

hope the Committee will allow it to stand as it is.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The select committee proposed that not only Clause 5, but Clauses 6 to 9 inclusive be deleted since they are consequential on Clause 5. Can all be dealt with together?

The CHAIRMAN: No. they must be dealt with separately.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.15 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Tuesday, 16th November, 1937.*

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

### ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Anniversary of the Birthday of the Reigning Sovereign Bill.

### QUESTION—MINING INDUSTRY, ACCIDENTS.

*Investigation by Expert.*

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Mines: In view of the ever-increasing number of fatal and serious accidents in the gold-

mining industry, will he favourably consider the advisability of appointing an expert in gold-mining to investigate the causes of these accidents, and to make a report as to the necessary alterations in legislation or administration to prevent, as far as possible, accidents of this nature?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: No. It is not considered that an expert could tell anything more about the causes of accidents experienced than is already known. The existing legislation is built up on many years of experience, and already provides for the elimination of any dangerous practice. The administration of the Mines Regulation Act is in the hands of the State Mining Engineer, Assistant State Mining Engineer, District and Workmen's Inspectors of Mines, all, excepting the workmen's inspectors, possessing technical and practical qualifications, while the workmen's inspectors, recently increased in number, are men with long practical experience. These officers constitute a particularly efficient staff. The fatal accidents this year are at present less than last year's total, and have practically all been of a nature beyond legislative or administrative control.

### QUESTION—EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES, MT. PLEASANT.

Mr. CROSS asked the Minister for Education: 1, Is he aware that a number of small children have to walk daily to and from Mt. Pleasant to the Applecross school? 2, Has consideration been given to the provision of a new school to suit the requirements of the Mt. Pleasant district? 3, If so, when will it be provided? 4, Whether so or not, will he give consideration to the provision of the daily transport for the children to and from Mt. Pleasant to the Applecross State school?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, The matter is receiving full consideration. 4, See answer to No. 3.

### LOAN ESTIMATES, 1937-38.

*Message.*

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read transmitting the Loan Estimates for the year 1937-38, and recommending appropriation.

*In Committee of Supply.*

The House having resolved into Committee of Supply to consider the Loan Estimates, Mr. Sleeman in the Chair,

*Vote—Departmental, £102,655 :*

**THE PREMIER AND TREASURER** (Hon. J. C. Willecock—Geraldton) [4.35]: As members are aware, the Loan Estimates are controlled by the amount made available to the State by the Loan Council. This year it is estimated that we will spend the sum of £2,241,427, which includes £218,000 for the new State vessel "Koolama." The total amount approved by the Loan Council for this financial year was £2,100,000, out of which we have to finance our estimated deficit of £128,855. Provision for the cost of the new ship was made in the Loan programme for 1936-37. As I have already made public statements in regard to the results of the last Loan Council meeting, I shall not detain the Committee by a repetition of them now. Members will recollect that the total amount made available for Governments this year shows a substantial reduction on that provided last year, and, indeed, as compared with the position during the past four years. While some may see in this reduction a tendency toward better finance, the smaller amounts do not assist a State Treasurer who is faced with the problem of providing for unemployment relief. Fortunately, we shall have available this year an additional amount from the Commonwealth from the proceeds of the petrol tax, but this additional sum, which is estimated to be about £120,000, will not make good the reduction in the provision of Loan Funds generally. In preparing the Loan Estimates, therefore, the greatest care has had to be exercised in an endeavour to see that the money will be spent wisely and will provide as much work as possible for the large number of men who are still dependent on the Government for relief work. As I stated last year, one of the increasing problems in regard to the provision of work is the rising cost. There may be many necessary works that should be carried out, but which have to be excluded from our programme because of the heavy cost of materials. Though there has been a substantial reduction in the number of those who are unemployed, we still have to find work for approximately 6,600 men. I

am sure it is the desire of every member of the Committee that as speedily as possible those men shall be provided with work under full-time conditions, in order that they may enjoy the standard of living that is the right of every Australian citizen. That does not mean to say that there will be a guarantee that everyone will be able to secure full-time work for every week in the year, but that work obtainable from the Government will be under full-time conditions. Unfortunately, the money made available to the Government has been insufficient to enable us to achieve this objective, but it is the intention of the Government that, as soon as practicable, the men employed by it will have an opportunity to work under conditions that are not relief conditions. Reviewing the Loan position last year, we find that the estimated Loan expenditure was £2,412,409, while the amount actually expended was £2,193,117. Members will recollect that at the Loan Council meeting held in November of last year, our programme was increased to enable us to meet a very much enlarged estimated deficit on account of the severe drought conditions then obtaining. Unfortunately, the Loan Council was not able to raise the whole of the money contemplated when the Loan programmes were reconsidered at that meeting, with the result that several important and urgent works had to be curtailed, and in some instances stopped. We had to do with less expenditure on relief works than was anticipated earlier, but I think it can be said that we were able to get through with satisfactory results and to provide for all that was legitimately required for the purpose of assisting those who were unfortunately placed in a position of having to secure relief work in their respective areas. This year, though the Loan Funds to be provided amount to less than was available last year, we are in the fortunate position that, at the meeting held in April, the Loan Council was able to obtain an assurance from the Commonwealth Bank that the money for the Loan programmes contemplated for this year would be provided. I think that in this instance effect will be given to that assurance. Therefore, though we shall have to finance our obligations on a smaller amount, we will be free of the anxiety as to whether the whole of the money will be provided. At the meeting in April, the Loan Council, after consultation with the Commonwealth Bank Board,

decided that the total sum to be raised for all Governments, including the Commonwealth, should not exceed £16,000,000 for the financial year 1937-38. From this, however, has to be provided the amount to be made available by the Commonwealth Government for farmers' debts relief, and as this sum has been fixed at £2,500,000, the balance available is £13,500,000. That represents the smallest Loan programme the State and Commonwealth Governments throughout Australia have provided for some years, and, in fact, there is a tendency for loan expenditure to decrease. I think that the assurance we received from the Commonwealth Bank Board in April will be carried out, although the raising of another loan is imminent and will be dealt with in the next few days. No finality has been reached in the negotiations that have been proceeding between the members of the Loan Council, but, in contradistinction to our experience of the previous three or four years, the second meeting of the Loan Council will not be the one at which the State will have to agree to a drastic reduction of the amount of Loan Funds to be made available, because we started off with a low amount which, as I have pointed out, represents £13,500,000 for the whole of the six States and the Commonwealth. As I have said, we received an assurance from the Commonwealth Bank Board some months back that the money would be made available, and as nothing has occurred to alter the position, I think the amount agreed upon will be raised in Australia and we will be able to proceed with our programme. Our share of the total is £2,000,000, in addition to which we will have available Loan repayments of £100,000. We shall also have the proceeds from the petrol tax, which is estimated to yield £720,000. The increase will enable us to deal with some expenditure on roads and bridges, which in years gone by has been dealt with out of Loan funds. In addition, there will be the forestry grant of £25,000 and the grant for metalliferous mining of £9,800. I do not propose to go into a detailed explanation of all the works contemplated in this year's programme, as members, if they so desire, will be able to obtain that information from the Ministers in charge of the various departments. The total loan liability of the State at the end of June last was £92,332,855, which represents a per capita indebtedness of £201 15s. The fact that this figure represents the

highest per capita debt of any State of the Commonwealth is frequently used as an argument to show that we have been extravagant, and that there is need for a rigid curtailment of our loan expenditure. But, as is well known, in the Eastern States semi-Government bodies carry very large expenditure for harbour works and that sort of thing. A considerable amount has been spent, especially in New South Wales, by those semi-Government bodies, and such expenditure does not appear in the general expenditure of those States, does not form part of the public debt, and so our figures in comparison are made to look larger than they really are. Whilst no one would deny that in the past loan moneys have been expended on works that have proved unremunerative, and in some cases loan moneys have been expended on charges that should have been met by revenue, it has to be remembered that in a young and growing State, such as ours, a large amount of developmental work has to be undertaken in excess of the immediate requirements of the population.

Mr. Marshall: As, for instance, expenditure on the Peel Estate.

The PREMIER: That was not a good investment, but anyone who travels through the south-western portion of the State can see the difference in productive capacity represented by the use of fertilisers. But for group settlement, we might not have learnt the value of certain fertilisers. A lot of the money spent on group settlement will some day prove reproductive.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Would you include Herdsman's Lake in that?

The PREMIER: No, I think not. From the beginning, many people said that work would never be remunerative.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is as well to take it philosophically.

The PREMIER: I am not taking it philosophically, because as Treasurer I have to find the interest on the enormous expenditure.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Some works undertaken and carried out by the hon. member's party never looked like being profitable.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Is the hon. member thinking of State steamers?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. C. G. Latham: However, such a discussion is quite unprofitable, so we might as well get on.

The PREMIER: Though a work may be essential and of a reproductive nature, the full extent of the reproductiveness may not be apparent until after the expiration of many years from the date when the money was expended. I am sure that in regard to our own expenditure, our revenue, both direct and indirect, from the loan undertakings will tend to increase with the passing of the years. In the meantime, the burden thrown on Consolidated Revenue to meet the costs of the heavy indebtedness is of such a nature as to cause us to view with the greatest care all future loan expenditure. The estimated expenditure this year, as compared with the actual expenditure of last year, is as follows:—

	1936-37. Expenditure. £	1937-38. Estimate. £
Departmental .....	102,928	102,655
Railways and tramways, etc. ....	318,461	385,500
Harbours and rivers .....	172,118	128,500
Water supply and sewerage .....	1,130,559	926,000
Development of goldfields and mineral resources .....	19,994	20,000
Development of agriculture .....	188,438	169,100
Roads and bridges, public buildings, etc. ....	207,236	293,672
New ship .....	53,385	218,000
	<u>£2,163,117</u>	<u>£2,241,427</u>

#### RAILWAYS AND TRAMWAYS.

	£
Expenditure last year .....	318,461
Provision this year .....	385,500
Increase.	<u>£67,039</u>

The addition is accounted for by increased expenditure on rolling stock, to which reference will be made later. The programme to overtake belated repairs has been completed. The expenditure to the 30th June last, including special maintenance, was £718,567, of which £525,971 has been recouped from Revenue, leaving £192,596 yet to be recouped. Of this balance it is proposed that £100,000 shall be recouped to loan from Revenue during the year.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I think belated repairs will go on for some years to come.

The PREMIER: No. Trucks now lying idle, when required to be repaired will be repaired from the current year's revenue. Still, it was a very great burden on this Government to bring back the system to where it was in the ordinary years which, I think, ended in 1929-30. The system has now been brought up to a proper standard, so that the railways can be run on a very satisfactory basis. During the depression it was simply impossible to maintain the repairs.

Mr. Stubbs: The previous Government was criticised very strongly by some of your party.

The PREMIER: I think Mr. Collier did not blame the previous Government. However, to be saddled with half a million pounds to bring the system up to date was a very unenviable task. Still, the task was faced, and at the end of this financial year there will be only £70,000 or £80,000 outstanding. Last year the principal works were:—Morawa-Mullewa, relaying; Brunswick Junction-Collie, deviation and regrading; East Northam-Waeel, reballasting; East Northam-Goomalling, deviation; Mullewa-Yalgoo, deviation and regrading; water supplies, Meekatharra-Wiluna and Koorda. The total expenditure was £83,520. This year £130,000 has been provided to continue work of a similar nature where necessary. Provision has been made for two new dams on the Mullewa-Cue section, and improvements to the catchment at Perenjori. Members are aware that at Wiluna, Big Bell, Youanmi and other places there has been very great activity which has been reflected in the railway business, so making the railways better able to cater for the increased traffic. This work will increase existing supplies to meet the demand for water in the district, and avoid the heavy expense involved in the haulage of water, in many cases over long distances. In one district, the Railway Department was transporting water for 130 miles. Now we are endeavouring to have catchment areas provided in areas subject to severe droughts, so as to save the department the unremunerative work of carting water. Provision has also been made to carry out other works necessary to the economic and efficient working of the railways generally. With regard to rolling stock the expenditure last year was £44,952, whilst for this year £161,000 has been provided for the construction of new rolling stock under a five-year programme. This is necessary to replace worn-out and obsolete stock and to enable the railways to cope with the traffic. Provision has been made in these Estimates for six Diesel rail cars. These cars are just about to be completed. It is hoped they will be in operation actively at the beginning of the year. The inauguration of this method of transport, which will go at about twice the rate of the existing

passenger transport, will be ever so much more convenient for people in the outlying districts, and should be very much appreciated there. Whilst this expenditure was authorised about two years ago the then Premier (Hon. P. Collier) and his Government thought it would only be an experiment, though we hoped it would be a successful one. It was also thought that after we had had some experience we could use more of them for branch lines and other parts of the State where they can be so economically used.

Mr. Wilson: And do away with coal altogether?

The PREMIER: We will not do that.

Mr. Doney: Will any structural alterations be necessary at any of the stations?

The PREMIER: No, they are just ordinary rail cars.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The hon. member has heard that they are too wide for the system. That is the bogey.

The PREMIER: The estimated cost of the six cars is £66,693. Up to the end of last year £10,614 had been expended, leaving £56,079 to complete the cost. The expenditure on the Cue-Big Bell Railway last year was £45,013, and £5,500 has been provided this year to complete the work. The work has been completed at this stage, and the railway is in operation. This work was carried out under an agreement between the Government and the American Smelting and Refining Company for the purpose of developing the Big Bell mine. Members who had an opportunity of attending the opening ceremonies at the mine a few weeks ago will realise that if the expectations as to gold production are realised the mine will have a tremendous effect upon the yield of gold in this State. The company has an up-to-date plant, and a wonderful lode, which I think has been tested more thoroughly and scientifically than any other lode in this State has been tested. The people in control of the mine are absolutely confident that they can fulfil their expectations, in which case another big gold producer will be added to the list. For tramways a sum of £55,000 has been provided in connection with the trolley bus service. Last year the expenditure was £31,000.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You know this is a waste of money?

The PREMIER: The hon. member and I will agree to differ on that subject. This

expenditure is to provide 14 buses, one complete bus and 13 chassis to be imported. The bodies for the 13 chassis will be constructed in the Midland Junction Workshops. These trolley buses will be driven by electricity, generated from Collie coal. The member for Collie will be pleased to hear that.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Exactly the same as in connection with the trams now, although they will use less power and therefore less coal will be used.

The PREMIER: But they will give a much better service.

Mr. North: Why not make them all at the Midland Junction Workshops?

The PREMIER: Once the people have had experience of trolley buses there will be a general demand for the extension of their use. By the time we reach that stage we might ask the hon. member for his support in having all the work connected with the building and construction of trolley buses done at Midland Junction. I think the workshops will then be capable of doing the work, having had the necessary experience.

Mr. Cross: We want one at South Perth straight away.

The PREMIER: From my experience of trolley buses abroad, and from our own experience of them in Perth, I should say that everyone along the tram routes will be desirous of changing over to the new system. We cannot, of course, afford to scrap all our rails, rail cars and tram cars now in use, but when they require to be replaced we can consider whether they shall be replaced by trolley buses. Our experience by that time will be such that I think for the benefit of all concerned the change over will be to trolley buses. The latest advice from the Agent General is that the shipment of the complete trolley bus is expected at the end of November, and chassis at the rate of three per week, starting early in November. The construction of the bodies at Midland Junction Workshops is well in hand, and it is expected from the end of November that two bodies will be completed per month, and the whole of the 13 completed at the end of April, 1938. All poles for the overhead lines have been erected on the two routes, and spans and fittings are in course of erection. If the delivery of the buses is completed, according to the anticipations of the makers, it is hoped to have the Wembley line in operation early in January, and the Claremont service in full

operation before the end of the financial year.

Mr. Stubbs: Could not Diesel cars be manufactured here?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. Stubbs: The patent rights would prevent that?

The PREMIER: No. We have had no experience of that type of engine. It is thought to be wise to import it for the time being. When we have had the necessary experience we can start manufacturing in our own workshops. It was the same with regard to locomotives. The locomotives we have built have proved eminently satisfactory, proving a better job, it will be admitted by most people, than the imported article, and costing no more. Having had that experience with locomotives we can look forward to doing the job with regard to Diesel cars and trolley buses when we have had the necessary experience of them. I would now refer to the East Perth power station and electricity supply. Last year £25,000 was provided to meet the overseas commitments in connection with the new "B" station. Expenditure was also incurred in providing a feeder cable for the Colinstreet substation, and switch gear for the Murray-street substation. Provision has been made this year for £32,000, this being for essential electricity supplies. The work of the construction on the new station is well in hand. It is hoped that it will be in operation within the next two or three months. When that work is completed we shall within the metropolitan area be able to supply in adequate form all requirements for domestic purposes, lighting and industrial power for many years ahead. Without committing the Government I think we shall be able to generate electricity at a cost that will enable us to supply current for industrial purposes comparing favourably with the price at which it is supplied in other portions of Australia. We do not hope to be able to get down to the .3d. per unit at which current is generated in Hobart by means of the hydro-electric power station there, but the addition to the plant at East Perth power station will certainly make for more economic working. I think we shall be able to generate current and sell it to the City Council at about the same price as it costs us, and that we shall not therefore be losing the £15,000 or £20,000 per annum which the people of the State have had to

shoulder because of the agreement made some 20 odd years ago with the Perth City Council.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You will not get current as cheaply as it is produced by the Lake View and Star mine.

The PREMIER: One never knows. The completion of this unit will be of great benefit to industries within the metropolitan area. Many people who have desired to commence undertakings in the metropolitan area would have preferred to obtain electric current for their enterprises, but because of the fact that we could not guarantee to maintain supplies of current, these people have held off. Now, no matter what the undertaking may be in the metropolitan area, people can be assured of an adequate supply of current for all industrial purposes for many years ahead. I do not know for how long that will endure; that depends upon the life of the present Government. We are practically doubling our plant by the addition of the new unit.

Hon. C. G. Latham: A change of Government will cause it to develop still more quickly.

The PREMIER: We can agree to differ on that point.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I hope it will be possible to transmit current into the hill country.

The PREMIER: We shall have sufficient power to enable us to deal adequately with the needs of people who desire to utilise electric current for irrigation and other purposes. The member for Toodyay is interested in the extension of electric power. He knows what benefit can accrue to people who are producing from the land if they have a cheap supply of electric current, and he knows what difference it makes to production generally. It certainly brings into use a tremendously increased area of land that can be cultivated.

Mr. Thorn: At least threefold.

The PREMIER: With regard to harbours and rivers, the expenditure last year was £172,116, and the provision this year is £126,500, a decrease of £45,616. The Ashburton jetty was completed last year, but £500 is provided this year to carry out essential work on the foreshore. The expenditure last year on Geraldton Harbour was £17,987, and the work is now completed. On the Pt. Sampson jetty we spent £42,911, and £45,000 has been provided on

this years Estimates for the completion of the work. It is expected that the jetty will be opened for shipping in February or March. The work on the Fremantle Harbour will be continued, and £48,000 has been provided for this purpose. The sum of £7,000 has been provided for additions and improvements generally in the North-West. For improvements to harbours and rivers £25,000 has been provided, the principal works being in connection with the Swan River reclamation. This expenditure includes reclamation at Subiaco and the Nedlands foreshores, where the local authorities are contributing half the cost. Under the heading of Water supplies, sewerage and drainage throughout the State, the expenditure last year was £1,130,559, and this year we have provided £926,000, a decrease of £204,559. With regard to town water supplies, of £12,794 expended last year, £10,998 was in connection with the Geraldton Water supplies. This consisted of relaying the gravitation main, from Wicherina to Geraldton, extension of the reticulation to supply Bluff Point and Wonthella tomato growers and boring at Wicherina. A small amount has been provided for improvement to water supplies on stock routes. At this stage I may say that a highly valuable asset to the State has been created in that district, because there is exported annually from the port of Geraldton £60,000 or £70,000 worth to the Eastern States, especially Victoria and New South Wales. While the amount does not look highly important in the general scheme of things, still it correspondingly increases our productive capacity and helps to counteract the £9,000,000 or £10,000,000 of importations from the Eastern States for which Western Australia has to provide annually. I may add that a small amount has been provided for water on stock routes. With regard to sewerage and drainage of Perth and Fremantle, the expenditure last year was £339,488. The amount provided this year is £315,000, showing a decrease of £24,488. During 1936-37 the main gravitation sewers, the main pumping station, and the rising main were completed. Progress was made with the Claremont-Cottesloe, Maylands-Inglewood and Victoria Park sewerage schemes, and also with the main treatment works and the Maylands-Inglewood stormwater drainage. This year it is expected that the following works will be completed:—Claremont-Cottesloe sewerage,

Maylands-Inglewood sewerage, and Victoria Park sewerage, and the Maylands-Inglewood stormwater drainage. Further progress will be made with the main treatment works and South Perth sewerage. The expenditure for last year on metropolitan water supply was £311,327, and the provision for the current year is £210,000, a reduction of £101,327. Last year the following works were carried out:—Canning contour channel, a 42-inch main from Gosnells to Cannington, and the Scarborough water supply. These works were completed, and progress was made with re-laying the 30-inch and 24-inch mains on the Stirling Highway, the construction of the Canning reservoir, and the re-conditioning of the 36-inch Hills main. Further progress will be made during the year with the Canning reservoir, the 24-inch main on the Stirling Highway, the 24-inch main at Queen's Park, and the re-conditioning of the 36-inch and 16-inch Hills mains. Work on the Canning dam was resumed early in this calendar year, and provision has been made to continue the work up to the end of June of next year. The capacity of the dam when completed will be 20,550 million gallons—a stupendous total. At present the storage capacity is 4,300 million gallons, which is almost equivalent to the storage capacity of the Mundaring reservoir. The Canning reservoir, when completed, will be almost five times as big. If the expenditure is continued, it is anticipated that by the end of this financial year the capacity will be raised to 7,000 million gallons, by the expenditure of only £200,000. I should mention that we now get about ten times as much actual conservation area as was obtained in the past.

Mr. Stubbs: What will it cost to complete? Another million pounds?

The PREMIER: No. The original estimated cost of the dam was £1,250,000, and it is hoped that this estimate will be slightly reduced. Up to the end of June last the expenditure amounted to £542,529. Notwithstanding the fact that we have what are known as relief workers and sustenance workers there, owing to the good work of these men it is confidently expected that at the completion of the dam the estimated expenditure will not be reached.

Mr. Cross: That speaks well for the relief and sustenance workers.

The PREMIER: Yes, and especially well for those of them who have not done work of this kind previously. I pay a tribute to all the men concerned. One cannot omit words of commendation to those responsible for the engineering part of the work. Many people passing through who have had experience of such work have been greatly impressed with the manner in which the Canning dam has been carried out, and have paid tributes to the engineers as well as to the men employed on the work. Expenditure on goldfields water supply for last year amounted to £319,138, and of this total £187,000 was spent on renovating the goldfields water supply main. Included in the £187,000 was £77,000 for the purchase and laying of new pipes. The original proposal was to complete the re-laying of the pipe line by June of 1940; but as the worst of the sections had been renewed, the completion of the work may be extended for another year or two. At the end of that time we shall be able to say that although the work was commenced 37 or 38 years ago and most of it has been worn out, in two or three years, when the work is completed, the main from here to Kalgoorlie, as well as several extensions, will have been almost entirely renewed. Thus we shall have little expenditure for renewals during the next 25 years or so. In connection with the Norseman water supply, the pipe line from Coolgardie to Norseman, including reservoirs, cost £103,000. While that is rather a large expenditure, the mine which is successfully working in that district would have been unable to operate to any comparable extent but for this extension of water supply. There are about 1,000 men working in and around the district, and there will be profits tax and dividend duty payable on the results from the mines, so that the work is well justified. There is also the provision of an additional reservoir at Northam, as well as pumping plant for the York and Beverley extension. From this Vote £20,000 was spent, and from the Vote Water Supplies in Agricultural Areas £43,000, in connecting the Barbalin water supply with the goldfields water supply main. Water supplies, which carry the bulk of the expenditure this year, will be necessary for many years to come in a State like Western Australia. We have provided railways, harbours, roads and

bridges; but there remains the matter of water supplies for agricultural and outback districts which will require expenditure for a good many years to come so as to increase the productive capacity of the State.

Mr. Stubbs: Many towns in the Great Southern district are short of water.

The PREMIER: Unfortunately that is so. The provision for this year is £230,000. The principal work will again be renovation of the main pipe line. Provision has also been made for relaying the mines main. Owing to increased consumption by the mines, it has been found necessary to replace two miles of 16-inch pipes with a similar length of 20-inch pipes. This will, of course, earn additional revenue. Other works for which provision has been made include improvements and extensions to agricultural branch mains, the northern service reservoir, the Norseman reticulation, and the necessary extensions to town reticulations. Expenditure on other mining water supplies are £3,000 for the Eastern Goldfields this year, as compared with £3,710 last year, and £7,000 for the Murchison Goldfields, as compared with £5,108 last year. The principal works provided for this year are the Meekatharra and Youanmi water supplies, and boring and well-sinking at Big Bell. Another heavy item in our loan expenditure always is water supplies, irrigation and drainage in agricultural areas. Last year's expenditure was £138,348, and this year provision is made for £140,000. The principal item of expenditure last year was £43,000 in connection with the Barbalin water supply, as already mentioned under the heading of Goldfields Water Supply. The balance of the expenditure was on account of water supplies, tanks, drainage and irrigation generally in agricultural areas. Provision is made this year for the following purposes:—Collie and Waroona irrigation scheme, lining channels; Waroona-Coolup drains; drainage and irrigation in the South-West generally; improvements to country water supplies generally at Belurboodin, Moon-don, Flat Rock and other tanks in agricultural areas; Wicherina and other boring; surveys and service connections at minor extensions. This, I repeat, needs to be one of the principal activities in connection with loan expenditure for years to come. During the year a survey was commenced for the purpose of locating sites for reservoirs in the coastal ranges suitable for storage,



with the object of supplying water by pipe line to the hinterland. The survey is now in the main completed. As regards the towns of Wagin and Katanning, plans and specifications are being prepared, and the necessities of the situation will be inquired into. We hope to be able to find out exactly what the work will cost, and whether we shall obtain a water supply which will obviate the inadequacy of supplies in towns in the Great Southern district. The data collected are now under consideration by the engineers, with a view to formulation of a scheme, its probable cost and the assessment of its economic possibilities. While we have a dry summer of six or seven months' duration, Nature has compensated us with the hills in the coastal areas, where tremendous amounts of water can be conserved and stored. This seems to me one of the most important matters to which future Governments will have to give attention, so that water may be supplied to the semi-arid regions. In regard to the development of the gold-fields, the expenditure last year was £19,994, and £20,000 has been provided this year. The expenditure last year was for loans under the Mining Development Act, assistance to prospectors, subsidies and assistance to the mining industry generally, new plants, additions and improvements to batteries, tailing plants, etc. The provision this year is for similar purposes. Last year we expended £7,175 on assistance to prospectors, of which £3,425 was repaid by those assisted. Half of the money advanced to prospectors under the prospecting scheme last year has been repaid, and in addition some valuable and some smaller shows have been discovered which have assisted in the opening up of new mines in the State. A gratifying feature is that those people who have been assisted to go out to prospect have been so successful that half the money advanced has been repaid. During the four years that the scheme has been in operation, we have advanced £93,130 and the repayments have totalled £16,932. The assistance granted has been supplemented by grants from the Commonwealth, and last year the sum of £21,329 was so expended. Up to the 30th June last the amount of Commonwealth money advanced to prospectors was £57,824. For the development of agriculture the expenditure last year was £188,438, and the provision this year is £169,100, a decrease of £19,338. The amount charged to the "Abattoirs, Cold

Storage, etc." vote last year was £21,460. This included an amount of £19,548 expended in the previous year but which was not covered by a loan authorisation and was charged to suspense. Last year the actual expenditure was therefore £1,912 and was for extensions to the Midland Junction abattoirs. This year £2,500 has been provided for a similar purpose. The vote "Development of Agriculture" is for land clearing and settlement at Nornalup, Nannup and Albany, and for reconditioning holdings. The expenditure last year was £82,000 and the provision for the current year is £83,000. The expenditure against the vote "Assistance to Settlers, etc." was £8,870, and was for assistance to pearlers and banana growers. This year £1,500 has been provided for the purpose of further assisting banana growers.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Is this a temporary advance until they market their produce?

The PREMIER: Yes, with regard to the pearling industry; but with regard to the banana industry returns are not expected in the same year of production. The loans are short-term, but we do not always get the money back in the same year. In respect to the pearling industry 80 per cent. of the money has been repaid in the year it has been advanced.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Who advances the money to the banana growers?

The PREMIER: The Treasury.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Not the Agricultural Bank?

The PREMIER: No, the Treasury.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is rather unusual, is it not?

The PREMIER: The Treasury advanced to the group settlements including the Nornalup settlement.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It was given by the board.

The PREMIER: Well, the Treasury gave the board the money. Last year we spent £74,325 on forestry, and this was supplemented by a Commonwealth grant of £50,000, making a total of £124,325. For the current year we have provided £80,000, but as the Commonwealth grant has been reduced to £25,000, the expenditure this year will be £20,000 less than for 1936-37. The provision for roads and bridges is £132,528, of which £42,528 was spent last year and charged to suspense, as there was not sufficient loan authorisation. The actual amount

provided therefore is £90,000, a reduction of £35,822 as compared with last year. The expenditure last year was on roads not covered by the Federal aid roads scheme, and the provision this year is for a similar purpose. In order to provide works at low cost, we entered into an arrangement with several local authorities whereby we provided the labour and they the material for road work. This arrangement was of considerable assistance to the local authorities concerned and was carried out at a cost of £41,326. For this year the sum of £70,000 has been estimated for a continuance of the arrangement.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That does not affect the grant made by the Commonwealth for a portion of the interest? Do you find the capital for the local authorities under that scheme?

The PREMIER: We find the labour and they find the material.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I do not mean that. The Commonwealth Government made available certain money for interest payments. You do not find the capital?

The PREMIER: Not for roads.

Hon. C. G. Latham: On any work the local authorities undertake?

The PREMIER: I see what you mean. That is a different thing altogether. The Commonwealth Government agreed to find £36,500 and we agreed to find a similar amount.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is so. You do not find the capital.

The PREMIER: No, the local authorities themselves have to find the capital. The Kalgoorlie municipality found an amount for sewerage; but we, in conjunction with the Commonwealth, are paying a portion of the interest and sinking fund. It will cost the State £650 a year, but we do not find any of the capital. A sum of £5,448 was provided last year to continue the small loans scheme, which was inaugurated in 1933, under the administration of the Workers' Homes Board. Up to the 30th June last, £30,998 had been provided. Repayments have been very satisfactory. Of that £30,000 almost all will have been repaid to the State at the end of the term for which they were arranged. No provision has been made this year, as the purpose for which the scheme was commenced—namely to stimulate activity in the building trade—has been achieved.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You should find money for sewerage connections if you can.

The PREMIER: We have already authorised this year £20,000 for that purpose, but we are not particularly anxious to give publication to that because many people are quite capable of helping themselves.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I do not think you should help them, but assistance should be given to those in workers' homes and other people of that kind.

The PREMIER: The Government does not provide money for advances to tenants who it is considered are in a position to make financial arrangements, but we are desirous of helping indigent people or the ordinary wage earner who cannot raise the money but unfortunately has to pay rates just the same, even although not connected with the sewerage.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The local authorities are always at them, too.

The PREMIER: They are. The department has been able to find some money for connections to sewerage but has been exercising a commendable degree of caution with regard to the amount of money being advanced for that purpose. There are hundreds who can make their own arrangements and they should do so without assistance from the Government. Last year the expenditure on public buildings was £78,377, and was for the erection of and additions and improvements to schools, quarters, police stations, hospitals, and public buildings generally. The provision for the current year is £62,000. Of this amount £40,000 is provided for buildings generally and £22,000 as the Government's portion of the cost of the new Infectious Diseases Hospital.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The promises made by Ministers in respect of new Government departmental buildings do not look as if they are going to be fulfilled.

The PREMIER: Perhaps the hon. member will be patient until I say something in regard to that matter. Under an agreement entered into between the Government and a committee representing the local authorities in the metropolitan area, each party agreed to pay half the cost of building and equipping the Infectious Diseases Hospital. The estimated cost is £44,000. An amount of £3,500 has been provided for buildings and water supply at Moola Bulla

native station, reconditioning settlements, native hospitals, and building extensions at Moore River. Under the vote "State Hotels and Tourist Resorts" £10,000 has been provided this year towards rebuilding Cave House at Yallingup.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Is this really dinkum?

The PREMIER: I am hopeful that it is.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We have had that on the Estimates for a long while.

The PREMIER: We have. We had it on the Estimates last year but the money was not spent owing to the necessity for conserving our funds for works of a more labour-absorbing nature; but the money is there and is earmarked.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Minister should get it straight away.

The PREMIER: I am not sure that it would be advantageous to start building operations at the busy time of the tourist resort. We do not want to be building when many people are utilising the resort, but prior to Easter we will have the plans prepared and I confidently expect that we will have commenced operations in building at Yallingup early in 1938, and hope that nearly the whole of the £10,000 will have been expended by the end of the year. I am not sure of the total cost of the building. We placed £10,000 on the Estimates but it might cost another two or three thousand pounds.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You have that insurance money to draw from yet.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows where all these little niches are. We have a small amount we can use for that purpose. The hon. member asked, in the vernacular, whether this was the dinkum oil. So far as I am able to assure him, the work will be started during the current financial year. For the purchase of a new launch for the South Perth ferry service, £3,644 has been provided.

Mr. Marshall: Good old South Perth. They can get anything at South Perth.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Marshall: Trolley buses, bridges across the Narrows, ferry services—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The PREMIER: I thought that news would wake up the member for Canning (Mr. Cross).

Mr. Marshall: What I am worried about is that I cannot get a decent water supply for the Murchison.

The PREMIER: The expenditure this year includes an amount of £218,000 to be spent on the new State ship Koolama. Last year the expenditure was £53,385. About £5,000 represents the cost of bringing the ship from England. It should be understood that the money expended on this ship is provided in addition to the loan programme to be financed by the Loan Council from internal loans. We were fortunate in obtaining the consent of the Loan Council to raise this money in London on very favourable terms. The contract price of the new ship is £266,000 sterling to be paid for in instalments; 40 per cent. on the completion of the ship, a further 20 per cent. when launched, a further 20 per cent. when the trial trip is successfully undertaken, and the balance when the ship is accepted. It is expected that the ship will be completed by the end of January next year, and it is hoped that it will be in our own waters and available for trade by the beginning of March. It is hoped that when the Koolama is in operation the earnings of the State Shipping Service will be augmented substantially, as we expect that with a fleet of fast vessels we shall be able to undertake the additional trips to Darwin and obtain an increased subsidy from the Commonwealth as a result. There is no doubt that the advent of the vessel will result in a very much improved service for the people of the North-West. I had an opportunity recently of discussing this matter with the Federal authorities. We do get a small subsidy for going to Darwin now. If we could run a dozen trips to Darwin each year, it would make a big difference and should be of advantage to Western Australian trade, as well as a great convenience to the people of Darwin, who suffer hardship through the lack of facilities from the Eastern States.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You get a mail subsidy as well.

The PREMIER: That is so. An amount of £57,000 has been provided for the erection of bulk-handling facilities at Bunbury. The erection of those silos is the Government's answer to a promise made to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. that the facilities would be available in time for the harvest of 1937-38. I was in the South-West at the weekend, and took the opportunity to inspect the work at Bunbury. It seems to be well on the road to completion. The terminal is almost finished, and the bins and elevators at

the end of the jetty have almost been installed. From what I could gather from a casual inspection, the facilities should be in operation towards the end of December, when supplies will be reaching that port. Judging from appearances and from the opinions expressed by local people, we shall have an up-to-date system that will do the work excellently and give satisfaction to all concerned. The silos will have a capacity of 250,000 bushels, and it will be possible to load a ship at the rate of 300 tons per hour.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The wheat will be trucked to the end of the wharf?

The PREMIER: Special trucks have been built for the purpose.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I suppose the Railways will impose another 9d. per ton.

The PREMIER: The Railways are run somewhat on a commercial basis.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes, where the charges are concerned.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is rather ungrateful, bearing in mind that the Railways do a lot of work at a minimum charge.

Mr. Styants: They carry a lot of super-phosphate at less than cost.

The PREMIER: The department has to take over the finance, and run branch lines that do not pay in their initial stages, and are not expected to pay for years. After my association with the department, I think the agriculturists owe a debt of gratitude to the department for the manner in which the business has been catered for. I realise that the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Beverley can point to little faults in various parts of the system.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I object to that charge for which the Railways do not render a service.

The PREMIER: The Railways do not charge the full cost for many of the services rendered.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Why put it on to another service?

Mr. Seward: They do not charge for killing sheep, either.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has had a few sheep die.

Mr. Seward: I can tell you about them.

The PREMIER: The hon. member sees red when the Railway Department is mentioned. I think he must have travelled from York with the Leader of the Opposition, and been bitten by the same bug as he.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I have not complained of the Railways for a long time.

The PREMIER: But the hon. member has been sparing in his praise of the Railways for a long time.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I object to the extra charge for bulk wheat, when it is not justified.

The PREMIER: The Royal Commission found it was justified.

Hon. C. G. Latham: No, they tried to excuse it.

The PREMIER: Exhaustive reports will be presented during the next week or ten days, when the Bill for the control of terminals at the ports of Fremantle, Bunbury, Geraldton and Albany is introduced.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Is there to be another Bill?

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows that there will be another Bill. However, I shall not discuss bulk handling further at this stage, and members might reserve the small items they have in mind until that occasion. No provision has been made on these Estimates for the erection of new public offices. This is not because the Government is not seized with the importance of providing additional accommodation for some of the departments that are already overcrowded and in unsuitable premises. It is intended to bring before Parliament a comprehensive scheme for the concentration of most of the Government departments, and as this will be the subject of special legislation, I do not propose to enlarge upon it at this stage.

Hon. C. G. Latham: This year?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Presumably in January.

The PREMIER: I think the good sense that will characterise the proposals will ensure their ready acceptance, and will not delay us.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I am looking at the formidable list of legislation still to be considered.

The PREMIER: We could make a big hole in that in a very few days. The point I wish to make is that because there is no amount on the Loan Estimates, members should not conclude that we are shelving the question. I hope we shall be in a position to deal with it this year, and will be able to make a start at least with additional

accommodation required for the Department of Agriculture and the Titles Office to provide for the urgent necessities of those two departments. One of the activities of the Government that has suffered considerably in consequence of the reduction of loan moneys has been the building of workers' homes. Since the inauguration of the scheme in 1912, the board has done good work for the people of the State, but had additional funds been available, very much more could have been accomplished. In the year before last, the then Treasurer (Hon. P. Collier) provided £50,000 of extra capital, some of which was spent last year and some of it this year, together with the repayments of advances which amount to about £30,000 a year.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We generally provide £35,000.

The PREMIER: We have not had as much money as could have been desired. If there is one direction in which we can profitably and commendably spend a considerable amount of money, it is in the housing of the people.

Mr. Styants: Especially on the goldfields.

The PREMIER: Eighteen months or two years ago, loan money was made available for building workers' homes on the goldfields.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And about 40 homes were built at Kalgoorlie and Boulder.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What about another hundred?

The PREMIER: I could hope that that was possible. It is the policy of the Government to endeavour as far as possible to provide homes for the lower-paid workers—people on comparatively low wages who will be satisfied with a low-priced house. The board could get numbers of clients prepared to spend £800 or £900 on homes. Naturally, when people think of settling down, they like to get as good a home as possible. Many people on low wages desire houses of four or five rooms, fitted with all sorts of conveniences, and the board has found it necessary to point out that the cost of such homes is quite beyond their financial resources. It is quite impossible for a man earning £3 15s. or £4 a week to finance a worker's home at a cost of £800 or £900 that would involve the payment of 23s. or 24s. a week.

Mr. Stubbs: He would be putting a millstone around his own neck.

The PREMIER: Yes. If people would make their housing requirements commensurate with their earnings, they would do much better, and we would be able to provide more homes for them. For every two or three who want homes ranging in cost from £350 to £500, we get a dozen applicants for homes costing £1,000. I would not deny anyone the pleasure of occupying a £1,000 home, but it is more than some people can afford. If people would take advantage of what the board can offer in the way of comparatively cheap and reasonably good homes, costing about £400, we could cater for double the number.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And a home of that sort would be within the means of a wage-earner.

The PREMIER: Yes. The £1,000 home is not the type of home for which the board desire to cater. Although applicants, in exceptional cases, have been allowed to go up to £800, there seems to be a desire on the part of everybody to have a home of that value, and the board has often to discourage people on low incomes from burdening themselves beyond their means.

Mr. Cross: We want more homes and cheaper homes for the poorer people.

The PREMIER: We do. For years the policy has been to give preference to people prepared to build houses of a lower value—a value that would be commensurate with their financial resources. It is desired to give publicity to this phase of the matter. When people see the more highly priced homes being erected, they are apt to conclude that a worker's home is beyond their means, and they do not inquire for themselves. During the past 12 months the board arranged for the erection of 40 homes in the Kalgoorlie and and Boulder districts, and the large number of applications for those homes was a clear indication of the pressing need for such a provision.

Mr. Hegney: What was the price of those homes?

The PREMIER: From £350 to £400.

Mr. Styants: They averaged about £375 each.

Mr. Stubbs: Quite reasonable.

The PREMIER: Yes, and the homes provided were quite satisfactory. If we had an open go, I suppose we could supply an-

other 250 homes there in a few weeks. The financing of this project naturally threw a strain on the resources of the board, with the result that many applicants in the metropolitan area and in the country districts did not have their wishes satisfied. To assist the board additional capital of £50,000 was provided last year, and that to some extent mitigated the strain on the board. There cannot be any better work undertaken by any Government than that of providing house accommodation. All over the world in recent years housing activities have been undertaken by Governments. In Great Britain no less a sum than about £300,000,000 has been advanced to local authorities and to people in the direction of providing housing accommodation. In France and Germany and many other places as well, housing schemes have been carried out extensively. We in this State should try to do something more than has been done in that direction. Unfortunately we have had other big projects to undertake, and those works have absorbed all the money available. We hope, however, that there will be increased activities in the direction of housing, and particularly for those people who cannot afford to pay big rents. There are two outstanding difficulties that present themselves. One is the inability of this type of worker to provide from his own resources a substantial deposit to purchase a home. This difficulty, however, could be overcome if the board had sufficient funds to enable it to proceed with an enlarged building programme. Under the leasehold section of the Act a deposit of £5 is necessary to enable the worker to obtain a home, the repayment period being spread over a term of 25 to 35 years.

Hon. C. G. Latham: If they want the freehold system they can buy the land themselves. If they are satisfied to take the leasehold, they can convert it afterwards.

The PREMIER: Yes, leasehold is advantageous in the initial stages. If they borrowed money with which to buy a block of land they would have to pay 4 or 5 per cent. for the accommodation, whereas with a small capital they can get a block of land of a similar capital value by paying 3 per cent. Thus an applicant for a leasehold block need only pay an application fee of £5 and 3 per cent. on the capital value of the house, and it can be financed

so that the rent need not be more than 13s. or 14s. a week.

Mr. Hegney: I know of some people who have paid 8 or 9 per cent. for their accommodation when they have started to build a house.

The PREMIER: The Workers' Homes Board rate is 5 per cent.

Mr. Styants: Provision is made for conversion from leasehold to freehold.

The PREMIER: The other difficulty, and one that is of even greater moment than the first, is the restriction by local authorities on the erection of wooden houses in their districts.

Mr. Cross: We can alter that.

The PREMIER: This House will have to give serious consideration to the advisability of altering the law.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We tried to do so about four years ago.

The PREMIER: I hope that next time we shall succeed. It seems incomprehensible that in a State with abundant timber supplies and where wooden houses can be erected so cheaply such a restriction should apply, and be increasingly applied. It is no exaggeration to say that at the present time it is almost impossible for a wooden house to be erected in the metropolitan area, at least in an area within access to the main industrial centres. Our timbers are equal to if not better than others in any part of the world.

Mr. Marshall: Our bricks also are equal to the best.

The PREMIER: In Melbourne it is possible to go along in two or three different directions and to find wooden houses everywhere. In some places 50 or 60 per cent. of the homes are of wood, but here, because of the arbitrary action of the local authorities in declaring brick areas, in places where it is not necessary to do so, we find that it is impossible to erect wooden houses. There is one place in Victoria Park where 95 per cent. of the homes are of wood, and yet today if a person bought a block of land there, he would not be permitted to build another wooden house.

Mr. Stubbs: Wooden houses cool more rapidly in summer time.

The PREMIER: I read the other day that it was proposed to erect a wooden house at the north end of Lake Monger, and immediately the local authorities became aware of it they sent an inspector out there,

and immediately afterwards declared the locality a brick area.

Mr. Cross: It is about time we prevented that kind of thing.

The PREMIER: The House would be well advised to agree to an alteration of the law to prevent municipalities or other local authorities vetoing the erection of wooden houses. The Workers' Homes Board is able to erect a suitable type of four-roomed wooden house for about £350, and the weekly repayments on this house, including rates, insurance and ground rent, would not exceed 14s. or 15s. Such a repayment would be well within the means of the average basic wage worker. I think some members have been interviewed by prospective clients who had their applications approved for houses of that type. There seems to be a general idea that because workers' homes in the past have been built of brick no one requires a wooden house. We have provided on this year's Estimates £10,000 to be made available as a special advance to the Workers' Homes Board. The purpose of the advance is to enable the board to erect houses suitable for persons on the lower range of incomes, those houses to be occupied by the applicants as rented houses. Even if applications are not received it will be possible to let those places after they have been built and when the type of house is seen and it is realised what it is possible to do, considerable activity must result in that direction.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You need not have any fear about not getting sufficient number of applications.

The PREMIER: I consider that for about £10,000 it should be possible to erect 25 of the type of house to which I have referred, perhaps two or three in different parts of the metropolitan area, and a similar number in the larger country towns. We could thus demonstrate what could be done.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The trouble will be to get outside the brick areas.

The PREMIER: If that becomes a menace to the scheme of providing cheap houses for people, the menace will have to be removed by statute. Regarding the Workers' Homes Board itself it has been subjected at times to a great deal of pressure in the rejection of tenants who are unsatisfactory. I have always stood by the board, and no influence will deter me from

continuing to do so in dealing with those people who will not live up to their obligations. As I have already stated, it is estimated that the rentals, including rates and taxes and a small amount for maintenance, will be between 12s. 6d. and 15s. per week according to the size of the house. In the estimates there is a balanced programme of work covering the different industries in the various parts of the State. There seems to be no doubt that loan programmes of over £4,000,000 which were the rule prior to the depression will not again be resorted to for some time. Fortunately, however, we have been able to reach a stage in the development of the State where, except for agricultural water supplies, big undertakings involving large sums of money do not appear to be urgently required in the near future. During comparatively recent years large sums of money have been spent in bringing up to a reasonable standard harbour facilities in all parts of the State, including the North-West. Similar attention has been devoted to the electricity undertaking, railways and metropolitan water supplies and sewerage. Roads and bridges have also received considerable attention, principally under the Main Roads Agreement, until the roads right throughout the State are in a very good condition. Our schools, public buildings for the requirements of administrative departments, and hospitals need some expenditure, but those works cannot be proceeded with at a rapid rate, as the main object of loan expenditure is to increase the productive capacity of the State for our own requirements and for our export industries. To this end our problem now is to concentrate our resources on future development in those districts that have already been provided with facilities, so as to ensure that they are being exploited to their maximum capacity. It will still be necessary, in order to provide for the employment of our people, to spend some money on developmental works, but great care will be exercised to see that as far as possible that the works undertaken are capable of increasing production and contributing towards the prosperity of the State.

Progress reported.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

# **BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY ACT AMENDMENT.**

Returned from the Council without amendment.

# **BILL—FREMANTLE GAS AND COKE COMPANY'S ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [7.31] in moving the second reading said: This short measure is self-explanatory. Members are aware that in the metropolitan area there are two gas supplying authorities, namely, the Electricity and Gas Department of the Perth City Council and the Fremantle Gas and Coke Company. The Acts under which those authorities operate restrict their activities in the case of the City Council department to within a radius of five miles of the G.P.O.; and with respect to the Fremantle Gas and Coke Company, to within a radius of five miles of the Fremantle town hall. It follows therefore that the territory outside those radii is not covered by either of the Acts I refer to. The residents of certain districts on the north side of the river, who live outside the specified radii, are anxious to obtain the extension of gas mains to their homes. The Bill, together with a second, which I will deal with after the one before members now, is for the purpose of defining the procedure under which their requests can be acceded to. It will be only a matter of time before a similar position will arise on the south side of the river. It is true that under Section 215 of the Municipal Corporations Act a municipal council has power to contract with the Electricity and Gas Department of the Perth City Council for the supply of gas, and that provision has been followed in some instances. Districts outside the radii previously referred to comprise road boards as well as municipalities, and the Crown Law Department advises that it is desirable that the principal Acts under which the supplying authorities operate be amended as proposed in the two Bills I am presenting to the House this evening. A perusal of the Bill under discussion will indicate that any such extension of the gas mains must be subject to the approval of the local authority concerned. There is

no difficulty regarding the two operating authorities. I have consulted both and find that their interests do not conflict. I have also written to the Nedlands Road Board, the Claremont Municipal Council and the Cottesloe Municipal Council. I find that those bodies are not much concerned as to which supplying authority provides for their requirements. There is very little difference in the prices charged and all those authorities are concerned with is that the conveniences shall be supplied if required. Neither the Perth City Council through the Electricity and Gas Department nor the Fremantle Gas and Coke Company can supply outside the respective radii.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Is the company operating to-day?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. The Fremantle Gas and Coke Company operates from the Fremantle end.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Is not the municipality running it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. It is true that the Perth City Council conducts the business of supplying gas, but it operates under an Act as I shall explain later on. That is all that this particular Bill deals with. It is necessary that the amendment be agreed to in order that the company may operate in districts not provided for at present. In any event, a safeguard is provided in that the local authority has to be satisfied first that the request for the extension made is satisfactory and then it will necessitate a minute of the Executive Council to authorise the extension. Further, a minute of the Executive Council will be all that is necessary to revoke any such extension.

Mr. Stubbs: Will all the territory between the two existing boundaries be covered under the Bills?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, if the necessary applications are first made to the local authorities concerned and the necessary orders in council are obtained. This legislation will cover the whole of the metropolitan area and there is always the proviso that the company cannot operate in any additional territory if the local authority objects.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There will be no duplication.



The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. North, debate adjourned.

### **BILL—PERTH GAS COMPANY'S ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [7.37] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is complementary to the one I have just dealt with. There is no need for further explanation, because the position is the same as with the Fremantle Gas and Coke Company. Here again the City of Perth Electricity and Gas Department is limited to the area within a radius of five miles of the G.P.O. The Bill will authorise the department to operate outside that area if so desired and if the authority of the Governor in Council is secured. My remarks regarding the Fremantle company's Bill apply equally to this Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. North, debate adjourned.

### **BILL—TIMBER INDUSTRY REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 11th November.

**HON. C. G. LATHAM** (York) [7.38]: I have not been able to give much consideration to the Bill. It is evidently intended to register sawmills. I listened attentively to the speech of the Minister when he moved the second reading. It seems to be an innocuous piece of legislation, apart from the fact that it may to some degree prevent accidents, fatal or otherwise, occurring because it will enable inspections to be made to ensure that machinery is put in with greater care than has been exercised in the past. There is one point I would like to take up with the Minister, and I hope he will not regard me as possessing a suspicious mind when I mention it. Is it the policy of the Government to prevent small concerns from opening up sawmills? It seems to me that it will all depend upon the regulations that

are to be framed. We have had no opportunity to ascertain what form they are to take. If it is the intention of the Government to prevent small mills from operating, then I shall have to oppose the Bill. Members of the Opposition are anxious to give the small man an opportunity to do some good. It is a positive fact that in Western Australia there is an arrangement between all the big sawmilling companies, and the State Sawmills is a party to that arrangement. I believe that the small man has just as much right to live as the big man. If we are not to give the individual with but little capital a chance to operate, he will have little opportunity to get out of the rut. The small mills do a great deal towards providing timber for fruit cases. At certain times nearly every year there is a shortage of fruit cases and if there is to be any discrimination against the small man, it will occasion greater difficulty than has been experienced in the past. While I do not desire to emphasise the fear I have expressed, I would like to have an assurance from the Minister that there is no intention to do what I am afraid could possibly be done. I am led to that conclusion because we have had presented to us much legislation having the objective I have mentioned. It is on that account that I have some doubt in my mind. I will be prepared to accept the Minister's assurance that no such course is intended, and I am sorry he did not mention it when moving the second reading of the Bill. At one stage I was concerned about the provisions of the Factories and Shops Act applying, but I note that that measure has a general application to all sawmills. It provides for inspection of the mills and for certain regulations to be carried out in the interests of the health of the employees. For that reason I have no objection to raise on that score. I notice that it is not intended to increase the fees for registration so no objection can be raised in that regard. I certainly hope the legislation will not be used to prevent the small man from operating. If that were to be the position, it would amount to a calamity. Many of the small mills are operating effectively, giving employment to two or three hands. If ever there was a time when it was necessary to encourage employment, it is to-day. Irrespective of what trade or calling may be affected. We should be glad to take advantage of every

opportunity to absorb as many people as we possibly can in industry of various types. For that reason I enter a plea with the Minister that this legislation will not be availed of to prevent anyone from operating a sawmill under reasonable conditions that will provide a living, not only for the employers, but for employees as well. Fortunately, most of the mills are working at full pressure. There was a time not long ago when there was much unemployment in the timber industry. I am anxious that the men in the industry shall be able to secure a continuance of work under full-time conditions. If the Minister gives me the assurance I have asked for, I shall raise no objection to the Bill.

**MISS HOLMAN** (Forrest) [7.44]: I can understand that the Leader of the Opposition has not had much opportunity to consider the Bill, particularly when he suggests that its object is to hamper the operations of the small mills. Nothing of the sort is intended. All that is sought to achieve is greater protection for both the mill owners and the mill hands. When the Timber Regulation Act of 1926 was passed, it was considered that the registration aspect was covered by the Factories and Shops Act, which defined a "factory" as meaning—

Any building, premises, or place in which four or more persons are engaged, directly or indirectly, in any handicraft, or in preparing or manufacturing goods for trade or sale . . .

When the Act was passed it was administered by the labour branch of the Factories and Shops Department and so there was no necessity for a special provision for registration under the Act. But now the position is somewhat different. In 1930 the administration of this Act was taken from the labour branch of the Factories and Shops Department and given to the Forests Department, which in my opinion is not quite right, for I think the Factories and Shops Department is the proper department for the administering of both this and the Scaffolding Act. As registration is not provided for in the Timber Industry Regulation Act, it is necessary to amend the Act we are considering. Proof of the fact that the Bill is not intended to hamper small mills is shown in the large number of such mills in existence. This year there are 84 of them, whereas last year there were only 60, and in 1929 there were only 48 of such mills in the State. To-day there are num-

bers of small portable mills dotted about all over the country and these are shifted from one locality to another. To-day one goes down the South-West and sees certain small mills, whereas to-morrow if one were coming past again one might see where they had been. So it is necessary that the department should have some idea of when and where a small mill is to be built. As for the case quoted by the Minister, the department did not know that that particular mill was built until the fatal accident was reported. That position, of course, is altogether wrong. I feel that this proposed amendment is entirely harmless and is very necessary for the proper working of the Act. How is it possible to compel mills to build proper and safe workings for their employees unless it is known that those mills are being built or are already built?

Hon. C. G. Latham: They are under the Machinery Act.

Miss HOLMAN: The hon. member must know that that is entirely incorrect. The Machinery Act has nothing to do with the ordinary working of a mill.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yet machinery is spread right through the mill.

Miss HOLMAN: The Machinery Act covers the inspection of boilers, and a boiler must stop working before it can be inspected. This department is in charge of the Timber Regulation Act and employs inspectors to inspect the various sawmills. But the officers themselves did not know that a particular mill was in existence until a fatal accident occurred. The boiler inspection department is not the Forests Department nor is it the timber inspection department. The Bill provides for the registration of sawmills. I am not quite sure whether it should be "sawmills" or "timber holdings." In the original Act the last-named term means and includes everything, including a sawmill. There are sections in the original Act providing for groups of workers, so I should like the Minister to make further inquiry as to whether the term here should be "sawmills" or "timber holdings"—that is in the registration clauses. A few weeks ago in this House we had an earnest debate on the dangerous nature of the mining industry. It is not my intention in any way to detract from the danger encountered in the mining industry, but I would point out that the timber industry is far more dangerous than the mining

industry. Except for the number of fatal accidents, the timber industry is the most dangerous of all in the State. To prove that statement, I have prepared and obtained three tables showing a comparison between the timber industry and the mining industry. Some years ago, when the original Bill was being introduced, a table was produced in connection with the statistics of killed and injured, one table dealing with the timber industry and the other being devoted to the mining industry. The mining table was prepared from official tables Nos. 26 and 27, while the timber industry table was prepared from the union's accident record. These tables are as follows:—

[Extract from "Hansard" Session, 1926, No. 13, page 1481.]

#### Statistics of Killed and Injured.

Mining, as per Official Tables 26 and 27.

Timber, as per A.T.W.U. Accident Records.

#### MINING.

Year.	Number Killed and Injured.	Total Number Men Employed.	Percentage.
1919	622	8,346	7.4
1920	559	8,496	6.5
1921	362	7,034	5.1
1922	346	6,776	5.5
1923	318	6,497	4.9
1924	241	6,289	3.8
1925	395	6,011	6.5

Serious Injury—Two weeks or more.

#### TIMBER.

Year.	No. Killed and Injured for whom Benefits were paid under Accident Fund.	Average Membership Accident Fund.	Percentage.
1919	285	1,021	27.77
1920	304	1,321	22.9
1921	423	1,635	25.8
1922	306	1,177	26.0
1923	217	973	22.18
1924	174	951	18.7
1925	210	936	22.4

No Accidents under three days reported.

That these figures are a fair indication of the number of accidents happening in the timber industry has been proved, because since the Act has been in operation proper records have been kept, and I have here the number of accidents reported since the Bill came into operation in 1928.

#### TIMBER INDUSTRY.

Year.	No. Accidents.	Persons Employed.	Fatal.	Percentage.	Average Days off per Person.
1928	836	3,157	5	26.4	20.6 (Total, 17,040 days)
1929	701	3,074 (48 mills)	5	22.8	22.7 (Total, 15,596 days)
1930	461	2,340	1	21.0	20.2
1931	190	1,255	1	15.14	23.4
1932	201	1,205	1	16.63	24.7
1933	310	1,365	2	22.71	25.8
1934	433	1,912	3	22.70	20.1
1935	579	2,463 (60 mills)	1	23.2	24.6 (Total, 14,260 days)
1936	683	2,706 (84 mills)	4	24.4	28.6 (Total, 13,800 days)

This table will show that in 1936 there were 104 more accidents than in 1935, while 303 more men were employed in the industry. The table effectively shows that the industry deserves every consideration. It is perhaps due to a certain extent to the small unregistered mills that the accident list is so large. We hoped that when the Act was passed it would lead to an improvement in the industry. However, the Bill before the House should effectively improve the position since it will provide that everybody who has a mill must be registered. It is not a party Bill at all, but it is absolutely necessary because it is of not much use to have the larger mills carrying out the regulations and the law, whilst small mills can be erected all over the place without any regulation whatever. The necessity for regulation, of course, is the dangerous nature of the industry. During my previous speech I mentioned the belt clips as being a source of danger. Those belt clips are still responsible for fatal accidents, also leaning stacks of timber are still being left anywhere, even where children go. At present the Act is not carried out to its full effect, because there is only one workmen's inspector engaged. We hope shortly the second inspector will be elected. There is certainly sufficient work for inspectors in the industry. There are still some backsliders in connection with housing conditions. Recently I toured the timber country, and found quite a number of mills where poor residences are being provided for the employees. At Port's Mill, Pindalup, there are houses with calico windows instead of glass windows, and houses through which water can run, although rent is being charged just as was the

case in the bad old days. There is no improvement in that regard. I would make one final comparison between the goldmining industry and the timber industry to prove that the timber industry is deserving of all possible protection. I will take the year 1936. The number of men employed in the goldmining industry, according to page 18 of the Mines Report, was 15,696. The number of fatal accidents, exclusive of accidents in quarries, was 38, the accident death rate per thousand was 2.28, and the number of accidents including the 38 that proved fatal, was 1,119, a total percentage of 7.12. In the timber industry for the same year the number of men employed was 2,766, total fatal accidents numbered four, the accident death rate per thousand was 1.44, and the number of accidents, including the four that proved fatal, 683, making a total percentage of 24.4. No member of either House will be able to deny to these people the protection that is their right.

**MR. SAMPSON** (Swan) [8.3]: The registration of sawmills should receive consideration. It is remarkable that the present position has continued for so long. There is need for the inspection of machinery and for registration, and for insistence on policies being taken out under the Workers' Compensation Act. Although insurance is compulsory, that would be effective only so long as the owner of the mill was financial. It happens that owners of some small mills have little or no finance. They are buying their plant on long terms. If a serious accident occurs, there is, in the absence of a policy, no possibility of the necessary protection being afforded to the members of the family of the injured person. I know these things happen, and from that point of view the Bill has great importance. The limitation of work does not affect the danger. The cutting of fruit cases may be more dangerous than the cutting of huge fitches. In one the work entails mechanical aid, and in the other it is mostly hand work. I would have been pleased if the Minister had commented upon the utilisation by small mills of a greater area of country, and also on the point of greater consideration being given in respect to timber that may be cut. The conduct of a small sawmill is a heavy problem. I support the introduction of legislation to ensure registration, because

it is most unfair when, as has happened on occasion, an accident arises and it is found that the mill is not registered and there is no compensation forthcoming. The proprietor may not be in a financial position; thus no protection is afforded for those working on the mill. I do not think the large sawmills are concerned about fruit-case wood.

**Hon. C. G. Latham**: You have not been to Pemberton.

**Mr. SAMPSON**: As a rule it is not a paying proposition for a big mill.

**Miss Holman**: Quite a number of them cut it.

**Mr. SAMPSON**: There would be no objection on the part of the big mills if the Minister for Forests placed in reserve for the purpose of producing fruit-case wood an area in suitable country. Fruit-case wood is a small side-line in the big mills, and is not regarded with any consideration. When it comes to a question of competition, the price at which fruit-case wood is available pushes the large mills out.

**Miss Holman**: I do not think you have inspected the large mills where this timber comes from.

**Mr. SAMPSON**: I have seen the mill at Pemberton and that at Jarrahdale. I do not think the big mills go in for fruit-case wood or shooks. It does not pay them to bother with them. If they do bother with them, they would not be concerned if they were deprived of this class of business.

**Mr. Doust**: They cut about 17 per cent. of the total.

**Mr. SAMPSON**: But it is not regarded by them as a paying proposition.

**Hon. C. G. Latham**: It is at Pemberton.

**Mr. SAMPSON**: Last year there was a shortage of fruit-case wood. Dependence had to be placed more on the small mills than on the large ones. Be that as it may, there is no doubt concerning the wisdom of registering all mills. The position hitherto has been somewhat on the lines of small backyard factories, and there has been an absence of that control which is essential if the interests of all concerned are to be cared for. I support the second reading.

#### **THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT**

(**Hon. A. R. G. Hawke**—Northam—in reply) [8.7]: The speech of the Leader of the Opposition could well have been compressed into eight words.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It did not take many more.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: What he should have said was, "I have very much pleasure in supporting the Bill." Evidently he gave some consideration to it, as the result of which he was not able to find anything to criticise or to complain of. Then, apparently, as suggested by the Minister for Agriculture, he began to search for the nigger in the woodpile. He asked for an assurance that the Bill would not in any way seek to prevent the establishment of small mills.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Or to eliminate those already in existence.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes. It is not my intention to give such assurance. To do so would be to admit the justification of the request of the Leader of the Opposition in asking for such an assurance. There is no justification whatever, concerning this Bill, for asking for that assurance. The provisions of this measure are fairly set out, and leave nothing in doubt. The regulations that will be drawn up to give effect to the Bill will have to come before Parliament and be approved before they can be brought into operation. If the Leader of the Opposition has some suspicion that ulterior motives have been responsible for the introduction of the measure, he has the supreme consolation that any damage he imagines may be done cannot be done unless both Houses of Parliament approve of the regulations.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You would require only 16 words to say all that.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: My reply to the Leader of the Opposition has been compressed into the narrowest possible limits. The member for Forrest asked whether the words "timber holdings" should be used in the Bill in place of the word "sawmills." The definition of "sawmill" in the Act is as follows:—

"Sawmill" means a place within the timber holding where any operation for the purpose of preparing or treating timber is carried on.

The term "timber holding" is interpreted to mean a sawmill permit granted under the Land Act, 1898. It would appear that the use of the word "timber holding" instead of "sawmill" might have the effect of registering only the sawmill permit granted, without making it necessary for the sawmill itself to be registered prior to erection. The

Bill states that when a person desires to establish a new sawmill he shall first of all make application for the registration of that mill, and provide plans and particulars of the type of mill proposed to be constructed. The term "sawmill" is, therefore, the correct term to use. If the term "timber holding" were used, it would certainly cover other activities that are carried on in a timber holding without a sawmill being established on the timber holding. Inquiries will be made to ascertain whether additional protection would be granted to workers on timber holdings in the event of its being necessary for timber holdings to be registered under the measure. If those inquiries disclose that additional protection will result from adopting a line of action such as that, then sympathetic consideration will be given to the question of providing for the registration of timber holdings as well as for the registration of sawmills under this Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Mr. Sleeman in the Chair; the Minister for Employment in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—New heading and new section; Sawmills to be registered:

Mr. DOUST: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added to Subsection 1 of proposed Section 12A:—"Provided further that every sawmill which complies with the regulations under this Act for the time being in force shall be registered upon application being made in the prescribed form."

It is quite impossible to say what the position will be a few years hence. Among timber people, especially those operating on private property, there is a fear that the Forests Department may consider that more mills are being erected than necessary. To allay that fear, I hope the Minister will agree to the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: As I understand the amendment, it seeks to provide that every sawmill now existing which has complied with the regulations issued under the Act and in force for the time being shall be registered upon application being made in the prescribed form.

Mr. Doust: And also any new mill to be erected in the future.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The Bill itself proposes to deal with future mills.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That would be under Clause 3.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The clause should be postponed until the Minister can look into the amendment.

Progress reported.

## BILL—WHALING.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 11th November.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [8.22]: The Bill does not require much discussion. It is a highly technical measure and, after all, will have to be administered by experts. The Minister has clearly stated that the intention of the Bill is to prevent the waste that has been taking place in regard to products of the whale. For that reason it is a commendable piece of legislation. Apparently all the countries of the world interested in whaling, except Japan, have entered into an agreement to foster the industry. In consequence this State has been asked to pass legislation similar to that adopted by other countries. The measure will be highly difficult to police, being confined to the three miles of our territorial waters. Outside the three miles we can exercise no control. True, while our inspectors are on board vessels whaling in Western Australian waters, they will be able to exercise control; but foreign vessels will be the problem—vessels that happen to be fishing outside the three-mile limit. I presume it will not be possible to control such vessels. As we have been asked to conform to the legislation of other States, there can be little objection to the Bill. However, I desire to point out to the Minister a clause, the future effect of which I am doubtful. It is Clause 11—

A ship designed and equipped for taking, killing, or treating whales shall not be brought into any port or place in Western Australia unless the owner or charterer of the ship is the holder of a license in force under this Act authorising the ship to be used for taking, killing, or treating whales, or the ship is duly

authorised by the Government of the country whose flag she flies to engage in taking, killing, or treating whales. Penalty (on owner, charterer, or master): £1,000.

The clause seems to provide that no ship can be brought into a Western Australian port if she happens to be fishing outside our territorial waters and is not licensed here. If we look carefully into that provision, we find that it represents an interference with international law. I would prefer to see the Commonwealth take that responsibility, rather than this State. I think the Premier will agree with me that international law provides that we shall not prevent any ship from entering our ports for assistance or stores and so forth. The clause imposes a penalty of £1,000 for any such ship as described coming here.

Mr. Marshall: I hope many will come.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hon. member might feel very sorry if we began to interfere in that way.

Mr. Marshall: We are all a bit fishy over this Bill.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Whaling is a very fishy sort of story. The Minister, if he has not already done so, might obtain information on that point. I doubt whether the Bill with that provision in it would be assented to by the Governor without reference to overseas. As for the rest of the Bill, like the Minister I am anxious to secure the best results from any whaling that takes place on our coasts. We are all anxious that Western Australia should obtain its share of the industry. The by-products of the whale are valuable, and consequently we should endeavour to eliminate waste as far as possible. Therefore it is proposed to register whalers and see that they do not kill immature whales or whales carrying young or nourishing young—which one thinks would be a problem. However, I am assured that whaling experts can easily determine those matters. I understand this measure caused a good deal of hilarity when introduced a few years ago and was dropped on that account.

The Minister for the North-West: It was not the same Bill.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It was similar, though. Since then there have been international conferences on whaling, and I understand that because of those conferences the Bill is again before Parliament. All I wish to be further informed about is Clause

11, to make sure that by passing it we shall not be infringing international law.

**MR. McDONALD** (West Perth) [8.29]: This is a Bill which I think should be welcomed by the House, not only because it deals with the whaling industry, which has become of considerable importance on the North-West coast of our State, but also because it establishes in connection with our territorial waters a principle which may be of value in later years. It is well known to everybody that now it is not merely the land that is the subject of controversy and competition between Powers, but that there is also controversy and competition in regard to various parts of the sea in which fisheries are rich and from which wealth can be obtained. That applies particularly in the old world, around the coast of England and the north coast of France, and it is as well to establish by this legislation the fact that we are concerned with the marine wealth that lies off the coast of this State and are determined to protect our rights by legislation. I do not know whether the Minister is in a position to tell the House something about this point, but I should be interested to know how the three mile territorial limit for our State waters is determined in the case of those parts of our coast that are studded with islands. Do we have control over the intermediate waters between the main land and the islands? I notice that the Bill also refers to the dependencies of Western Australia. I confess I am in ignorance as to what our dependencies are, and would be interested to know. It might be that the Abrolhos Islands and Rottnest Island might be our dependencies, but I was under the impression that those islands were really part of the State. If the Minister could enlighten me on that point I should be grateful. In the meantime, I consider that the Bill is a useful measure and I support it.

**MR. HILL** (Albany) [8.32]: I support the measure and at the same time would like to suggest that the occasion is opportune to co-operate with the Commonwealth Government with a view to seeing if the wealth off our shores could not be exploited. One fisherman advised me that whales were as plentiful as herring off Albany this year. In 1914 a Norwegian whaling company was stationed at Albany. The whole of the requirements

of this company were obtained from Norway, and all the proceeds went to Norway. During the war they were prevented from taking fats and oils to Norway, and that caused their failure. It would be to the advantage of Australia if the Commonwealth subsidised a whaling company to start operations here, and the State Government should assist by making the port available at reasonable terms.

**THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST** (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne—in reply) [8.34]: The House should have some clarification of the two points raised by the Leader of the Opposition. The first was in connection with vessels operating outside the three-mile limit, and as to our having no control of their operations. Under this legislation we have this control: that no vessel will be operating as a whaling factory ship except under license from the country of its origin. Those countries co-operate with the Australian States or the Commonwealth in the issue of licenses. For example, the Norwegian Government would not license a greater number of ships to operate off this coast than Western Australia desired should be licensed. That obtained this year, for although three companies sought permission to operate off the West Australian coast, when the case was presented for a restriction to two factory ships, only two licenses were issued by the Norwegian Government.

**Mr. Seward**: Does the same apply to Japan?

**The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST**: It applies to all countries except Japan. Any ship operating under license from a foreign country outside the three-mile limit would hardly affect the position in this State for the reason that in nine cases out of ten a factory ship needs sheltered waters within the three-mile limit.

**Hon. C. G. Latham**: We have islands in the North that are outside the three-mile limit.

**The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST**: There are many that are dependencies of this State such as the Lacepedes. I understand from the Crown Law Office also that this is the position, that where the three-mile limit operates is within three miles of existing territory, and not within three miles of the coast. In connec-

tion with no ship being permitted in any port, I do not desire to offend the Standing Orders by quoting the particular clause, but I think it could be dealt with here and if the Leader of the Opposition were to study carefully that clause, particularly the last sentence of it, which is the saving part of the clause, he would read into it that all ships being licensed by the country of their origin as whaling vessels or vessels permitted to trade in whaling, would be registered in that country and therefore would have free entry to any port. Japan agreed in every particular but one to the Bill as presented. Japan opposed the restrictive nature of the legislation before the House at Geneva simply because that country desired to operate on a wider scale than this legislation permits. The whaling vessels from Japan that were in our harbour this week, and a month ago, were licensed by the Japanese Government. The particular saving clause is to prevent ships indiscriminately operating as whalers without any permit from their particular Government. I am assured that there is no difficulty whatever in the direction mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Mr. Sleeman in the Chair: the Minister for the North-West in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Unlicensed ships entering Western Australia:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Apparently, as the Minister pointed out, if a vessel is licensed it will be entitled to remain in port. Otherwise it is to be regarded as a pirate ship. It seems that we are taking a big responsibility in dealing with vessels of another country which may happen to be forced in here. We can get into serious trouble over matters of this kind. I presume that a vessel which came for whaling purposes would have papers to show that it was licensed, but Japanese vessels could go all over the place whaling without a license.

The Minister for the North-West: Japan has all her vessels licensed.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But for how long? Japan is not a party to this agreement. I doubt whether we can enforce this

provision. We could arrest a vessel, but I do not know how long we would stand up to it against a powerful nation.

The Minister for Mines: I suppose we would send the "Perth" out after them.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I presume the "Lady Forrest" would have to do the work. Then we would fine the ship £1,000 and I doubt whether the penalty would be paid. The matter should be looked into before we ask the Governor to assent to the Bill.

The Minister for the North-West: I have gone into the matter.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We introduced legislation to prevent Asiatics from becoming cooks in restaurants after a certain date, but that provision had to be taken out of the Bill ultimately. I am afraid the same kind of thing might have to be done in regard to this matter.

The Premier: All nationals have agreed not to allow ships to go out, under their own law.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But we cannot enforce the laws of other countries. We can deal with our own ships. I am not afraid of vessels registered within Western Australia or within Australia. I am worried about the foreign vessels.

The Minister for the North-West: They will be all right.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If they desire to come here, they will probably present some Japanese certificate and we shall not know whether it is right or wrong. However, I have directed attention to the matter and the Government must accept the responsibility, though I think the attention of the Lieut.-Governor should be specifically drawn to the Bill before it receives assent. Under the measure we shall be attempting to enforce a foreign law, and we can only punish for an infringement of the State law within territorial waters. When a vessel fishes in the open sea there can be no offence against the State. The Minister should consult the Solicitor General to ensure that we do nothing wrong.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I should not like to force this measure through if the Leader of the Opposition has any doubt, but I have been assured by the Crown Law authorities that the purpose of the Bill is obvious and they see no difficulty at all. Should the Leader of the Opposition desire that progress be reported—



Hon. C. G. Latham: No, I will leave it to you.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I could get a ruling for the hon. member and present it on the third reading.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 12 to 24, Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

## **BILL—BUSH FIRES.**

### *In Committee.*

Mr. Withers in the Chair: the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Interpretation:

Mr. DOUST: I move an amendment—

That in the interpretation of "stubble" all the words after "herbage" be struck out.

I have in mind the meaning applied to stubble later in the measure. It is wrong to define as stubble standing vegetation including scrub.

Mr. Sampson: What would you term the remains of a self-sown crop?

Mr. DOUST: That would be comprehended by grass, hay or straw.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member should grasp the opportunity to make the definition wide. If the measure is to have effect it needs to be as wide as possible.

Mr. SLEEMAN: If the definition is retained, no one will be able to smoke south of Armadale because he will be within 20 yards of stubble, etc. If the definition is limited, there might be a chance to delete the ridiculous proposal later in the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The interpretation is taken from the South Australian Act. Later the Bill provides that no person shall throw a lighted cigar, cigarette, or match, from a moving vehicle within 20 yards of a patch of stubble. If anybody did so, it would be a wrong act and he would be an entirely irresponsible and stupid man. Would the hon. member allow a man to act as a child might be expected to do? If that is the only excuse for limiting the definition, it is not a valid one. I ask members not to accept the amendment.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It seems to me that the Minister has not read the Bill, when he

talks about stupid people smoking around hay-stacks. It is only a stupid man who would really introduce such a Bill. I intend to assist the member for Nelson to get this stupid provision out of the Bill. One will not be allowed to smoke a cigarette or cigar or a pipe within 20 yards of any herbage. The Bill should go out, lock, stock and barrel.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member has abandoned his first statement, and is now dealing with some of the other provisions of the Bill. There is no provision in the Bill such as he indicates. At any rate, there is no occasion to generate any heat over the matter, and the hon. member need not get beyond bounds. That about which he complains as being stupid is already the law of the country and has been the law for the past 30 years. There is every good reason for retaining it.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Is there any reason why we should retain a provision that is stupid just because it has been on the statute-book for 30 years? May I compare what we are now doing with the attempt we are making to abolish plural voting? Does the Minister say that because it has been on the statute-book for so many years that also should remain?

Mr. HEGNEY: The definition of "stubble" includes herbage, hay, straw, grass, and other vegetation, whether alive or dead, and whether standing or not standing. I intend to support the amendment.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: We should make this legislation as useful as possible, and there is nothing of an inflammable nature I would not like to see included in the definition of stubble or bush.

Mr. Marshall: You have everything there.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: We should keep it there. The member for Nelson wants to cut out "whether alive or dead or standing or not standing." We ought to include everything in the definition of stubble that is likely to be a menace in an agricultural area during the summer months.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7—Fire protected areas:

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: This clause provides that it shall be unlawful for any

person to set fire to bush on any land at any time without the permission of the Minister. I move an amendment—

That after "time" in line 3 the words "between the first day of November and the thirty-first day of March" be inserted.

If farmers want to engage in clearing operations, they should not be hampered to any extent further than is necessary. They also want to make their homesteads safe, but they cannot burn a break around the homestead until the grass becomes sufficiently dry. I do not say that farmers should be allowed to burn when the risk of a bush fire is great. I have a farm at Moora, and I have been trying all through October this year to burn a break around the building, but I have not yet succeeded because the grass has not been dry enough. I want to give the farmer the right, within reason, to burn around his homestead, and make the homestead reasonably safe during the summer months, when there is a risk of fire; but under the clause he must go to the Minister to get permission to burn that break.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member's intention is good, but he is speaking in error. The clause refers only to fire-protected areas, and there are only two in the State, namely the forest areas at Mundaring and at Collie, and in those areas there are farms and townships.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8—Governor may declare prohibited time:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I hope the Minister proposes to allow the local authorities to act in consultation with the Government with regard to the prohibited periods.

The Minister for Lands: That has always been so.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: So long as that is to continue, I have no objection to raise, but I do not want dates fixed by Act of Parliament, because those dates must vary in different parts of the State.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is some confusion in the minds of hon. members in regard to burning periods. The dates are not being altered, and the position in that respect will remain the same as under the principal Act. Settlers can burn off during the whole year, even during prohibited periods, but they must do so subject

to certain conditions. For instance, if anyone desires to burn off he must get the permission of the Minister, but he must also observe the regulations that will be framed to require him to comply with certain conditions. The member for Irwin-Moore complains about the position from the 1st October to the 30th April. There is nothing to prevent settlers from burning off in that period, but they must comply with the restrictions that are set out. Then there are the prohibited periods that the Leader of the Opposition spoke of, and they are gazetted in the "Government Gazette."

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is the position to-day.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: And it will be the position if the Bill be passed. Even there, the settlers are not prohibited from burning off except to the extent that they are under the existing legislation. For instance a settler can burn within 10 chains of his homestead in order to protect his building, his barn, his haystack, his wheat-stack or other produce. But, on the other hand, he cannot set fire to his holding generally because that is in the prohibited time. But even under the Bill we extend that provision by giving settlers in the South-West authority to burn clover paddocks in order to secure the burr, subject to certain conditions. There is the prohibited time when no one would dream of setting fire to country because he would be afraid to do so. Nevertheless, we say that he can set a fire within 10 chains of his house in order to protect his property. In the most recent "Government Gazette" that I have, a number of prohibited periods are gazetted in respect of various road board areas.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 9—Penalty for lighting fires:

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: This clause is the one the Minister has been talking about with regard to burning off within 10 chains of a dwelling-house. Irrespective of whether this provision is in the old Act or not, I want it amended. Merely because legislation was good at a time when we were children, does not necessarily say that that is the type of legislation applicable to present-day conditions. I move an amendment—

That in line 8 of Subclause 2 after "produce" the words "or crops or stubble" be inserted.

If the farmer is to have the right, under certain conditions, to burn off the bush upon land between two plough breaks or spade breaks, between 8 p.m. and midnight, for the purpose of protecting his dwelling-house or other building, stack of hay, wheat or other produce, he should have the same right to protect his crop and stubble.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** I do not think the member for Irwin-Moore means what he says. If we agree to the amendment, no legislation at all will be necessary. The clause refers to the prohibited period when no sane man would attempt to burn off. In Moora the prohibited period is from the 31st October to the 15th February. That is the period gazetted at the request of the Moora Road Board. Now the hon. member wishes to extend the protection afforded in respect of dwelling houses, stacks and so on, to his 1,000-acre crop.

**Mr. Marshall:** He would require to have his crop well insured before he started.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** He certainly would.

**Hon. P. D. Ferguson:** But this refers to the area between breaks.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** The hon. member does not understand the position. If it could be brought home to him, he would agree that it was impossible. In the Moora district do not the farmers plough breaks before the 15th October?

**Hon. P. D. Ferguson:** How could they burn off before October? The rubbish would not burn.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** The member for Irwin-Moore wants to put the break round when the bush will burn. When everything is like tinder there is a danger of fire at any time. The hon. member wants to burn the whole country out. The road boards ask to have gazetted times when people shall not be allowed to burn off, and yet the hon. member says that is the time to set alight to fires.

**Hon. P. D. FERGUSON:** I will not allow the Minister to get away with tripe like that. The Minister says I want to set fire to the whole countryside. My intention is the very opposite. In the Bill the Minister proposes that the farmer will be able to burn between certain breaks in order to protect his house, stacks, and so on. All that I want is that privilege extended in respect of his crop or stubble. Exactly the opposite to what the Minister has suggested hap-

pens to every farmer within my district. When the ground is soft in winter, the farmer ploughs two breaks half-a-chain apart round his crop. When the grass is sufficiently dry between the breaks, he desires to burn off, and then he will have a break two chains wide around his crop. All that my amendment means is that the farmer will not be allowed to burn the section between the breaks so as to make assurance doubly sure. There is no justification for the attitude of the Minister, the petulant way in which he meets any suggestion to improve the Bill. It only annoys members. I want to see the Bill made workable, and the people I represent have urged me to secure for them the right to make their crops safe.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** The hon. member is getting further into trouble. He says the Moora Road Board asked the Minister for Lands to make a prohibited period in order that they might do certain things. That is not correct. They asked me to prohibit the area in keeping with the existing legislation, which does not allow anybody to burn during this specially prohibited period, except in the protection of homesteads. Now the hon. member says that the people of Moora want two firebreaks. I have been through the district, but I have not seen any breaks. The settler is allowed to burn within ten yards of his house, but only because of urgency; and even then he has to take special precautions. Within the prohibited period no man burns around his house unless in dire urgency. Yet the hon. member wants to depart from all experience. He declares that the farmers want to burn two breaks around their crops. I am sure that no farmer would do anything of the sort.

Amendment put and negatived.

**Mr. STUBBS:** I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of paragraph (1) of Sub-clause 3 "twenty" be struck out and "forty" inserted in lieu.

Many people have gone in for cultivation of subterranean clover on a large scale, and if the burn be limited to 20 acres it will cause great hardship, because it will mean cutting a 10ft. break down the middle of a paddock and so do injury to the growing clover. The farmers want the area doubled.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** I cannot agree to the amendment. It is a most dan-

gerous time for burning, but the position in regard to the clover is different. The clover burner must have a quick fire, and that means wind, because a slow fire would burn up all the burr. Had I followed my first impulse I would have made this burning from 8 o'clock at night. However, I made it 4 o'clock in the afternoon, but under special conditions with an area of only 20 acres at a time. If the hon. member were to make this 40 acres, he would be making the conditions very dangerous for his own people. An area of 20 acres is very much safer than one of 40 acres at a period of the year when fires are very dangerous.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. NORTH: Why should these fires have to be confined within definite set hours? It seems to me arbitrary to draw the line at, say, one minute, and then fine a man £20 for his first offence and £50 for his second offence. I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of paragraph (f) "approximately" be inserted before "between."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We do not want the word "approximately." It is too wide. We must have a definite hour fixed.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. STUBBS: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of paragraph (g) of Sub-clause 3 "three" be struck out and "five" inserted in lieu.

Five men would provide greater protection than could three.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have no objection to this, but it will be imposing on men conditions that they cannot stand up to.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Occupier to extinguish bush fire occurring on his land during prohibited times:

Mr. STUBBS: Sometimes it is very difficult for a man who sees a fire occur to notify someone else of it when he is himself trying to put it out. One of the road boards has a number of lakes within its area, and people camp around them. Very often these campers cause fires. If a fire breaks out, the owner of the property on which it occurs naturally tackles it at once. If he

has to leave it to notify the fire-control officer incalculable damage may be done. I move an amendment—

That after the word "purpose" in line 7 the following words be inserted:—"and means are available to do so without leaving the fire unattended."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot accept the amendment. If a man can extinguish a fire, he will do so; if he cannot extinguish it he will go for assistance. There is no chance of anyone being penalised under this clause.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I move an amendment—

That in line 10 the word "fifty" be struck out and "twenty" inserted in lieu.

I do not want anyone to be absolved from the duty of putting out a fire on his property if he sees it, but if he neglects to put out someone else's fire he should not be obliged to suffer the same penalty as if he deliberately set fire to the country. A penalty of £20 under this clause should be ample.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If a man proved that he tried to put out a fire and then went for assistance, he would suffer no penalty. He would only be penalised if he failed to do what is required of him by law. Most fires occur through neglect. The great fire in the South-West might not have swept the country if the person on whose property it originated had attempted to put it out. Some penalty should be provided for the man who neglects to extinguish a fire when he can possibly do so.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 12—Sale and use of wax matches may be prohibited:

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I move an amendment—

That all the words after "The" at the beginning of line 1 be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—"sale or use of wax matches by any person in any part of the State south of the twenty-eighth parallel of south latitude not being a goldfield or mineral field as defined by section three of the Mining Act, 1904, is hereby prohibited."

This leaves out the pastoral areas in the North and the mining areas, and will make the clause more effective than it is at present.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The amendment would prohibit the sale of wax matches in the metropolitan area. There is no occasion to do that.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: If they are sold in the metropolitan area they get into the farming areas.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: After including the metropolitan area the amendment excepts the forest areas, which are also a mineral field as well as a farming area. We cannot have that. The clause as printed provides all that is necessary. The Government can by regulation do all that is required.

Mr. MARSHALL: I differ from the Minister, though not because I represent an electorate which really does not enter into the argument. Why should the sale of wax matches be prohibited? In the country there are many mechanical contrivances which can be lighted only with a wax match, and not with a safety match.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: The custom is to use a wick; not a match at all.

Mr. MARSHALL: If there is a substitute for the match, the difficulty is overcome. However, it is not necessary to prohibit the sale of wax matches.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: If the sale is not prohibited, the use cannot be prevented. If people can buy wax matches, irresponsible persons will use them. A safety match can be lighted only on the box, whereas a wax match dropped on the ground can be lighted by treading on it. Again, a wax match lying on the ground can be lighted by the heat of the sun. Picnic parties will use wax matches and leave them about the country, with disastrous results. At the suggestion of the Crown Law Department I have omitted the mining areas, where some people find it impossible to use any other than wax matches.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 13—Other offences:

Mr. STYANTS: I move an amendment—  
That paragraph (b) be struck out.

The objection to the paragraph is that it is a very old provision and one liable to create much trouble. The fact that it has remained inoperative is due chiefly to its being unnecessary and unwarranted. If

one were out hunting say 15 miles from civilisation, any person representing himself as owner or occupier of land or a servant of the owner or occupier could seize one's gun for the purpose of examining it. In the early days, I had to hunt through the bush with a gun to supplement the larder, and I can certify that no bushman will hand over his gun to any person unless satisfied firstly that the person is reliable and secondly that he is a person authorised to make the demand. The person demanding the gun might be of unsound mind. A gun is not a menace from the aspect of setting fire to the bush. The risk is in the ammunition. There is no need, therefore, to give even authorised persons the right to seize firearms. Vendors of up-to-date ammunition state definitely that there is no danger of setting fire in the case of that ammunition. The provision might be necessary in the case of re-loaded cartridges, but the practice of re-loading obtains only to a limited extent. The person to whom the gun is handed over might damage it, or damage the owner with it. The matter should be left to members of the police force.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I was not keen on this provision myself, but it is an existing law, and I have made some inquiries about it. The provision operates only between the 1st October and the 30th April. Nobody has any right to be shooting on private property without the consent of the owner or occupier.

Mr. Hegney: The man shooting on the place could be prosecuted for trespass.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He has no right to be there without the consent of the owner or occupier. The clause is chiefly concerned about wadding. I am informed that many people re-fill cartridges, and that the wadding they use is particularly dangerous if shot out on to grass.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Most kangaroo-shooters do what you say.

Mr. STYANTS: Most kangaroo-shooters do not use wadding at all. What the Minister has been dealing with is paragraph (a), to which I do not object. My objection is to paragraph (b). I know many persons who would not be able to state the composition of a wad in a cartridge if it were taken out and shown to them. The

modern sporting rifle or shot-gun, particularly the automatic, is a delicate mechanism. If some person who has never seen an automatic shotgun starts pulling it about he will do some damage to the gun or to himself. The point raised by the Minister that no person has any right to go on another person's property can be dealt with under separate legislation.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** For the reasons I gave in respect of paragraph (a) I oppose the amendment to strike out paragraph (b). It is not possible to ascertain whether the ammunition is such that the owner of the gun should not use unless the gun is taken for examination. The paragraph does not give any owner the right to break or damage a gun. I should say he would be liable for damages if he did.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	16
Noes	..	..	..	..	20
					—
Majority against	..	..	..	..	4
					—

## AYES.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver  
Mr. Coverley  
Mr. Cross  
Mr. Fox  
Mr. Hegney  
Miss Holman  
Mr. Johnson  
Mr. Marshall

Mr. Needham  
Mr. Rodoreda  
Mr. Sleeman  
Mr. Styants  
Mr. Tonkin  
Mr. Warner  
Mr. Watts  
Mr. Doney

(Teller.)

## NOES.

Mr. Donat  
Mr. Ferguson  
Mr. Hawke  
Mr. Hill  
Mr. Latham  
Mr. Mann  
Mr. McDonald  
Mr. McLarty  
Mr. Millington  
Mr. North

Mr. Nulsen  
Mr. Patrick  
Mr. Sampson  
Mr. Seward  
Mr. Thorn  
Mr. Troy  
Mr. Welsh  
Mr. Willcock  
Mr. Wise  
Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

## PAIR.

AVE.  
Mr. Stubbs

NO  
Mr. F. O. L. Smith

Amendment thus negatived.

**Mr. WATTS:** I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of paragraph (d) the words "and no pedestrian" be added.

Amendment put and passed.

**Mr. WATTS:** I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of paragraph (d) after the word "vehicle" the words "(or in the case of a pedestrian throw down or drop)" be inserted.

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

Clause 14—Lighting fires in the open:

**Hon. P. D. FERGUSON:** I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of paragraph (a) of Subclause (1) "three" be struck out and the word "ten" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

**Mr. SLEEMAN:** I move—

That Subclause 3 be struck out.

Notwithstanding what the Minister tried to say the other evening about the inconsistency of some members, including myself, I am satisfied that members will be able to judge whether or not I at all times, when possible, have tried to get similar clauses to this struck out of other measures. On nearly every occasion on which I have noticed them I have opposed them, but six of the measures the Minister quoted the other night were debated between 1902 and 1923, when I was not here, so it would have been impossible for me to oppose the clauses on those occasions. On nearly every occasion I have moved to strike out similar provisions, and I shall continue to do so. When I was in the Chair recently, a similar clause was passed in the Fair Rents Bill. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned it but no one else appeared to do so, and it was agreed to. The subclause is opposed to the very essence of British justice, and I am not prepared to allow any such provision to be passed with my vote. Recently the High Court of Australia commented on the obligation imposed on the Crown to prove its case up to the hilt. Such a provision as this makes for lackadaisical methods on the part of the police. All they will have to do when they grab an individual is to say to him, "Now prove that you have not done it." The Minister may say that the subclause does not mean what I contend it does. Nevertheless, I claim that it throws the onus of proof on the defendant, and that is against British justice.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** I have some regard for British justice, which is sometimes badly mauled. The existing law provides that every person who is discovered or proved to have been with any party which has lighted or used a fire or to have been present when it was lighted or used contrary to the Act shall be deemed guilty as having acted contrary to Section 10. The Bill will provide the individual with an opportunity to excuse himself. It will en-

able the defendant to prove that he took the necessary precautions set out in the clause.

Mr. Patrick: But the authorities will know that he was with the party that lit the fire.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, but it sets out that all the man will have to prove is that he cleared a space of stubble, scrub and other inflammable material within a radius of 10ft. of the fire, and that he had complied with the other requirements. If he set a light to a fire at all in the prescribed period it would be unlawful, but if he complied with the conditions set out, he could give that as his excuse. What is wrong with that? The prosecution has to prove that the party set alight to the fire and the subclause provides the individual with an opportunity to prove that he took all lawful precautions.

Mr. STYANTS: I support the amendment. It is against the principle of British justice, which has always laid it down that the accused person must be regarded as innocent until proved guilty. The subclause is a contravention of that principle. To me an even more objectionable feature of the subclause is the latter portion, which provides an inducement to one or more members of the party to inform against his friends.

The Minister for Lands: That provides a further excuse.

Mr. STYANTS: The subclause sets out that the individual is to be deemed to have acted in contravention of the provision unless he proves that he used his best endeavours to comply with the requirements, but was prevented from doing so by another member or other members of the party. There was a time in history when informers were shot on sight, yet here we provide an opportunity that will induce individuals to act as informers against their friends. The Minister said that the prosecution had to prove that the fire was lit by the party, but the subclause sets out that the members of that party are to be regarded as guilty of an offence unless they can prove that they used their best endeavours to comply with the requirements of the clause, or that some members of the party prevented others from doing so. For those two reasons I hope the Committee will not agree to this Subclause 3.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is in the subclause no inducement whatever

for one person to inform on another. All members of the party are held to be equally responsible for the infringement of the Act. If a man takes the precautions laid down in the Act, his lighting of the fire was lawful. All that he has to prove is that he lit the fire, cleared a radius of 10 feet around it and that in the end he extinguished the fire. At a time when it is dangerous to light fires, the man who lights one without taking the stipulated precautions should not go without penalty.

Mr. SLEEMAN: One would think the supporters of the amendment were condoning the offence set out in Subclause 1. That is not the position at all. We agree with the punishment of a man who should be punished, but we say he should not be made to prove that he took the stipulated precautions. The onus of proof that he did not do so should be on the Crown. The whole principle in the subclause is wrong. The police should charge a man with having lit a fire without taking due precautions, and then prove to the satisfaction of the magistrate that the accused is guilty.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Suppose a fire has been lit and has got away, causing great damage. Certain people have been prosecuted for lighting the fire. But the lawful excuse for having done so is that in doing so they complied with the Act.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It is provided in the clause that the offender shall be deemed to have acted in contravention of the law unless he proves before a magistrate that he used his best endeavours to comply with the law, or alternatively that he was prevented by another person from so doing.

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

Ayes .. .. .	19
Noes .. .. .	14
	—
Majority for .. ..	5
	—

#### ASS.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. North
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Cross	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Fox	Mr. Styants
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Miss Holmes	Mr. Warner
Mr. Latham	Mr. Wallis
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Needham	

(Teller.)

Mr. Doust  
Mr. Hawke  
Mr. McDonald  
Mr. McLarty  
Mr. Nulsen  
Mr. Patrick  
Mr. Sampson

## NORA.

Mr. Seward  
Mr. Thora  
Mr. Troy  
Mr. Welsh  
Mr. Willcock  
Mr. Wise  
Mr. Doney

(Teller.)

## PAIR

AVE. No.  
Mr. Stubbs | Mr. F. C. L. Smith

Amendment thus passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.46 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Wednesday, 17th November, 1937.*

Bills:	Financial Emergency Tax Assessment Act	PAGE
Amendment, 2R., Com.	.....	1820
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Income Tax Assessment, 2R.	.....	1837
Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance, 2R.	.....	1848
Land Act Amendment, 2R.,	.....	1848

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

### BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. C. H. WITTENOOM** (South-East) [4.35]: I intend to support the second reading of the Bill. Though we all dislike taxation, we appreciate that the Government must have money. In Committee I hope that the Bill will receive considerable amendment.

Member: If it reaches Committee.

**HON. C. H. WITTENOOM**: One hon. member suggests that it might not reach Committee, but I think we shall have to pass the second reading. The financial emergency tax was introduced several years ago when unemployment was proving such a heavy burden on the people. As the tax was inaugurated for that reason, it is only fair that most people in the State should subscribe something towards it, though I do not infer that we should expect to collect from everybody. The tax obviously is necessary; no one denies that, although some members during the debate have stated that the depression is almost a thing of the past. We have to admit, however, that the effects of the depression are still with us and are likely to remain with us for a considerable time to come. I pay a good many employees, and personally I have not heard any of them complain at having to pay this tax. In fact, I believe most of them recognise that they receive many gratuitous advantages from the State, and that they have little to pay in the shape of other taxation, except, of course, indirect taxation, which everybody has to pay. They enjoy the advantages of free education, of police protection, and of hospital service, and the unemployed, of course, receive assistance. Members have suggested that the name of financial emergency tax is no longer applicable, but I do not know that the title matters much. After all, what's in a name? When the next depression arrives, which we hope will not be in our lifetime, I do not think any difficulty will be experienced in finding a title for any fresh form of taxation that might be considered necessary. I strongly object to Clauses 4 and 5 of the Bill, and shall oppose them in Committee. I consider it most unjust that if any employer paying wages fails to carry out certain provisions, he should be held liable to pay the whole of the tax that should have been paid by the employee. Far worse than that, however, is the amendment proposing to make that liability retrospective for three years. Everyone is liable to make a mistake; people often forget to stamp a document, but this is too serious a matter in which to permit the Government to go back for three years to collect from employers. Realising that the Government must have money, I shall vote for the second reading.