: Two years ago we had a special session of Parliament to pass the Albany-Denmark and the Bridgetown-Jarnadup railway extension Bills, which it was said were required to be passed immediately in order that the group settlement scheme might be carried on. I have looked through the Loan Bill to see whether any money has been allocated for these railways. Last session I drew attention to the fact that although the Denmark railway had been authorised, no provision had been made for it on the then Loan Estimates. I believe that before the session closed the Leader of the House pointed out that his Government had inherited a loan expenditure from the previous Government, and I think foreshadowed that the money would be provided, and that the railway would be constructed in the near future. I am concerned about these railways in the southern portion of my province. Group settlement has been pushed on with 25 and 30 miles from the end of the railways. Hundreds of people have come from Great Britain and settled there, and yet no provision

has been made for the construction of these lines. There is set down on the Estimates a substantial amount for the Jarnadup-Pemberton extension, but the extension from the other end was the first authorised. We understood the work would be started from that end, and that priority would be given to it.

Hon. T. Moore: The Government you supported started at the other end.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Which Government was that.

Hon. T. Moore: The Mitchell Government.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The money has gone to the deficit. What is the use of talking?

Hon. H. STEWART: Other railways have since been authorised, and a large sum of money provided for them. That is opposed to the generally accepted principle that railways should be constructed in the order in which they have been authorised. It has been a matter of complaint for many years that the southern portion of my province has not received proper consideration from the developmental point of view. We have the position that groups are established at long distances from railway communication. The previous Government called a special session of Parliament in order to deal with this line, and yet it is not being constructed. Another matter I desire some information on is item 29, "Carnarvon meatworks, £45,000." As there is nothing going on in connection with the works referred to, I do not know what is the significance of this item in the schedule. Again, there is item 33, "Loans and grants to local authorities for erection of country hospitals or discharging existing liabilities thereon, and to trustees of agricultural halls and mechanics' institutes, also to institutions for erection of homes, etc., £10,000," with regard to which I should like the Chief Secretary to state, in replying, what payments have been made to trustees of agricultural halls and so forth during the last 12 months, or to which of such bodies it is proposed to make payments from this amount of £10,000. With these remarks I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. A. BURVILL (South-East) [8.33]: As regards railways and group settlements I must offer a few remarks. A special session was called by the Mitchell Government, as mentioned by Mr. Stewart, to pass cer-

tain railway Bills; and it is high time something was done in connection with those railways. I fully expected to see provision for them on these Loan Estimates. There is the railway specially mentioned by Mr. Stewart, which is to go out a distance of 35 miles. It was necessary to know that that railway would be built before the groups were established. Thirteen have actually been established, and there is room for others; but further settlement is held up pending drainage and the construction of the railway. Several of the groups would be very close to the proposed railway. At present groups 41 and 42 are 10 and 12 miles out, and the last group established is 35 miles out. Another group is 20 miles distant from railway communication. The average distance from a railway would be 15 miles. Residents of Albany and certain agricultural experts visited Denmark recently to have what is called a field day, and were taken out to see the groups, and to see the crops grown with top-dressing. Extraordinary expense is incurred at the groups for the want of a railway. Thirteen groups, or an average of 20 settlers per group, are top-dressing. Although the ground is excellent and the climate is all right, the ground needs phosphates exactly as the wheat area does. The Railway Department have a special rate of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per ton per mile for fertiliser. At present the groups I refer to are using a bag to the acre by way of top-dressing, though later on so much should not be required. It is costing anything from £1 to £3 or £4 per ton to take fertiliser out to those groups, whereas the cost to the ordinary agriculturist is $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per ton per mile. Everything else taken out to the groups in question is on the same scale of cost of transport. By way of contrast, settlers at Denmark, who have been there for a number of years, are making a comfortable living, though not a fortune, by reason of the fact that they are not more than five miles distant from a railway. Those settlers are going in for dairying.

Hon. T. Moore: And many of them have gone out of dairying.

Hon. A. BURVILL: Because they can make sidelines pay better. Mr. Moore's interjection proves the need for the railway. It stands to reason that with the railway these people can immediately make a living instead of being on sustenance. But no man can make a living out of sidelines if he is more than

five miles away from the railway. The Government are not doing a fair thing in keeping the settlers waiting for railway communication. The Chief Secretary may reply that the Government are waiting for cheap money. That might be a good reason for delay. It has to be borne in mind, however, that even when the railway is started, the settlers will not have the benefit of it for two years. In the meantime their debt in respect of the land, on which debt they have to pay interest and sinking fund, will go on accumulating. Further, before this railway is started, there will have to be a deviation made to Denmark, reducing the grade from 1 in 40 to 1 in 60. Nothing has yet been done towards that deviation. The settlers were established under the promise of railway facilities, and it is not fair to leave the work in abeyance.

HON. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [8.38]: I am rather surprised at the remarks of the two previous speakers, because they are giving evidence that they came down apparently with the last shower. With reference to the Jarnadup-Denmark railway, a special session was called to pass the Bill for that line. It was a very urgent session, and the Government of the day, not the present Government, were in a very tight corner. They had to get some authority to borrow money, because the London and Westminster Bank overdraft was right up to the hilt and had to be relieved. As an excuse for borrowing more money and to enable us to go on again, we authorised this railway. The same thing is going to happen once more. Here is a Loan Bill for four millions of money. We know that apart from whatever may be raised through the Commonwealth, Western Australia can only borrow about two millions a year on the London market. Here we have a Loan Bill for four millions, and a schedule showing what is to be done with the money when it has been borrowed. So long as we have this huge deficit and are not paying our way, all those works cannot be completed. A little will be spent here and a little will be spent there, and it will take years before the loan expenditure is completed and the works carried out. As I say, we can borrow roughly two millions per annum in London, and can also get some money from the Commonwealth. However, the Bill represents London borrowing, and the people in the metropolitan area want

most of the money that will be available next year. There is £130,000 for sewerage. We must have that. That work is going on. We want £400,000 for water supply. We must have that. Then there is £1,300,000 for group settlement and £150,000 for assistance to industries. That is all the money we can borrow for next year.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Do not forget that the University is getting nothing.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: There is nothing for anybody or anything except these works, which must go on. We know how the thing will be manipulated. There will not be £400,000 spent on metropolitan water works, but a little less. There will be no dam at Churchman's Brook next year. It will probably be the year after.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: There will be a number of "damns" said by the people in North Perth.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Yes, strong "damns." Sewerage at Subiaco will have to be kept going, and probably will want all the money set down for it. This Loan Bill is all so much camouflage. So long as we have our huge deficit, there cannot be any money spent. We cannot have our cake and eat it too. We have been out-running the constable to a vast extent of recent years, though we are doing a bit better under the Labour Government. However, the present Government are not making good in a way that I approve of: they are increasing the taxes instead of exercising a little economy. So long as we have a deficit and cannot pay our way, so long must we be piling up overdrafts in London, and so long must we periodically float loans in order to liquidate those overdrafts and get another start. It is no good deceiving ourselves. Mr. Burvill wants his railway. He has £30,000 for it this year.

Hon. A. Burvill: No, there is nothing for that railway.

Hon. H. Stewart: It is for Mr. Ewing's railway.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Somebody has to get £30,000. I think Mr. Burvill has a little bit for certain works at Albany. A few pounds will be spent just to keep the thing going. Many years will pass before these works will be completed. Let us not deceive ourselves, however much we may deceive others.

HON. J. EWING (South-West) [8.45]: I represent a province that is interested in one end of the Jarnadup-Pemberton railway. There are a large number of successful settlers in that part of the district. The Mitchell Government and the present Government have constructed some magnificent roads at considerable cost and that probably has delayed the building of the railway line for the time being. As Mr. Lovekin stated, the Bill provides for loan expenditure, but if I understand the position aright, three and three-quarter million pounds was spent during the year before last and four million pounds will be spent this year. Therefore on that basis the loan authorisation will soon be exhausted. The Bill merely authorises the Government to raise additional funds and we should agree to the Bill readily, knowing that, as the country progresses, it will be necessary to engage upon more public works which will involve considerable expenditure. I regret that no provision appears on the Loan Estimates for constructing in the South-West those railways that are so necessary for development. When the Mitchell Government were in power they desired to build the line through from Denmark to link up with the Pemberton line, and the then Premier, Sir James Mitchell, was much concerned when the Council decided that they would not agree to the Bill authorising the construction of the line from both ends. So seriously did the then Premier view the question that a special session of Parliament was held to give further consideration to the proposition. With the change of Government, the review of the old migration agreement, and the negotiations with the Imperial Government regarding financial assistance, the whole question was delayed, and to an extent group settlement has been delayed, too. Now that money at 1 per cent. is available, I am sure that the Minister will be able to tell us that something will be done in connection with this particular railway proposal. Mr. Burvill said there was plenty of land in that part of the State, but some of it requires to be drained. It is certain that that part of the State will have to be settled because it is one of the most beautiful heritages we have.

Hon. A. Burvill: Without a railway, it is no good.

Hon. J. EWING: Without a railway it will be very difficult to develop. Without those facilities, and also drainage, it will be

impossible for men to make a good living there. I hope the Government will be able to commence the construction of the railway soon and thus develop one of the most wonderful territories we have in Western Australia. I notice on the loan schedule there appear £80,000 for the Geraldton harbour works, £75,000 for Fremantle harbour works, and £14,000 for dredges. Two years ago the Mitchell Government gave consideration to the purchase of the dredge "Sir William Matthews." When the present Government came into power they finalised the negotiations, bought the dredge and sent her to the Eastern States to be reconditioned. When she was brought back she was despatched to the Bunbury harbour to carry out urgent dredging operations. Prior to that the old dredge "Premier" had been employed there but being a suction dredge, she was incapable of doing good work. It was only possible for that dredge to deal with the silt on the bottom of the harbour, and nothing below the silt. The new dredge has been operating for some considerable time and has done wonderful work. The harbour has been deepened for some considerable distance to the extent of from 18in. to 2ft. It will require another two or three months before the dredging can be completed to the jetty. When that is done the Bunbury harbour facilities will be in a better condition than they have been for many years past. All Governments alike have neglected Bunbury harbour.

Hon. T. Moore: There has been a tremendous amount of money spent there.

Hon. J. EWING: But it has not been spent under adequate direction. It is recognised in the South-West that a proper scheme for harbour development is necessary there. The Mitchell Government did not carry out any such scheme and the present Government have not done so either. I hope that now we have a new Engineer-in-Chief a design will be drawn up so that we will know the lines along which the Bunbury harbour is to be developed, just as has been done with the Geraldton harbour. In my opinion the Bunbury harbour is just as important, in fact more important than the Geraldton harbour.

Hon. T. Moore: Not at all.

Hon. J. EWING: In the South-West we have wonderful development going on and we have not a harbour that is capable of meeting the requirements of the district. I

hope the Minister will be able to tell us something about a scheme for improving the Bunbury harbour facilities. To my astonishment I was told that it was the intention of the Government to take the dredge "Sir William Matthews" from Bunbury and to send it to Geraldton.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You have had your turn.

Hon. J. EWING: A dredge like the "Premier" would be quite adequate for the work to be done at Geraldton.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: It takes a lot to stir up Bunbury.

Hon. J. EWING: As it is, the dredge "Sir William Matthews" is now doing work that has never been done before, which is urgently necessary.

Hon. E. Rose: Bunbury has more shipping in one month than Geraldton has in twelve months.

Hon. J. EWING: Bunbury is a very prosperous port. I hope the Minister will influence his colleague and see that the dredge is not removed from Bunbury until the work there is completed. If the dredge is taken away now, the work done will be of little value. On the other hand, if the dredge is allowed to complete the work, she can then proceed to Geraldton and the "Premier" dredge will be able to deal with the silt that will accumulate in the dredged portion and thus without difficulty keep the harbour free to the greater depth. I am told by somebody who is in a position to know that it is intended to shift the "Sir William Matthews" but I hope the Chief Secretary will make representations successfully that will result in the dredge being left at Bunbury until the work is completed.

HON. T. MOORE (Central) [8.53]: I have been drawn into the discussion by references that have been made to Bunbury and Geraldton. I hope the Minister will not take too much notice of what Mr. Ewing has said. Mr. Ewing suggested that the Bunbury harbour had been neglected in the past. As a matter of fact, many thousands of pounds have been spent on that harbour and I am sorry to add it has not all been well spent. Great expense was incurred in constructing the breakwater and then it was found that the harbour was silting up inside. Next a scheme was formulated to "chase the harbour out to sea."

The PRESIDENT: Order! I think both the hon. member and the previous speaker were out of order. This is not a dredging Bill but a Loan Bill.

Hon. T. MOORE: At any rate, I hope the Chief Secretary will not be influenced by the comparisons between the Bunbury harbour and that at Geraldton. It has to be remembered that the Bunbury harbour is mostly engaged in the timber trade, and that is a dying trade. On the other hand, the prosperity of Geraldton is built up on a solid agricultural basis and wheat ships are coming to Geraldton in increasing numbers each year to take away the harvest. It is necessary that the harbour shall be dredged in order to provide the required draught for the wheat boats and, therefore, it is essential that a first class dredge shall undertake those operations.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central—in reply) [8.55]: It may be necessary to remind hon. members that this is a Loan Bill. Authority is sought to raise £4,000,000 for specific purposes mentioned in the Bill. Not one of the items included in the schedule has been criticised and therefore I take it that members agree with the items. The only complaint I have heard is that not enough money is provided for.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I wanted to criticise one portion but you would not allow me to proceed.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: The Premier assures me that it would require not £4,000,000 but probably 6½ million pounds to meet the necessities of the present situation. He assures me that if he could raise 6½ million pounds he could spend it all on reproductive works. He did not think it wise to approach Parliament, however, with a proposal to raise the larger amount. Mr. Ewing said that money could be raised at 1 per cent.

Hon. J. Ewing: I hope so.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: That is not so. The 1 per cent. money affects the proposition to the extent of perhaps 1½ million pounds.

Hon. A. Lovekin: But that is for a specific purpose.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: We cannot get that applied in other directions unless the Imperial authorities agree to it. In ordinary circumstances the Premier might not have approached Parliament for the large sum covered by the Bill, but in view of the fact that 1½ million pounds is concerned with the migration scheme at the percentage

referred to, he thought it was a good proposition. He could easily spend £2,000,000 more. I regret that provision is not made for the extension of the Denmark railway.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What about the York-rakine-Baandee railway? We have been waiting for that line for 18 years.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: And there are others as well. The whole question was gone into thoroughly by the Government and the railways have been placed on the schedule in the order of merit according to the views of Ministers. The action of the Government in that regard may be criticised but, at any rate, they have done the best they could in the circumstances. The works mentioned there were not included in the schedule without a good deal of consideration and the decision was arrived at in accordance with the judgment of the Treasurer assisted by the departmental experts. Mr. Stewart asked the meaning of the item that provides £45,000 for the Carnarvon meat works. That is easily explained. The Mitchell Government guaranteed the overdraft at the Commonwealth Bank for the Carnarvon Meat Export Co. The overdraft has been called up and the position has to be met.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: The good State milch cow.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: As to the item, referring to loans to local authorities, £10,000, I cannot give the details. Last year considerable sums went in the direction of halls and hospitals, including one at Kataning, and this year sums are provided for buildings in many of the country districts. Mr. Ewing complained that very little had been done at Bunbury. The dredge "Sir William Matthews," purchased with the object of dredging at Bunbury, cost the Government £45,000. I remember well when she arrived there in June or July last, and she has been carrying on since. Nothing much can be done until the dredge is completed. I feel sure the dredge will not be removed while there is work to be done at Bunbury. However, I will bring the matter under the notice of the Government, and see what can be done.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Read a third time and passed.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Council.

[The Deputy President took the Chair.]

BILL—BRITISH IMPERIAL OIL COMPANY LIMITED (PRIVATE).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 10th December.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [9.5]: I asked for the adjournment of the debate because when any concession is being granted, more particularly at one of our harbours, it is possible that some difficulty might arise that requires consideration. I have not discovered anything to necessitate further delay. I hope the passing of this Bill will lead to the cheapening of a product that has come to play a very important part in the business of the State. I hope the company will be able to discharge the oil into large reservoirs and distribute it more cheaply than is possible under the present system. We should embrace every opportunity to have petrol supplied more cheaply. I was in Singapore a couple of years ago, and was astounded at the difference in the price charged for petrol there. I negotiated for a purchase which would have been of considerable benefit to me, and it was all but completed when, to my surprise, the contract was cancelled because the suppliers said it could be sent to any part of the world but Australia. What we want here is more competition. The vessel I travelled by brought a large quantity of oil in tins and cases. That is an expensive way of transporting it. Therefore I am glad of this proposal to bring the oil in bulk, and I trust it will be supplied to the country districts in bulk and more cheaply than it is supplied at present. It is easy to allow a monopoly to grow up, but I take it that all possible safeguards have been provided. A select committee in another place inquired into the matter, and no doubt if other companies enter the business they will be able to get similar concessions. The land to be used is an area reclaimed on the sea coast. It is waste land and I am pleased that it is now to be turned to profitable account.

HON. G. POTTER (West) [9.10]: It was only natural that Mr. Hamersley, representing a large country constituency, should require some little time to consider the purpose and ramifications of the Bill. It is obvious that he has subjected the measure and its purpose to a close scrutiny. There was in the minds of country members some little fear, firstly, that something in the nature of a monopoly was aimed at, and secondly, that the future facilities for the export of primary products might be endangered. Since the Bill was last before us, country members have carefully considered those aspects. There need be no fear of any monopoly. The intention of the measure destroys the possibility of any monopoly. On the south side of the river the Anglo-Persian Oil Company have similar concessions to those now sought by the British Imperial Company. The Minister in another place, said he would welcome applications for similar privileges from other companies. Members representing country constituencies doubtless will follow Mr. Hamersley in welcoming the other companies who undertake this work, so that operations involving petrol-driven engines in the country districts will be facilitated through the supply of cheap oil distributed in bulk.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Read a third time and passed.

BILL—WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. J. W. Hickey—Central) [9.20] in moving the second reading said: The object of the Bill is to enable the Workers' Homes Board to increase the amount that may be advanced for the erection of homes. Since the advent of the board, the cost of material and labour and everything associated with building operations has increased considerably. Con-

sequently the amount to be advanced provided for in the Act is now inadequate, as it is found impossible to erect homes suitable to the demands of to-day at the price originally fixed, namely £550. The Government thought that possibly costs would come down, but as their hopes were not fulfilled, it was decided to introduce this short measure to make it possible for the board to advance up to £650. The original amount did not include provision for the installation of sewerage. It is hoped that the increased amount will enable sewerage connections to be made. The Bill will also apply so far as sewerage is concerned to the houses already erected. It has been the desire to connect many of those homes with the sewerage system, but it has not been found possible to make provision in that direction. People have entered into certain obligations and the installation of the sewerage connections would mean additional expenditure which they find they are not able to undertake. If the Bill is passed, it will apply equally to those homes that have already been erected as well as to houses to be built, and it will be possible for the owners to make the necessary arrangements to enable them to connect their homes with the system, and the repayments will be spread over a period. The Bill is necessary to permit of the Government continuing their policy of erecting workers' homes. I move—

That the Bill be read a second time.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [9.25]: The amendments sought in the Bill are necessary. We know that the amount provided for originally is inadequate to-day. The Bill sets out that both leasehold and freehold blocks shall come within the scope of its operations. I would like the Minister to give the House some indication as to why the leasehold sections of the Act have not been availed of to a greater extent. There have been practically no leaseholds granted for the past eight or nine years. I happen to have a workers' home on the leasehold principle. When the Act was originally passed the member for Menzies in another place and I were the only two Parliamentarians who availed themselves of that provision. Despite the fact that other members of Parliament had argued that the leasehold system was a splendid thing, we were the only two who put that belief into prac-

tice. I think it is up to the Government, therefore, to inform the House why the leasehold part of the Act has not been availed of to a greater extent. I would also like to know whether it is the intention of the Government to perpetuate what was done by previous Governments and declare that they will not erect any homes on the leasehold principle. If that is to be the policy, the Government should recast the whole position. It has been said that there is no statutory provision whereby leasehold workers' homes may be converted into freehold, but there is one glaring contradiction to that belief. In the group of leasehold homes there was one reserved for the Jewish community, ostensibly for the erection of a synagogue. The Jewish community, with that business acumen characteristic of the race, succeeded in having an Order in Council passed whereby the freehold of that block was given them. The block was afterwards disposed of and to-day it is held as a freehold block, though the land was dedicated under Part 3 of the Workers' Homes Act. If that kind of thing can be done for the Jewish community, I cannot see any valid reason why similar consideration should not be given to those who honestly took up land under the leasehold system. Since 1914 there have lain idle 30 surveyed blocks between the group of workers' homes at West Subiaco and the West Subiaco railway station. The most distant of those blocks from the station is less than three minutes away. Those blocks are dedicated under the leasehold system. If the Government are going to upset the action of their predecessors and revert to the leasehold system, there is an opportunity for them! Thirty people could be domiciled within three minutes of the West Subiaco railway station.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Have there been no applications for them?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Since the war successive Governments have been opposed to the leasehold system, and so those blocks have lain idle. They present a fine opportunity for the present Labour Government to proceed with the leasehold scheme. It is a scandal that those 30 blocks should remain idle when working men are being forced much further out. In other parts of the metropolitan area are to be found idle lands dedicated to the same purpose. I hope to see that position rectified.

HON. J. DUFFELL (Metropolitan-Suburban) [9.33]: I will support the second reading. In many parts of the metropolitan area we have workers' homes, and a fairly large area of land has been set aside for the same purpose. I have previously raised the question now referred to by Mr. Cornell. Much dissatisfaction has been expressed by holders of workers' homes under the leasehold system; there is on their part a general desire that sooner or later they should have the fee simple in their homes. It has been promised by previous Governments that the leasehold properties should be converted to freehold. I will support the second reading.

HON. G. POTTER (West) [9.36]: I will support the Bill. With the all round advances in the building prices it is quite necessary. Together with the members who have preceded me, I ask the Minister to give some attention to the conversion of leasehold properties into freehold. When I was returned to the House I brought a message from a number of holders of workers' homes under the leasehold system, and I pledged myself to endeavour to prevail on the Government to convert the leaseholds into freehold. Those people who took up the leasehold very soon discovered that it was not nearly so attractive as the freehold. On a previous occasion we were told by the present Minister for Lands that the leasehold was better because the tenant was secured to a greater extent than the freeholder, and that the leaseholder had just as much right in the disposal of his improvements to the property as had the freeholder. That might be all right if nothing but leasehold were known in the community. But wherever we have leasehold and freehold running side by side, we find a distinct preference for the freehold. Mr. Cornell spoke of blocks lying idle for a long time. If, as he says, they are leasehold, they are likely to lie idle. We have glaring examples of the finest leasehold land in the West Province being offered on very easy terms without success. Nobody will touch it. I refer to the University endowment lands in the vicinity of Spearwood. People will not apply for those leasehold blocks, for people are by no means satisfied that leasehold is more attractive than freehold. I hope the Minister will try to induce the Government to convert the leasehold propositions into freehold. I will support the second reading.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [9.40]: I should have liked to see the amount raised to £800. This legislation stands as a monument to a previous Labour Administration. When the original Bill was passed, £550 allowed of the building of a splendid brick house, in every way suitable for a working man. To-day such a place could not be built for less than £800. Whilst I would not recommend a man on the basic wage to take over so costly a house, yet many working families with sons and daughters earning money, require and could well afford such a house. I should like the Honorary Minister to say something about that when replying. I will support the second reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. J. W. Hickey—Central—in reply) [9.42]: Mr. Cornell asked why leasehold was not more popular than freehold. In my opinion it is because successive Governments have not been sympathetically disposed towards the building of workers' homes on the leasehold plan. During wartime the Government were sceptical about building, and in consequence the operations of the board, at all events under Part III. of the Act, were practically suspended. It has been said that freehold is more attractive than leasehold. That may be so. On the other hand the price of suitable freehold land is generally too high for the purposes of a worker's home. Moreover, people are able to mortgage freehold propositions, and so defeat the object of the original Act. If this Bill were extended to provide for a loan up to £800, it might be suggested that the amount should be extended to £1,000. This might set up a dangerous position, and tend to defeat the objects of the Act. It is better for a working man with a family to put up with a little inconvenience and go in for a smaller house. A liability of £500 or £600 is as much as a working man can afford.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The burden is not so heavy for him.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: That is so. The obligation is quite sufficient for him. If a man is prepared to go up to £1,000 under this scheme he should be able to finance his own home.

Hon. J. Cornell: The repayments could well be extended over 35 years.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: There may be something in that suggestion. I

have a leasehold workers' home and would not change it for any other in the metropolitan area. It is always dangerous to interfere with a matter of this sort. It might open the way to unscrupulous agents who will become a prey upon other people. If we overload the scheme we may find ourselves catering for the type of people it was not particularly designed to help. I will make a note of the remarks of Mr. Cornell about West Subiaco, and will bring the matter under the notice of the Premier. If the money is forthcoming it is possible that land will be made available for workers' homes. The Act has operated successfully in the past, and I am sure will continue to do so.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Read a third time and passed.

BILL—TAXATION (MOTOR SPIRIT VENDORS).

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [9.50] in moving the second reading said: This Bill proposes to place a tax on the vendors and users of petrol and to devote the proceeds to the main roads trust account. When the question was last discussed in the House there was some doubt as to whether the tax in the form then presented would not be an infringement of the Commonwealth Constitution. High legal authority has since been consulted. Sir Edward Mitchell and Mr. Owen Dixon, K.C., have both given the opinion that the method employed by this Bill to raise funds is constitutionally sound. Provision for licensing vendors of petrol in return for 3d. per gallon was made in the Main Roads Bill, but it is now considered desirable to introduce this special measure, and to appropriate the proceeds of the tax to the Main Roads fund. On the basis of the quantity of petrol imported last year, the revenue, after allowing for all exemptions provided by the Bill, and after allowing a nominal

sum for collection by the Commissioner of Taxation, is £90,000. It has recently been announced that the Commonwealth Government are seriously considering the imposition of an increased import duty on petrol to go towards providing two million pounds per annum for developmental roads. If this were done it is not at all likely that any exemption would be allowed in the case of petrol imported for use in portions of Australia, which would not directly benefit by the construction of road works. The Bill as submitted is almost identical with that submitted by the South Australian Government to Parliament. The Minister there in charge has given an assurance, by wire, that no important alterations have been made. It is generally agreed by all who have been consulted that this means of raising funds for main roads is equitable. It has been said that in view of the increased licenses charged for motor vehicles 3d. per gallon on petrol in addition is too high. The increase in the fees charged, under the Traffic Act, is not so great as is contended. In the case of motor cars, the increases are not more than 20 per cent. on the old scale, and the extra fees now charged against the heavy motor lorries, particularly those with metal tyres, appear to be great only because it was relatively to motor cars very low under the old scale. In any event, if Parliament considers that any adjustment is necessary, it should not be in the direction of reducing the proposed tax of 3d. per gallon on petrol. The North-West is excluded from the operation of the Bill. Main roads are not likely to be declared there. Provision is also made for the discontinuance of the tax if the Commonwealth Government tax petrol. Clause 2 relates to motor spirit. The Government analyst agrees that all of the items specified can be used for propelling motor vehicles. The words "but does not include any distillate from petroleum the specific gravity of which exceeds .76" are there in order to make it clear that kerosene is not motor spirit, and therefore, not taxable. The interpretation of the word "vendor" is that only about four importers at present in Western Australia will be vendors. Thus, in the first place, as these vendors will pay for all they import and sell, provision is made that "Vendor" does not include any purchaser of any such motor spirit, but subsequently sells

the same. Subclause 2 is provided in case persons import into the State some substance, not at present defined as motor spirit, and also in case it is found that any substance, which might under the interpretation be defined as motor spirit, is not in fact used for propelling vehicles on roads. Clauses 3, 4, 5 and 6 are small machinery clauses providing for the registration of vendors; for the furnishing of returns to the Commissioner of Taxation; and for the payment of the money due and for penalty for failure. Clause 7, Subclause 1 makes provision whereby the consumer—namely the person who uses motor spirit, but who has purchased or obtained it outside the State for the purpose of propelling motor vehicles—shall pay. That is, say the Imperial Oil Company import petrol, sell it and pay the tax. Some of the petrol they would not sell, but use for propelling their vehicles. They would thus be vendors and consumers and would pay both ways. Similarly, any person or combination of persons might import for their own use, and provision is made that they shall periodically make declarations as to the quantity purchased or obtained, and pay just in the same way as the vendors do. Clause 7, Subclause 2 provides for payment by the consumer, who must, on the days set out, furnish declarations, showing the number of gallons of motor spirit purchased outside the State, and used for the purpose of propelling motor vehicles on streets or roads. Clause 8 enables any person who purchases motor spirit, which is used for any purpose other than propelling vehicles on roads or streets, to claim a refund of that amount, which, of course, he has paid to the vendor from whom he purchased. Clause 9, 10 and 11 are penalty clauses. Clause 12 gives certain power to the Commissioner to facilitate collection, and ensure that full payments are made. Clause 13 definitely provides that the whole of the proceeds shall be paid to the Main Roads Fund. Clause 14 relates to regulations. I move:—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

RESOLUTION—STATE FOREST,

Revocation.

Message from the Assembly received and read requesting concurrence in the following resolution:—"That the proposal for the par-

tial revocation of State Forest No. 4, Collingwood, laid upon the Table of the House on Thursday, the 10th December, be carried out."

House adjourned at 10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 15th December, 1925.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.3 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (3)—RAILWAY STATIONS

Kellerberrin.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Railways: 1. Has any definite decision been arrived at regarding the lighting of the Kellerberrin station yard? 2. In view of the growing importance of Kellerberrin, will the Minister cause inquiry to be made into the necessity for more adequate station buildings and offices, and the provision of an overhead bridge, as requested by the 20 citizens of the town?