

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 5th September, 1940.

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

QUESTIONS (2)—AGRICULTURE.

Eviction of Farmers.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Premier: As it is not the practice of the Government to disclose matters of policy in answer to questions, and as the subject matter of questions 3 and 4 asked by me yesterday, relating to the eviction of farmers from their holdings, are of the utmost importance to the farming community, when will he disclose the policy of his Government on this outstanding matter?

The PREMIER replied: As will be seen from a reply given yesterday by the Minister for Agriculture to a question asked by the member for Irwin-Moore, this matter is receiving careful consideration. It will be dealt with as one of urgency. It is likely that a conference of financial interests will shortly be held to discuss the matter further.

Drought-Stricken Stock.

Mr. WATTS (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands: In view of the urgency of the stock feed question to the agricultural community, will he lay on the Table of the House the letter received from the institution which, as stated by him yesterday, is withholding a decision?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: As the Premier has already pointed out, this matter is receiving fullest consideration and it is likely that the Government will, in the near future, call together in conference the persons interested. I would much rather

that the hon. member's question embraced the tabling of all the papers referring to the subject.

Mr. WATTS: Would the Minister be good enough to table the papers to-day or at a subsequent sitting?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have no objection to tabling all the papers.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to the Speaker (Hon. J. B. Sleeman) and to Hon. P. Collier (Boulder) on the ground of ill-health.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, McNess Housing Trust Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Premier.

2, Life Assurance Companies Act Amendment.

Introduced by Mr. Watts.

BILL—KALGOORLIE HEALTH AUTHORITY LOAN.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [4.35] in moving the second reading said: This is a short measure relating to a loan of £34,500 raised in 1938 by the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council as a health authority, for the purpose of installing and constructing sewerage works in the municipality. The actual cost of the sewerage scheme to date, inclusive of an amount spent on the restoration of lanes, totals £28,308 14s. 11d., the balance on hand being £6,191 5s. 1d. It is estimated, however, that approximately £200 will be required to restore the lanes to their former state, thus leaving an unexpended balance of approximately £6,000. The fact that the actual cost of the work was £6,000 below the original estimate was due to several favourable circumstances, the chief of which was the council's great fortune in obtaining the services of a competent engineer who modified the original plans and bought all materials in a particularly good market. Another factor was that the council carried out the scheme by day labour, thus saving the profits that a contractor would have made.

The object of the Bill is to give authority to the municipality to use the £6,000 unexpended balance for works other than those for which the original loan was raised. Provision is made in the Bill that before any such expenditure is incurred it must be approved by a resolution passed by an absolute majority of the members of the council, and the resolution confirmed by a meeting of ratepayers in the Kalgoorlie municipal district. Without the authority given by the Bill, the council will not be able to use the £6,000 for any other purpose, and I feel sure that in view of the safeguards inserted in the measure, the House will agree to its enactment. I understand the same procedure was adopted with respect to the Northam and Geraldton municipalities, Bills being passed to enable the authorities in those centres to utilise unexpended loan money. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Sampson, debate adjourned.

BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

BILL—AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd August.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [4.40]: This Bill proposes to amend the Agricultural Products Act, 1929, in order to give the Department of Agriculture power to enforce stricter control over the importation of young fruit trees and vines. That the department should have such control is, in my opinion, very necessary. Often the nurseries supply very disappointing stock, some of it suffering from fungus diseases or stunted in growth. I was rather surprised to learn from the statement of the Minister in moving the second reading that we import on an average 80,000 fruit trees annually.

Mr. Warner: That statement surprised most of us.

Mr. THORN: Many of the imported trees are undoubtedly rubbish. Seemingly there is scope in this State for an up-to-date nursery, and I think our nurserymen have lacked initiative by not seizing the opportunity to raise more fruit trees.

Mr. Warner: Some of the nurserymen used to import them from the other States.

Mr. THORN: They still do so. Seeing that sufficient trees are imported annually to plant 800 acres of orchard, it is time our nurserymen woke up and made provision to meet the State's requirements.

Mr. Warner: Is the Minister's advice correct that 75 per cent. of our requirements are imported?

Mr. THORN: Yes, and the 75 per cent. represents 80,000 fruit trees. The Minister also referred to stunted trees. There is nothing worse than a stunted plant of any kind, because of the difficulty of getting a stunted tree, vine or plant to pick up and become healthy and vigorous. Further, the thorough preparation of the soil for the planting of an orchard entails considerable expense, and when an orchardist receives poor stock that will not respond, it is most disappointing. Even if the orchardist decided to pull out unsatisfactory stock and re-plant with healthy stock, he must lose a year's production which, on an orchard of average size, would represent £500 on the first payable crop. As it is evidently necessary to import fruit trees from the other States, we should ensure that the stock is of a high standard and healthy. Otherwise, quite a big loss will be incurred by those engaged in the industry. I think every member may safely support the Bill, because it will rectify a condition of affairs badly in need of rectification and will be of assistance to the fruit-growing industry. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [4.45]: I also support the second reading. I am aware that some nurserymen, on finding that the bud has failed to take, re-bud in the following year. By that time the stock has become old and is not as vigorous as it would have been had the regular practice been observed. That is the opinion of some orchardists, but one grower said he considered that a tree was all the better for having another year. I feel sure, however, that he is quite wrong in that opinion.

Mr. Thorn: Quite wrong.

Mr. SAMPSON: The consensus of opinion certainly favours destruction where the bud has failed to take and the usefulness of the stock is impaired. The old practice of planting a wide range of trees is now out of date. Orchardists are rather inclined to specialise and limit the trees planted to those varieties for which there is a demand either locally or by export. Many varieties of fruit cannot be exported, and thus the number of export varieties is strictly limited.

Imported trees are often fumigated to prevent the introduction of disease. I have seen what appeared to have been very good citrus trees practically destroyed and certainly greatly retarded in their growth as a result of excessive fumigation. When they were delivered to the growers, the leaves were falling off. Such fumigation must prove a serious shock to a citrus tree. Undoubtedly the Bill will serve a good purpose. I do not think the Minister made any reference to local nurserymen, but I daresay that locally produced trees are also subject to examination.

Mr. Warner: There is evidently a good market awaiting the local nurserymen.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes; they understand the business and should be in a better position to supply healthy trees budded on to good stock than are nurserymen in other States, seeing that their trees have to be transported a long distance and subject to fumigation. Undoubtedly all fruit trees should be subject to examination. As the member for Toodyay said, it is a very serious matter to an orchardist if he is supplied with trees that are unsuitable or trees that have been injured. The principle contained in the Bill might well be extended and, for the protection of growers, made to cover locally-grown as well as imported stock. I feel sure that the Bill will be passed. The minds of growers have long been exercised by the difficulty arising from the lack of protection, the difficulty of getting sound, healthy trees, and the difficulty of getting them properly described. To these matters the department might well give greater attention.

MR. HOLMAN (Forrest) [4.50]: I also compliment the Minister upon his introduction of this measure, one for which there is great need. One point in the Minister's re-

marks struck me very forcibly, namely, that 75 per cent. of the trees that are used in our fruit industry come from the other States. If it were possible to give that matter enough publicity, our own nurserymen might be induced to enter the business themselves on a larger scale. We know that nurserymen in the Eastern States conduct extensive operations in this direction, but it seems to me there is no reason why our own experts should not supply a greater proportion of our needs. We pride ourselves on our fruit-growing capabilities, particularly in the Swan, Toodyay and Forrest electorates. We all desire that this industry should continue successfully, and must agree that it is desirable to protect it in every way. Seeing that the Western Australian Fruitgrowers' Association has endorsed the measure, very little more need be said by members in support of it. I feel sure the House will endorse the thanks expressed by previous speakers to the Minister for bringing down this Bill, and that it will have a speedy passage.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—LICENSED SURVEYORS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd August.

Mr. MANN (Beverley) [4.55]: This Bill seems to be in order and I have pleasure in supporting it. I understand that in Committee the Leader of the Opposition intends to move an amendment.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1, 2,—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 4 of the principal Act:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: According to the Act, the Surveyor-General has control of the

Lands and Surveys Department. No provision is, however, made for an acting or deputy Surveyor-General. The clause in question states that the Surveyor-General shall be the chairman of the licensing board. Should he be ill, out of the State, or engaged in other duties such as that of a Royal Commissioner, the board would be unable to meet. My desire, therefore, is to provide for an acting surveyor-general or a deputy who can take the place of the Surveyor-General.

The Minister for Lands: The definition would have to be amended.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not know that that would overcome the difficulty. Surveyors may require to be licensed, but that cannot happen unless the board meets. It is important that such work should not be held up because of the absence of the Surveyor-General. Again, certain documents might have to be signed by the Surveyor-General, but as a rule his deputy acts for him in that respect. I have endeavoured to work in an amendment to this clause, but the only thing I can suggest is that the interpretation be amended to provide that wherever the Surveyor-General is mentioned the term shall include also the acting Surveyor-General.

The Minister for Lands: That might suit for this purpose, but not generally.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Bill deals only with the licensing of surveyors. If later on the Minister found himself without a Surveyor-General or an acting Surveyor-General he might have to ask Parliament to pass an amendment to overcome the difficulty. It would be better to make that provision now. Perhaps he would consult with the Crown Law Department concerning the matter and have the necessary amendment made in another place.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am prepared to accept the last suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition by inserting in this clause a subparagraph to meet that position, should it arise. I would prefer that the hon. gentleman did not resist the measure at this stage.

Mr. SAMPSON: Under Subclause (3) the Governor may, on a recommendation of the majority of members of the board, remove any member, other than the Surveyor-General, from the board. That seems drastic; there should be a right of appeal. If there was justification for the removal, probably an appeal would not be lodged.

In a small board, however, a member might find himself no longer qualified to sit because a majority of the board recommended his removal. I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to subclause (3):—"subject to the right of appeal to the Minister."

Appointees to the Board are deserving of at least this protection.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have no intention of agreeing to the amendment. If a majority of the board considered that one of its members because of unprofessional conduct or for any other reason deemed sufficient, was not fit to remain on the board, the majority would recommend the Minister to have him removed.

Mr. Sampson: That member might have a complete defence.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Surely any recommendation of that character would receive the closest scrutiny and the most careful consideration. I do not believe that ever a case would arise when it would be necessary for a professional man to appeal against any decision of his fellow-members on the board.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 27th August. Mr. Withers in the Chair; the Premier (for the Minister for Justice) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 76 (partly considered):

HON. W. D. JOHNSON: When the clause was under discussion previously, I pointed out that under the principal Act any person, regardless of whether he was qualified to be on the roll or was merely a new arrival from any other part of Australia, could nominate. That circumstance often puts the State unnecessarily to the expense of an election. I am not complaining, but merely trying to avoid unnecessary expense. There was an instance in which a man nominated who was not entitled to sit in the House, in view of the

time at which he had left New South Wales, or even to be on the roll. Yet that man caused the expense of an election. I suggested to the Minister that he should go into the question whether the word "person" might not be altered to "elector." Some people think the suggestion is unduly restrictive. They raise the point that possibly a person eligible to be an elector might, through inadvertence, have his name removed from the roll. The word "elector" would disqualify such a person. However, that is a mere detail. "Elector" really means an elector on the roll, or a person qualified to be on the roll. The change would make it clear that a new arrival was not eligible for nomination simply because he happened to be a person. The matter involves protection of the State's revenue, and we hear a good deal about protecting it. The object of the amendment is to place the matter on a commonsense basis. Another point raised was that possibly just at the time nominations closed, a young man would become 21 years of age. Although he was not eligible to be enrolled, being under age, his interests, it has been suggested, might be injured seeing that he may have made every attempt to qualify himself to become a candidate. At the time nominations closed, it might possibly be a matter of a few hours only before the young man was actually of age and entitled to be enrolled. Such objections represent merely details; they do not affect the principle.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: It does in regard to the Legislative Council.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON: I am speaking of the Legislative Assembly. I want to abolish the Legislative Council altogether. I have been talking on that subject for 20 odd years.

Mr. Watts: And that is as far as you are likely to get with it.

Mr. Doney: At any rate, is that suggestion embodied in the Bill?

HON. W. D. JOHNSON: No; it is distinctly out of order to refer to it. I emphasise that in the interest of economy and common sense, the word "person" should be altered to read "elector."

The Premier: Do you propose to move an amendment?

HON. W. D. JOHNSON: I am not in a position to do so at the moment; the understanding was that the Minister would go

into the matter. I suggest that we agree to the clause as it stands and the Government can have the necessary amendment made in the Legislative Council.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Section 87, repeal and new section. Withdrawal or death of candidate after nomination:

HON. N. KEENAN: The effect of the clause in its present form is that if there were four candidates, one might be in a hopeless position and certain to lose his deposit—he would probably be a Communist—in consequence of which he might commit suicide or otherwise disappear, and the whole election would have to be fought over again. I quite admit that we should change the law to meet the situation where only two candidates are standing for election and one dies. The mere fact of the individual's death results in the other person becoming entitled to be elected. In such circumstances the law should be changed, but if there are three or more candidates I do not think we should call upon them all to incur their electioneering expenses a second time. The death of one candidate might take place on polling day. If the whole election had to be fought over again, not only would the candidates have to go to the expense of fighting the issue once more, but the State would be required to duplicate expenditure for the same purpose. The alteration in the law should apply where there were fewer than three candidates. I think that would meet the situation. For certain reasons I do not wish to move an amendment, but this is a matter in which we can easily go too far in our desire to achieve our objective.

The PREMIER: Irrespective of whether people agree or disagree with the principle, we must realise that these are the days of party Governments. In consequence, we must take cognisance of the fact. Bearing in mind the latest election for this Chamber, had the member for Nedlands died—God forbid such a disastrous eventuality!—his party would have lost its nominee and the result of the election might have affected the fate of the Government. We know that parties select their candidates to represent them at elections. In one constituency a man may stand as an Independent. No one knows how he may act, and yet the whole fate of the Government or of the prospects

of the Opposition may be affected by his election. It may be that in one electorate the opinion of the electors on a matter of policy is sought, but, in the circumstances I have indicated, no such result would be obtained. In these days of small majorities in Parliaments, it might be possible that the whole policy of the country might be changed for the full term of a Parliament because of such a happening. Eventualities such as those referred to, which no one could foresee, might involve such drastic changes that it is reasonable and fair to suggest that, even if such considerations did enter into an election, while inconvenience and extra expense might be involved in a further contest, the electors concerned should at least have an opportunity to vote for the candidate whom they desired to represent them. As I say, the electors of a constituency might find themselves represented by a candidate who could not be said to represent more than one-third of the people on the roll. It is to overcome such a position that the Bill is introduced. I agree that much inconvenience, expense and trouble will be incurred in conducting an election, but the result that will be achieved if the Bill passes is worth all that. An amendment is necessary as the clause refers to a "returning officer," whereas "presiding officer" is intended. I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of paragraph (c) of Sub-clause 2 the words "Deputy Returning" be struck out and the word "Presiding" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER: Different circumstances arise in Council elections and Assembly elections and the Bill deals with the law relating to both Houses. I move an amendment—

That after the word "Officer" in line 7 the words "or Deputy Returning Officer" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. HOLMAN: I move an amendment—

That the following subclause be added:—
(3) If, after polling day and before the counting of the votes in the election has been completed, a candidate dies, and on the completion of the count of the votes it is found that such candidate, if still living, would have been entitled to be declared and to be returned as elected, no candidate shall be returned as elected at the election and Section eighty-eight of this Act shall apply.

A candidate is not elected until he is declared elected. Accordingly, provision should be made for the intervening period. The only

reference to the point that I can find in the parent Act is in Section 87, which this Bill proposes to strike out. There is a possibility of such a position arising, though I hope it never will. We should, however, be prepared to meet it. In the previous election, a certain returning officer did not exactly understand the position and worked at high speed to endeavour to get the poll counted. No wonder. Since then I have discussed the point with Government officials and with some members of the legal profession and find there is a wide divergence of opinion. Some assert that after the poll has been counted it is but fair and reasonable that the candidate who secured the highest number of votes should be elected; but the fact remains that until he is declared elected he is not a member of Parliament. We do not receive our salary until we are declared elected.

The Premier: Yes. Members get their salary from election day.

Hon. N. Keenan: The hon. member must have missed something.

Mr. HOLMAN: I did not count it as closely as that. Because of the wide divergence of opinion I have mentioned we should prepare for the eventuality, otherwise much legal squabbling might ensue and that should be avoided, if possible. This amendment also affects the point raised by the Premier. One of the most important points, however, is that if the successful candidate dies and the other candidate is declared elected he will not mirror the thought of the majority of the electors. That majority should be given the opportunity of securing a candidate who will fairly represent their views. I do not think there is need for me to debate the point further. I trust the Committee will agree to the amendment.

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

Clauses 4, 5, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 29th August.

Mr. PATRICK (Greenough) [5.34]: In many respects the Bill is similar to that which had a very smooth passage in this

House last session but which was regarded in another place as being highly contentious legislation. There is no doubt that some amendment of the Act is necessary, because it is obvious that changes have taken place in machinery, changes that were not contemplated when the original Act was introduced. The Minister referred to refrigerating machinery, apart from small domestic plants from which not much danger need be feared and which do not come under this legislation. There is no doubt that in the larger plants gases are developed and that those gases are highly poisonous. They are used under great pressure and consequently the plants must be in the hands of capable persons. As the Minister pointed out, they must also be controlled in the buildings where they are erected to the extent that the gases must not be allowed to penetrate to other parts of the establishment.

The Premier: Or even next door.

Mr. PATRICK: Yes. I can instance what happened in the town represented by the Premier, where a refrigerating plant exploded and the gases might easily have affected everyone in the vicinity. The Minister also outlined other amendments which were necessary because of the introduction of new fuels, such as oil and pulverised coal. An objection raised by members in another place had reference to engineers' certificates. I read the debate that took place there, and it seemed to me that the opposition was in a general sense; in fact, one member said that this was highly contentious legislation, and should not be introduced in war time. An objection that came from the Minister's own side on the subject of engineer's certificates was that many engineers erecting plants on the goldfields were self-taught men who did not possess qualifications. Of course we find that in all walks of life; we find men who are not certificated quite superior and more practical than those in possession of certificates. At the same time we must follow a standard. Really the objections raised in another place were such that the Bill might have been allowed to go through the second reading and then dealt with in Committee.

The Premier: It was late in the session, unfortunately.

Mr. PATRICK: Yes, and there was not sufficient time to deal with it properly. I had no serious objection to the Bill as it was introduced last session, though I do not pre-

tend to know a good deal of matters that are highly technical. I do not suppose many of the members of this House do either, probably not even the Minister who introduced the Bill. We are largely in the hands of departmental officials. I do not know whether that is always a good thing and whether it is always safe to trust to their judgment. There have been occasions when we have allowed perfectly innocent-looking matters to slip through and then later unexpectedly found to be cropping up difficulties that were not contemplated. A Bill of this type, as is done in America, should be referred to a standing committee, and even though the members of that committee may not be experts, they are capable of sifting evidence and obtaining advice from independent experts. However, I support the second reading.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [5.38] I said last year on a somewhat similar Bill that I felt quite unable to say whether it was a good or a bad Bill. I consider it is a good Bill and, as the previous speaker has said, it is necessary to amend the Act so as to bring the legislation for the inspection of machinery up to date, having regard to the great changes that have taken place in many classes of machinery. I appreciate the action of the Minister for Mines in submitting the Bill to the House but with many members I agree that we cannot quite judge the effect of it. I would have liked some assurance that it is not likely to be too far-reaching. There are many mechanical devices driven by electricity or steam or charcoal gas which under modern conditions are brought to every home and to farms and stations where it is now quite usual for all kinds of machinery to be a normal factor of the owner's business. It will be rather hard if we impose restrictions on the use of such machinery. If there had to be a preliminary examination of a man's qualifications to use such machinery, and annual permits had to be obtained before those particular contrivances could be used, the many obligations that are now imposed by law on the conduct of almost every class of business would thereby be added to. Consequently I would like the Minister to give the House an assurance that the Bill will not place any undue restrictions on people who have occasion to use various classes of machinery and mechanical contrivances in

their homes, on their farms and in their businesses in such cases where the danger of accident is not very great. On the general principle that the Bill is needed to bring the Act up to date, I propose to support the second reading, but would like the Minister to inform the House of the extent to which the Bill goes. I hope that before the measure is finally agreed to there will be some expression of expert advice from qualified people in order that hon. members may be assured that the measure will not be too far-reaching.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville—in reply) [5.43]: The only assurance I can give to the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) is that so far as I know there is no possibility of the Bill interfering with mechanical contrivances in the places he mentioned. As I said before, the Bill deals with refrigeration. It contains a definition of "unit system," as meaning "a system which can be removed from the user's premises without disconnecting any parts containing refrigerant." In view of that definition no house refrigerators would come under the scope of the Act; that is to say, no refrigerators that can be removed from a house without any parts being disconnected. I have not had one complaint about the provisions in the Bill. When I introduce a measure I generally hear very quickly whether anybody is likely to be adversely affected by that measure, but so far no criticism has reached me. Mechanical contrivances on farms are governed by the present Act.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—RESERVES (GOVERNMENT DOMAIN).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 29th August.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [5.50]: Just before the adjournment of the House last Thursday, I had quoted the opinions of three leading architects of this State to show that

there would be no difficulty as regards the foundations for a building on this particular block, or in dealing with the seepage which is said to exist along the whole front of that locality. The Town Planning Commissioner, Mr. Davidson, gave evidence before the committee, and his opinion was that it would be an ideal site for public buildings, provided, as the Leader of the Opposition said, the site of the Christian Brothers' College was acquired. The reason why Mr. Davidson made the stipulation was that at the time the committee had not evolved the idea of providing a road along the eastern side of the site recommended, and I think all the members of the committee were of opinion that it would be absolutely essential to have a roadway on the eastern side if the block was to be used for this purpose. Had Mr. Davidson known that later on the committee would have recommended a 66ft. roadway along the eastern alignment of the block, I feel sure he would not have made that definite qualification about acquiring the Christian Brothers' College site. Amongst the other witnesses were Mr. Allingham, representing the Perth Chamber of Commerce, and Inspector Campbell, who is in charge of traffic in the metropolitan area. Inspector Campbell expressed the opinion that if the Government offices were erected on the Government Domain site, no traffic problem would be created. He thought it would be particularly free in that respect as there would be the Riverside-drive and the terrace, as well as the new road.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The new road will have a very steep grade.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes, but there would really be no need to use it to any great extent. The new road need not necessarily be carried right through, but could be used to serve the purpose of giving access to the Government buildings.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I thought the buildings were to have an east-west layout.

Mr. STYANTS: Anyhow, to build up the foundations so that the grade to the river frontage could be reduced would not be an insuperable difficulty. The Leader of the Opposition raised the question whether the whole of the Government departments would be housed in the new buildings, and instanced the Tourist Bureau. I agree entirely that it would be inadvisable to move the Tourist Bureau to the domain site and house it in the proposed new buildings. If the hon. member looks at page 7 of the evi-

dence at the bottom right-hand corner, he will find that the Principal Architect excluded quite a number of departments that he considered could not be suitably housed there. I should say offhand that one of those departments would be the Child Welfare Department.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Public Service Commissioner is the man who decides.

Mr. STYANTS: The plan drawn up by the Principal Architect does not provide for the departments set out in the right-hand bottom corner of page 7. There are nine or ten of those departments. Another matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition was that of a bridge across the river. The inference to be drawn from his remarks was that, if Government buildings were erected on the domain site, the State would be involved in the expense of putting a bridge across the river at that point.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That was to give ready access.

Mr. STYANTS: It would not be fair to burden the proposed Government buildings with the cost of erecting a bridge over the river. Everyone realises that sooner or later some more convenient means than exist at present must be provided for getting to the southern suburbs. I think we can all agree that if some competent authority found this to be the most suitable position for a bridge across the river, it would be a great convenience to the people of the southern suburbs to be able to proceed straight across the bridge to the site of the Government offices. Another matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition was that of financing the cost of the buildings. He seemed to have some complaint on the score that the money was already available for the purpose. The complaint we usually have is that finance is not available and that we have to float a loan and bear the consequent interest charges for such proposals.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You will have to pay interest on the money proposed to be used.

Mr. STYANTS: Yes, but it will be a matter of one Government department lending to another, which is entirely different from borrowing from an outside source.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The same amount of interest would still have to be paid.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the member for Kalgoorlie that I will not permit any discussion in regard to financing

unless by way of comparing the different sites. There is no provision in this Bill for the financing of the buildings.

Mr. STYANTS: One point that greatly influenced me was that if the proposal is adopted, of the eight acres to be excised from the Government Domain, only about $1\frac{3}{4}$ acres will be used for actual buildings. The remainder of the area can be converted into gardens and a breathing space for the people of the city. This will leave something in the vicinity of six acres for that purpose, and one can visualise what an asset this will be to the people of the city, not only in the future but also at present. If we can have another six acres of garden comparable with that at Stirling Square, it will certainly be a distinct advantage.

In my opinion neither the Government Domain nor the Parliament House area provides the ideal site. To each of them there are certain objections. What impressed me greatly was that no serious objection was raised by any professional man to the domain site. I took particular care to ask each of them whether he saw anything that was definitely objectionable in the domain site, and the most serious objection advanced was that it would necessitate people having business to transact at the Government offices walking a little further than they have to walk at present. The additional distance would be about 10 chains—something like 200 yards—so I do not consider that to be any serious objection. Probably it would be beneficial to the health of office-workers if they had to walk an extra 200 yards.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I think it is more like 400 yards.

Mr. STYANTS: No, it is 14 chains from Barrack street, but from the site of the present Titles Office and the Lands Office the distance is 10 chains. Those are exact measurements. It was the opinion of three of the four architects called before the Committee that Parliament House would not be dwarfed by the erection of suitable buildings for public offices. It may fairly be said that this was the consensus of opinion. Mr. Clare was definitely of opinion, however, that such buildings could not be erected without dwarfing Parliament House. The three witnesses were certainly agreed that the buildings could be erected without dwarfing Parliament House, but it is equally clear that every one of them was opposed

to the building of public offices on this site. They all said this was a magnificent site and should be preserved for all time, so that there might be erected upon it a fine edifice in the shape of a completed Parliament House, to which the people of this State would look up with respect. Although they agreed that buildings could be constructed so that they would not dwarf Parliament House, they were definitely of opinion that they should not be erected here.

I am now going to express my personal view as to what I visualise for the future. This may not be the opinion of the members of the committee. Something like 18 to 20 acres of ground are available in the domain itself. That is not required by Government House. According to the reports that building is getting old and beginning to crumble. If it is not now costing a good deal to keep up in repairs, it will do so in the near future. If we could get some suitable site, say three or four acres of the Observatory ground, we could move Government House to that area. We could then give, say, three or four acres of the remaining portion of that area to the Perth City Council for civic offices, and have a chance of making a deal with the local authority for the present Town Hall site. Such an exchange would make the Treasury building site particularly valuable to the Government. By this means we could have a civic and Governmental centre second to none in Australia. We would have beautiful gardens with a river frontage for the people, and something that would be a credit to the residents of the city, something of which they would be very proud. The committee called evidence from witnesses in all walks of life, and in addition advertised extensively for any person who was willing to give evidence.

The Minister for Lands: We even invited the Leader of the Opposition to come along.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You did not.

The Minister for Lands: I mean in a general sense.

Mr. STYANTS: After listening closely to the evidence I am satisfied that if the recommendation of the committee is not correct or not the best one, it is no fault of members of the committee. All the members approached the subject with an open mind, and we had put before us the best brains available in the State, that is to say, the witnesses who gave evidence on this matter. We weighed the evidence carefully,

and came to the conclusion that the weight of evidence and of opinion was greatly in favour of the Government Domain site.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [6.5]: I approach this question feeling that any criticism I may offer is offered out of a sense of public duty rather than with any idea on my part of gaining sufficient support for the plea that this important question should be deferred for further consideration. It has been suggested to me, not by the Government or by members of the Opposition, that I should allow this matter to go on. I have been reminded that a Parliamentary committee, representative of both Houses, has gone into the question, has investigated it from different angles, and submitted a unanimous report. That report involves the support of representatives of the direct Opposition, the support of the National Party, and the support of the members on the Government side of the House who usually endorse any action of this kind.

Mr. Warner: The committee had no standing, anyhow.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I appreciate that in going into this question fully I am doing something that a member could only do out of a sense of public duty. I take this course because I am convinced that a very grave wrong would be done to the city and the State if the Bill became law. So strongly do I feel that I intend to oppose the measure. It is my intention to review the position more or less in detail, and to quote the evidence which I maintain does not support the report. The reasons outlined in the evidence for the construction of public offices at this juncture are first, the need for better accommodation for the Titles branch of the Government service, and because of a similar need for the Agricultural Department, whose premises are not a credit to the State and are not convenient for good administration. The second point is a desire on the part of the Government to improve the general administration of the affairs of State by providing better office accommodation as compared with that provided to-day. The third point is to dispose of existing buildings which could be put to more profitable use, the position being that we as a State are occupying highly valuable land in the business portion of the city and that from a Government point of view it would be more economical to dispose of the present Treasury building and expend the proceeds

on the Government Domain site. The fourth point is that the work involved is desirable in order to provide employment for those in the building trade, and especially that section which is not fully employed now, and, further, to afford an outlet for investment of £400,000 which is available to the Government, the amount mentioned in the evidence which I shall quote rather extensively. The fifth point is to ensure that the position selected for the new building is central.

As regards the first point, I agree, and have urged for some time, that there should be new accommodation for the Titles Office and that the Agricultural Department should be better housed. I submit that those two needs could have been supplied many years ago. To do so would not involve the removal of Government offices generally, because on the old police court site, where the Industrial Development officials are now housed together with the Minister for Employment, there is accommodation suitable for the Titles Office, and the public would not be appreciably inconvenienced by its transfer from Cathedral avenue to Barrack-street. Therefore, if the outstanding need is to provide new accommodation for the Titles Office, that can be done in a simple and comparatively inexpensive way. Then, as regards the Agricultural Department, the suitable site is there, with room for extension. In point of fact, there is room on the existing site, plus the site of the building now occupied by the Returned Soldiers' League, which does not now require the building—

Mr. Patrick: Has not the League a lease of the building?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That site could be incorporated in the area available to the Agricultural Department, and thus there would be a fairly large block of land capable of providing ample accommodation for the Agricultural Department and the Titles Office.

Mr. Lambert: Those departments could have used the Observatory building, with certain additions.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I question the wisdom—as I have done right through—of scrapping at the present juncture the existing Treasury building. I know it occupies a valuable part of the city; and I believe that if things were normal, arrangements could be made to raise a huge sum of money by the sale of the area or by letting it on a long-term building

lease. Thus the State could secure a considerable amount of revenue by the disposal of that and the surrounding buildings. Nevertheless, the question arises whether the central situation is not of value from the Government point of view. It is central and convenient for the general population. The business people surround it, and transport radiates from it. Therefore my conviction is that at the present juncture we should not move from the Treasury building. We should add to it, on the lines I have suggested, to meet the outstanding needs of the two departments mentioned.

I have read through the evidence taken by the committee, and I shall comment a good deal on the absence of evidence. I would like the Minister to put me right if I err, but I believe there is not, throughout the evidence, anything that deals with the possibility of making the present Treasury building suitable for requirements of State.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I was dealing with the absence of any intimation regarding the continued use of the Treasury building on a remodelled or reformed basis, and I suggested that the Minister should devote some attention to that phase when replying to the debate. The Bill, if passed, will definitely involve Parliament in the disposal, in one way or another, of the Treasury building. If the House approves of the Bill, then the Government offices are to be centralised elsewhere, and to that extent, seeing that the Treasury building will become vacant, the disposal of the premises is involved. I merely mention that in passing because, most definitely and distinctly, one proposition involves the other. With regard to the site to be selected for the new building we must ensure that it is centrally situated and conveniently placed for the citizens of the metropolitan area; I shall therefore confine my speech to two suggested sites. I propose to examine the evidence to ascertain if the report faithfully reflects the information regarding those particular sites. In my opinion—I will leave the House to judge after I have dealt with the evidence—the report, as submitted, is not based on the evidence presented to Parliament. It is true that the Bill is not actually a reflex of the evidence contained in the report, because the measure seeks to provide a right-of-way on

the eastern side of the Government Domain, and by that means create an island at the corner of Victoria avenue and St. George's terrace. That will be a separate unit. I propose to read evidence regarding the effect that proposal may have.

At this stage I wish to make it clear that I am definitely opposed to the Bill, and I shall endeavour during the Committee stage, should the measure pass the second reading, to have the provision for the roadway erased. If we are to do the proper thing, I am firmly of the opinion that that course could be adopted. I agree with the view of those whose evidence showed that we must acquire the area at the corner of Victoria avenue and St. George's terrace. I mention that roadway as a striking point respecting which there is no evidence of any importance. True, in the plan displayed by Mr. Clare, the Government Architect, provision is made for the roadway, but even he is not definite regarding it, nor did any other witness, so far as I have noticed, advance that idea.

In my opinion, there was a good deal that influenced the opinions of members of the Joint Committee in formulating their recommendations apart from the evidence that was submitted. I believe that the Minister for Lands played a major part in the framing of the report. I believe the document is a monument to his persistency, his application and his personality. He set himself to the task of securing approval for this proposition after it had been defeated by Parliament; and to date he has succeeded. The question arises as to whether Parliament will now endorse the report which, in my opinion, is largely that of the Minister and is not based upon the evidence. There must have been a good deal of discussion between the members of the Joint Committee and the Minister, and an understanding must have been arrived at when making the inspections that were no doubt carried out. I think the discussions in committee and during the inspections contributed to the unanimity that was made evident in the signing of the report by the members of the Joint Committee.

I support the utilisation of Parliament House grounds. I have been convinced of their suitability for the purpose for many years past. I was associated with the completion of Parliament House building. I was Minister for Works at the time of its

completion, and I was the first to conceive the idea of using the Old Barracks as Government offices. That course was adopted at the time with the distinct intention of, just as we then collected all the various branches of the Public Works Department which were then scattered throughout the city and domiciled them in what is now known as the Public Works Building, later on gradually but surely providing further accommodation there for other departments that were not housed in the Treasury building. The intention then was to have two centres. One would be the Treasury building—there was certainly no thought then of disposing of the premises—and the other was to be the Public Works Department. I admired the Parliament House site in those days, and I have admired it ever since. I believe we have in the Parliament House reserve all that is essential for the purposes of a site for Government offices. I think the evidence will support my claim that it is an outstanding and naturally beautifully situated site for central administrative offices. I shall not say any more on that point because the evidence helps me in my contention.

I admit I have not read all the evidence that was tendered to the Joint Committee, because certain of the witnesses hardly impressed me. I do not think they possess special qualifications enabling them to instruct members of Parliament on the points at issue. I have selected those who I believe were the principal witnesses of whom Parliament should take cognisance in an inquiry of this description. I know Mr. Allingham slightly, and while he is quite a capable business man, I do not think that his evidence could be regarded as of any great value on a question of this description. Therefore I do not take his views seriously, and I admit I have not read his evidence carefully. I have not read the evidence of Inspector Campbell of the Traffic Department, the Commissioner of Railways (Mr. Ellis), Sir John Kirwan, the Chairman of the Transport Board (Mr. Millen), nor yet of the Public Service Commissioner (Mr. G. W. Simpson). I did not read their evidence carefully, but merely glanced through it. I do not regard their statements as of value, from my point of view, and I do not think that their views will help Parliament to

arrive at a decision on this question. I shall quote from the evidence given by Mr. Armstrong, the City Valuer; Mr. Boas as an architect and later as representative of the Institute of Architects; Mr. Clare, the Principal Architect; Mr. Davidson, the Town Planning Commissioner; Mr. Fyfe, the Surveyor-General; Mr. Hall, who for many years was associated with the Land Resumption Office; Mr. Parry, the Vice-President of the Institute of Architects; and Mr. Summerhayes, a Perth architect who has been prominent in matters of this kind. The evidence of those gentlemen does not justify the discarding of the Parliament House site as a site for Government offices. I shall begin with Mr. Davidson's evidence. In answer to Question 236, Mr. Davidson said—

Apart from the inconvenience to the Public Service, the travelling public and the business and professional community, I strongly urge that it would be unfair to Parliament House to erect any buildings on this site. I also make this point. We could not control what might go on in the vicinity of the site. Already there is a hospital adjacent to the site, as well as a large brewery chimney, the smoke from which enters the hospital and the private office of the Minister for Works. If public buildings to accommodate public servants are erected on the two flanks, there is nothing at the present time to stop any person from starting a manufactory adjacent to the site, and this could be prevented only by costly resumption.

In his answer to Question 239 Mr. Davidson said—

Even if this State became only a province as Alberta is a province of Canada or Natal a province of United South Africa, we should still need provincial halls. Even if Parliament became transformed into a county council there would still be need for a building of this type and we would want to finish it. The building must be finished and if it is finished as approved by previous Parliaments, you cannot afford to have any flanking buildings on the site, otherwise you will detract from this building. We cannot afford to put up this type of structure; we have to adopt the modern type.

Parliament has been using this building since it was completed in 1904, 36 years ago. The State then controlled a tremendous number of activities which it no longer controls, nor has it any responsibility for the administration of such activities. Parliament's powers, Parliament's ramifications and Parliament's responsibilities have decreased enormously during the past 36 years. How then can it be said that the Parliament House building must be completed? The desire no

doubt is laudable. I have tried to influence Governments to complete the building not on the original plans—not on such a comprehensive basis—but nevertheless to complete it in such a way that it would represent a finished appearance instead of the patchlike appearance it now presents. The fact remains we must appreciate that the need for Parliament House has declined in the last 36 years, and that therefore we have to examine closely whether we can, with justice to the State, anticipate expenditure on the extension of Parliament House building to any great extent. Mr. Holmes asked Mr. Davidson (Question 241)—

You said this area is undoubtedly a wonderful site for Parliament House, unique in the State and one of the finest sites in the Commonwealth?

Mr. Davidson replied, "Definitely." Mr. Davidson confirms the high opinion I formed of this site, nor has my opinion been modified by the little travelling I have done. I have never seen a site more suited to a Parliament House.

Mr. Sampson: Mr. Davidson made a close study of this question.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON. By Question 244, Mr. Davidson was asked—

You have stressed the point that the city must extend east?

I will return to this phase of the matter, as I do not wish to mix it up with the question of Parliament House site. I will deal exhaustively with it later. I shall now quote Question 260—

By Mr. Patrick: Then you do not agree with the Principal Architect, who said that the Parliament House was the most magnificent of all for public buildings?

Mr. Davidson replied—

Foundations do not worry architects to-day. You could put up a building in the middle of Perth Water for that matter. That has been done in Stockholm. The Royal Palace there is on an island.

I could not quite connect that answer with the question.

The Minister for Lands: It would be awkward for the public to get to an island.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes. I do not think Mr. Davidson would evade a question, he is not built that way; but it seems clear when he answered in that way that he did not understand Mr. Patrick's question.

Mr. Patrick: Possibly Mr. Patrick did not understand it.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is quite clear to me. In reply to Question 267 by Mr. Holmes, Mr. Davidson said—

To house public servants on the Parliament House block would be to render a disservice to the general public and more especially to the members of the legal profession and others who have frequently to use the Government offices.

I will leave Mr. Davidson's evidence at that point, but will return to it later. I propose now to consider the evidence of Mr. Summerhayes, and to quote the following question and answer 331:—

From an idealistic point of view you would like to see the whole of Government Domain regarded as an area for future development, but if that cannot be achieved, you still adhere to your view that the site shown on the plan before you is the best of all those that are available?—Yes, the best of those mentioned, except that the question of the Treasury Buildings, together with the Stirling Square site is still against your point that no further progress could be made westward. The Treasury buildings site alone is not advisable on account of the limited accommodation available. As to bringing in Stirling Square, I think public opinion would be a factor to be considered. As an alternative to that, there is the Parliament House site, the objection to which is mainly based upon Parliament House and its surroundings.

On the same page appears the following (Question 335):—

You stated that one of your objections to the Parliament House site was that it would be too far away from the commercial life of the city?—Yes.

Then we read Question 344 and the answer:—

By Hon. J. J. Holmes: I gather that your objection to the Parliament House site is the dwarfing of Parliament House itself?—And accessibility. If you are in business in the centre of the Terrace it seems a long way to have to walk to the Public Works Department.

Hon. members will perceive that Mr. Summerhayes was not strongly opposed to the Parliament House site and they can weigh the evidence for themselves and determine whether it is sufficient for them to assume that he favoured the Government Domain site. The next witness to whose evidence I shall refer is Mr. Boas. At the bottom right hand corner of page 27 Mr. Boas is reported as having said—

As to the possible sites, there are the recommendations of the Commission upon which I have touched. I shall not put these suggestions in the order of respective merits. No. 2 is the Public Works site at the head of St. George's-terrace forming the apex of the block upon which Parliament House stands. I am inclined to think that would be about the next

best site for Government offices. I envisage there a block of buildings that architecturally would be the crowning point to the head of St. George's-terrace and the city. The site would meet some of the conditions that I have already laid down. It is owned by the State; it is large enough, and it would form an effective part of the development of Parliament House grounds. It is not necessary to see the front of Parliament House to make it a palatial Parliament House. I can envisage a Treasury Building at the head of St. George's-terrace that would be the spearpoint of this Governmental group with Parliament House in the distance behind it.

On page 39 appears the following question (by the Chairman) and answer—

In looking through some documents while preparing my case for the site which was the subject of a Bill, I noticed that in 1934 the Council of the City of Perth had a deputation to the then Premier (Mr. Collier) and recommended three alternative sites for a Town Hall. No. 1 of those recommendations was a portion of Government House reserve, approximately from the lodge end to the Christian Brothers' College, and the deputation asked that the Government make that site available?—Yes.

That is the first intimation I have gained from all the discussion as to how the Christian Brothers' College came under public notice, why it was singled out. I find that it was actually singled out in the first place by the city fathers as a site for a town hall. I cannot say that it was a very wise selection for that purpose, but the fact remains that the first occasion on which the site was brought under public notice appears to have been as a result of a discussion by the Perth City Council. Question 484 and the answer are as follows:—

Subsequently to that again, in 1938 you pressed very strongly that the Perth Council, because of the inability to close the railway and with a view to getting the bigger scheme you had envisaged, should go to the Government unanimously declaring that it supported the Esplanade site?—Yes.

I quote that to show that Mr. Boas was not strongly in favour of the Government Domain site because he stated that subsequently the Esplanade site was selected. We need not worry about that, however, because it does not come into consideration as a site for Government offices. The following questions and answers are worth quoting—

491. You consider that for a group of Government buildings 10 acres should be the minimum area?—Yes.

492. How does that dovetail in with your suggestion regarding the site on the Parliament House reserve which comprises an area of approximately 12 acres? I distinctly re-

member that in your Commission's report you urged the retention of this site and the completion of Parliament House. Is that not so?—Yes.

493. You considered it a serious matter that Parliament House, standing on the best site in the city, was not completed?—Yes.

So Mr. Boas says it is the best site in the city. On the same page are the following questions and answers—

502. By Hon. J. J. Holmes: You referred to a suggestion that the committee should delegate its authority to a committee of experts?—Yes.

503. We cannot do that because the committee was appointed by Parliament and has to report to the Governor, so that answers that question. Then you referred to 10 acres as the minimum area required for public buildings. How does that fit in with your idea as to reduced State Parliamentary activities?—I think that when that time comes, if it ever does, our local responsibilities will be greater. Local government in its largest sphere will become more important.

What he was saying was that after all we should not envisage a huge palatial building for Parliament House in view of the reason I have already given, namely that Parliament in Western Australia is not growing, but declining.

Question 535 was asked by Mr. Patrick and answered as follows—

Do you think it would be possible to group the Government buildings on Parliament House site without dwarfing Parliament House?—I am sure of it. It is only a question of architectural treatment.

Mr. Boas was very definite, and I think we must accept him as a man qualified to express an opinion. Question 539a was asked by Mr. Baxter—

At the commencement of your evidence you were definite on the point that, if the commission's recommendation was not adopted, the Public Works site was No. 1 site. Now you say that No. 1 site is the Government Domain?—Not the Government Domain. I said the Esplanade.

As the evidence is reported, it is quite clear that Mr. Boas was somewhat confused in regard to the questions. On meeting him I said, "It seemed to me that you started very definitely and then qualified your remarks before you got through." He replied that the whole thing had been mixed up because of his advocacy of the Esplanade site. I have a letter from Mr. Boas on the point and will probably read it later. Questions

545-9 are the next to which I direct attention—

Do you think it would be wise to erect public buildings on Parliament House site and so dwarf Parliament House?—The Houses of Parliament in other countries cannot be dwarfed. It is a question of design. They are magnificent structures.

What would our Parliament House look like if it was finished and had a ten-storey building in front of it?—This building was designed 40 years ago. If you called for a design for Parliament House to-day, you would probably get an entirely different design.

But it would be desirable to complete Parliament House as designed? Yes, I suppose so.

If the building is finished as designed, it will be possible to treat the grounds in such a way that Parliament House would not be dwarfed?—I am sure that could be done.

Before you came here, you had not had the suggestion put up to you which was submitted to us by a witness and outlined to you by me (Mr. Styants), that is, for the shifting of Government House to the Observatory site. Assuming that Government House could be shifted and the 30 acres on which it stands could be made available for a governmental and civic site, would you then think that this ground should rank as the third site in preference? That is to say, would you favour the erection of a governmental centre only on the Parliament House site, or a governmental and civic centre on the Government Domain?—I would say that would be the second preference.

Members will see the leading questions that were submitted and the desire to side-track the witness and not to deal with the Government Domain site as part of the Government policy. It was submitted to Mr. Boas that, if the whole lot was handed over for governmental and civic offices and Government House was transferred to the Observatory site, would he be favourable to the site. Now I turn to Question 712, after Mr. Boas had been recalled by the committee. Mr. Boas, in reply to Mr. Patrick, said—

From a practical point of view there are two considerations against the Parliament House site. The first is that the group of Government buildings would overshadow Parliament House and, secondly, the nature of both the ground and the surrounding streets would make it unsuitable for traffic and parking purposes.

Mr. Patrick: That was not Mr. Boas's own opinion?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, that was when he was expressing the views of the Institute of Architects. Questions 719 and 722 were asked by Mr. Holmes—

You said that one of the principal objections to Parliament House site was that the proposed buildings would dwarf Parliament

House. I think every architect who has given evidence before the committee, including the Chief Architect (Mr. Clare) and you yourself, said that that difficulty could be overcome?—I think so.

I think Mr. Clare did, but we can deal with that point later?—I am of opinion that a suitable group of Government buildings could be erected on Parliament House site, a group of buildings that would harmonise with Parliament House without subordinating it. That, however, is just my personal view.

Mr. Boas was not authorised to include that as the opinion of the Institute of Architects. I will deal with the Institute of Architects later. Question 738 reads—

You are very enthusiastic about this particular site?—Yes. I think that buildings could be erected on the Parliament House site to harmonise with the existing building.

That emphasises his previous statement. Now I propose to quote Mr. Parry on the same matter, Question 410. Mr. Parry is an architect of standing, Vice-President of the Royal Institute of Architects of Western Australia, and a man very highly respected as a citizen.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member resume his seat? I think the House should know that I can hardly hear the remarks being made by the hon. member. Far too many private conversations are being carried on while the speaker is addressing the Chair. I would also remind members that when they enter the Chamber they must take their seats, and that they must not stand around conversing with each other. It is only fair that those who are interested in the discussion and are occupying their seats, should be able to hear what is being said. I call members to task for this sort of thing, because it is definitely out of order. I hope that members will give speakers a patient hearing so that other members who are interested may obtain a full digest of what is being properly put before the Chair.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was just going to quote Question 410—and several others.

Do you consider that the putting of buildings on different levels would interfere with the architectural symmetry, say, on the Malcolm-street frontage?—I do not think there would be any insuperable difficulty.

411. I am referring to the attractiveness of the buildings?—No, quite the contrary, especially if you had Parliament House as the dominating structure and the accessory build-

ings arranged around it on a lower level. I think these buildings would make a very good group.

412. Would not any scheme of buildings on Parliament House grounds tend to dwarf Parliament House?—I think not.

413. Such buildings would have to be carried much higher than Parliament House?—I do not think so. Making allowance for the difficulties presented by the site, I think the buildings could be erected in the form of a huge quadrangle, on the Malcolm-street, George-street and Hay-street frontages below Parliament House.

414. Do you think it would be wise, when other sites are available, to crowd the Parliament House site with Government buildings?—My opinion on this point would be only comparative as to what the other sites had to offer. I should like to know more about them.

416. Do you think the fact of having nine-storey buildings around Parliament House, which is only two storeys, would dwarf the appearance of Parliament House?—I do not know what the plan indicates, but I think that is an instance that when a scheme of huge public buildings is being considered you should not be satisfied with the opinion of one department, but should take advantage of competition of brains outside the department.

419. The plan before you shows one suggested treatment of the Parliament House site to meet immediate requirements and provide for an increase of 25 per cent.?—I should think this plan could be improved upon. It gives the appearance of having Parliament House fenced in with tall buildings, which is the wrong way of treating the scheme.

420. The Principal Architect told us that this scheme could be altered to give a view of Parliament House from the Terrace?—That is obviously what is wrong with this plan.

This was the definite opinion of Mr. Parry. I will now deal with Mr. Clare's evidence. Mr. Holmes asked Questions 135 and 137. Mr. Clare said—

This plan, marked "M," provides for the completion of Parliament House to enable it to be seen from the Terrace, but seven-storey buildings would have to be erected on the two flanks of Parliament House, and there would be another lot of four-storey buildings here (indicated). That plan would carry us on for about 80 years, and Parliament House would be surrounded by these great buildings and would be robbed of all dignity. This is a wonderful site, one of the best in Australia. It is axial on the Terrace and is elevated, and Parliament House could be completed and made into a beautiful building in a delightful setting.

In my opinion, in less than 50 years Parliament House will be a glorified municipal council?—That may occur, but if it did the site would be available for some other purpose.

One of the members of the committee expressed the opinion that we were degenerating into a glorified municipal council. I do not know that he was far out. He is as nearly right as are many of those who can see a palatial Parliament House. If we were able to strike a happy medium we would get somewhere nearer the truth. In answer to Question 138 the witness said—

It is well situated for the buses passing this building, but passengers on the buses from Victoria Park, South Perth and North Perth have to break their journey at the centre of the city and transfer to other vehicles in order to get here. The main objection, however, is the effect the erection of buildings here would have on Parliament House. Consequently we set aside that particular site.

I shall revert to that point. Mr. Clare said a lot about people at the east end of the city, but he said nothing about those on the west, the south or the north-west. He was extraordinarily silent on that question, and I propose to devote special attention to it before sitting down. The next question I wish to refer to is 168—

You consider that Parliament House ground would be an ideal site, but for the fact that buildings there would overshadow Parliament House?—The site is a beautiful one, but buildings erected there would detrimentally affect Parliament House, and furthermore would be too far out of the city. As the city develops, I think it will do so in an easterly direction.

170. Leaving out the Christian Brothers' College, could you erect a good set of buildings on Government House Domain, plus the other piece you had in mind?—I think that would spoil Government House at present.

I now turn to the evidence of Mr. Hall, the Land Resumption Officer, and will take, first, Question 189—

Of the sites you have mentioned, which did the committee discard, and which did they consider favourable?

Mr. Hall was giving evidence with regard to the departmental committee that gave consideration to the erection of public buildings some years ago. His answer was—

To read again from the committee's report on that point:—

Reviewing carefully all the circumstances, existing and probable, as they appear to the committee, we place the sites in order of our unanimous preference as follows:—

First, the Mount-street—St. George's-terrace corner.

Second, the Irwin-street expansion (old University site as the nucleus).

Third, Bishop's grove.

Fourth, Mill-street (St. George's-terrace corner).

We are of the opinion that there is little to choose between the two first-placed sites.

I think he was referring to Parliament House site and the University land in Irwin-street.

The Minister for Lands: Not the Parliament House grounds. That was the area between Mount-street and Malcolm-street.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The witness referred to the Mount-street - St. George's-terrace corner. To continue—

221. You said that the first committee fully considered 11 different sites, and made a selection of the first, second, third and fourth. I notice that from that list was excluded Parliament House grounds, which include the Public Works Department site?—The consideration of that site was excluded from our deliberations, according to instructions.

So that while the committee recommended the St. George's-terrace and Mount-street block, it was instructed not to go into the question of the suitability of Parliament House grounds.

The Minister for Lands: You are referring to two different reports—in the first place to the 1928 report, and then to the 1932 report.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The fact remains that from the second report Parliament House site was excluded, and I assume that it was excluded in the first place as well. It would be an extraordinary thing to have it in one and taken out of the other. However, I cannot say from the evidence whether that is so or not. The Minister will be able to explain that. Possibly the information is contained in the next question and answer, (222)—

I am referring to the deliberations of the first committee. The second committee dealt with the Government Domain site?—The consideration of Parliament House site was excluded from the deliberations of the 1928 committee. The choice of sites was further limited inasmuch as Parliament House grounds—that included the Barracks—Government House land and the remaining portion of Stirling Square, at the corner of Barrack-street and St. George's-terrace, were to remain undisturbed for the people's use and enjoyment.

So evidently that committee was narrowly circumscribed at the time of working on this problem to which Mr. Hall refers. Now I come to Question 224, asked by Mr. McDonald—

Do you consider that the Government House site together with the Christian Brothers' Col-

lege site is the best for the public buildings?—It is the only site for a Government centre as contemplated; that is, if you are not going to have only utilitarian buildings as envisaged by the 1928 committee. Otherwise I would say there are sites that are better.

Next I quote Question 226, asked by Mr. Styants—

What objection do you see to Parliament House grounds being used for a Government building centre?—I hope you will excuse me if I do not answer that question directly. One of the matters that influenced the 1928 committee in selecting the Mount-street site was its nearness to Parliament House. That committee was then impressed by the evidence it took from the Commonwealth property officer, who happened to be in Perth at about that time. He said that all Governments in the Eastern States and at Canberra had found it a great convenience for the departments to be close to the Parliamentary buildings, and especially was it convenient for Ministers and heads of departments. In that connection I might quote again from the 1928 report:—"It is close to Parliament House and of advantage to Ministers and members and also to departmental officials when the House is sitting." I should also like to read this paragraph from the same report:—"It was interesting to note the experience of the Under Secretary (Mr. C. A. Munt was Under Secretary at that time) spread over many years regarding the locating of the Public Works Department at the western summit of St. George's-terrace hill, and later the removal of the Water Supply Department to George-street. Notwithstanding a measure of outcry at the time, results have shown that the disadvantage prophesied has been more apparent than real; there has never been any serious complaint of public inconvenience. There has, however, been serious departmental disability, but that has arisen from the distance separating the Public Works Department from the other departments of the State."

I remember that at the time there was some argument and public discussion that the Works Department was not conveniently situated, and that there was some objection to putting up the Water Supply Department building which is now on the site. However, as Mr. Munt pointed out, the disability was more imaginary than real. Now I come to Mr. Fyfe, who in the course of a long statement in reply to Question 350 said—

As regards the spoiling of Parliament House, by the erection of buildings on this site, I would stress the necessity for the establishment of a Parliament House worthy of this city of Perth, one that will compare with parliamentary buildings in other cities of the world. My opinion is that it would be a tragedy to do anything to prevent such a development from taking place.

As I have said, the time is past for talking of palatial buildings for housing a State Parliament in its decline. In answer to Question 352 Mr. Fyfe said, "The tendency is to drift this way." However, I will deal with that aspect at another stage. In answer to a question by Mr. Mann (356), Mr. Fyfe said—

My opinion is that the present site between Cathedral-avenue, Barrack-street, Hay-street, and St. George's-terrace is far too small. Consequently I favour the proposal approved by the Legislative Assembly to place buildings on the Government Domain site.

The witness showed wise discretion in getting behind the Government, seeing that he was closely associated with it.

Mr. Patrick: And the Assembly.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes.

Mr. Styants. That is very cheap.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: In reply to Mr. Baxter's question 359, Mr. Fyfe said—

If some action is taken to make possible the movement of development in an easterly direction, it will check for a time the rather rapid tendency of the last 10 years for the city to extend westerly.

I think I am overlapping again. I do not wish to read the same extract twice, and therefore I will leave that aspect to a later stage. I think I have extracted from the evidence everything worth while in regard to the Parliament House site. Those witnesses who qualified in the first place to give evidence helpful to Parliament have been quoted, and their references to Parliament House grounds have been read, so that I shall have on record in "Hansard" the whole of the statements regarding those grounds.

Now I return to Government Domain, and firstly I propose to quote the evidence of Mr. Davidson, the Town Planning Commissioner. Mr. Davidson further expressed his opinion on this point in answer to Question 274 as follows:—

Are you satisfied with the proposed site at the eastern end of Government House Domain, or do you think there is any alternative site we would consider as challenging it either for suitability or preference?—I can find no rival to it on actual facts, provided we acquire the area held by the Christian Brothers.

Therefore, the Town Planning Commissioner agrees that the site, from his point of view, should include the Christian Brothers' College.

Mr. Patrick: But his proposal was not to go as far west as we suggest.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am quoting what Mr. Davidson stated. Then we have the evidence of Mr. Summerhayes. The committee was discussing the various sites and, in Question 327 which was put to him by Mr. McDonald, Mr. Summerhayes replied—

You suggested that the whole of Government House Domain and Stirling Square should be regarded as a site available for a general scheme in connection with the erection of Government buildings. Assuming that the areas mentioned, apart from those shown on the plan, will not become available because public opinion would not allow the increased areas to be taken from their present uses, would you still support the provision of a Government administrative centre on the eastern area of Government House Domain?—That is rather dividing up the scheme as a whole. Unless the whole of Government House Domain, from Victoria-avenue to Barrack-street, is considered as a complete entity, then the buildings may be getting rather far away from the business area.

Then we have the evidence tendered by Mr. Boas. The Minister for Lands, as Chairman, was questioning the witness whose evidence, Question 479 contains the following:—

In looking through some documents while preparing my case for the site which was the subject of a Bill, I noticed that in 1934 the council of the City of Perth had a deputation to the then Premier, Mr. Collier, and recommended three alternative sites for a Town Hall. No. 1 of those recommendations was a portion of the Government House reserve, approximately from the Lodge end to Christian Brothers' College, and asked that the Government make that site available?—Yes.

That is when I stated it first came into the realm of practical politics. Then there is the evidence of the Government Architect, Mr. Clare. I may remark, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that what I am attempting to do is to link up all the evidence regarding the particular sites to stress the points I am endeavouring to make in my criticism of the report. In Mr. Clare's evidence (Question 148) there is the following:—

By Mr. Styants: Does not the plan show an area of eight acres without including the Christian Brothers' College site?—No, including the Christian Brothers' College site.

Mr. Clare again returned to the Christian Brothers' site as being what he had in mind and we find the following in his evidence:—

149. By Hon. W. J. Mann: The Christian Brothers' College buildings would have to be demolished?—Not for a long time.

150. By Mr. Styants: What is the area of the college site?—About three acres. I was pointing out that under the present proposal

Government House would not be interfered with and the gardens would be retained. If we acquired the Christian Brothers' College buildings, we would not pull them down until this became necessary. We would use them for Government offices. It might not be necessary to pull them down for 25 or 30 years.

157. By Mr. McDonald: What is the approximate usable floor space in the Christian Brothers' College Building?—About 25,000 square feet.

158. You could use that building for various departments for 25 or 30 years?—Yes.

When Mr. Clare appeared before the Committee on the second occasion, we find his evidence included the following:—

743. By the Chairman: In connection with the second likely structure, I realise that from the Government's point of view, the beginning of that would not depend solely on the need for accommodation for the service, but also on the amount of money available to proceed with the work. Have you any ideas for a site for the second building?—There are two possibilities. We might complete the other building facing St. George's-terrace; that is the one to occupy the site of the Christian Brothers' College. If the College is utilised for Government purposes, it might not be economical or desirable to interfere with that building for the time being; in which case I suggest that we start on the first half of the centre block, that is, the western half of the centre block.

746. Would the extension into the Government Domain of an area equivalent to the frontage of the Christian Brothers' College be sufficient to carry out the plans you have visualised, or would you need a roadway in addition, between the Christian Brothers' area, and the area that would be developed?—Without having given the matter a great deal of consideration I should say offhand that it would be essential to have a road on one side.

That represents the first time in the evidence that I could find any reference made to the road. The report of his evidence also contained the following:—

747. I am visualising the grouping of five buildings on part of Government Domain and the Christian Brothers' College site; what are the objections to having a roadway or, alternatively, buildings abutting on the Christian Brothers' boundary?—You would require a roadway on one side to give access to the buildings.

762. Can you give a rough estimate, say within £50,000, of the cost of the 320,000 feet required?—

That has reference to the floor space requirements for public offices—

—I should think that to house the departments proposed to be transferred to this site would cost about £1,000,000.

791. By Mr. Patrick: The University is a nice job?—Yes. In speaking on the proposal to extend westwards into Government House grounds rather than resume the Christian Brothers' College, I omitted to mention one important point. If you do not acquire Christian Brothers' College, you have always the possibility that someone will erect there a large building—

I want hon. members to listen specially to this part of Mr. Clare's evidence—

—flats or offices—and that you will have the rear of that building facing right on to your Governmental group. You would then have a rear like the western side of Shell House, or some of the big insurance offices—windows without any order, and covered with pipes. That is a distinct possibility, and I feel it to be highly desirable that you should have the control of the whole block right from Victoria-avenue up to Barrack-street, whether it is utilised for Government offices or whatever is done with it. You should have control of it to prevent that undesirable development which I have mentioned, and which, I am sure, would occur.

I too believe that it would be wrong to erect public offices on this site and leave an area to be utilised for other purposes that might seriously interfere with Government offices. I shall now quote Question 354 and the answer:—

With regard to distances, I understand there is only four chains difference in the distance between the Parliament House site and William-street and between the Government Domain site and William-street?—That would be about right, but I would rather walk from a central point between William-street and Barrack-street to-day down to the Christian Brothers' College than walk up to Parliament House.

I wish members specially to bear that in mind, because I propose to return to it later. In his reply to Question 356, Mr. Fyfe said—

My opinion is that the present site between Cathedral-avenue, Barrack-street, Hay-street and St. George's-terrace is too small.

There the witness is supporting the Government's viewpoint. I shall now deal with the matters of public convenience and the trend of the city; I have almost finished quoting from the report. In reply to Question 287 by Mr. Holmes, Mr. Davidson said—

To house public servants on the Parliament House block would be to render a disservice to the general public and more especially to members of the legal profession and others who have frequently to use the Government offices.

I shall now quote Question 352—

The tendency is to drift this way then?—

That is, towards Parliament House. Mr. Fyfe's reply was—

During the past five years that has been so. It has been caused to some extent by the fact that the city could not expand as it normally should in an easterly direction because of the presence of Government buildings and D. & W. Murray's building.

I cannot follow the reasoning in that answer. I do not think it sound. D. & W. Murray's building may have caused some difficulty in Barrack-street; but one would think that it helped rather than retarded the progress of Murray-street.

Mr. Patrick: The witness was looking at the matter from a retail shop point of view.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON: In his answer to Question 359, Mr. Fyfe said—

If some action is taken to make possible the movement of development in an easterly direction, it will check for a time the rather rapid tendency of the last ten years for the city to extend westerly.

Why on earth should we desire to check the city's development in the most desirable part of the metropolitan area? The witness continued—

Assuming that those obstacles are not removed and within, say, 20 years we have all the land comparatively fully developed between the west end of the Terrace and William-street, what then will happen regarding the commercial and retail interests of the city? Behind Parliament House is a big hill with a residential area, and the strip between Wellington-street and King's Park-road is very narrow, and so expansion eastward will be forced on the people, assuming of course that the population increases.

The evidence continues—

360. The only expansion to date has been in the form of small factories, which do not tend to carry the city eastward; can you see any possibility of a change taking place that will cause the city to extend eastward?—

The reply is interesting—

If the present Government area bounded by Hay-street, St. George's-terrace, Barrack-street and Cathedral-avenue were developed for first-class shops and offices—shops on the Hay-street and Barrack-street frontages and offices on the Terrace and Cathedral-avenue frontages—if public offices housing the departments were constructed to the east of the present site thus drawing all the patronage in that direction, and if another contemplated building is ultimately constructed between the two sites, I think there is a definite prospect of development eastward in the Terrace, and that Hay-street would follow, though perhaps more slowly.

What an extraordinary argument! We must force the city to develop in an easterly direction because we propose to place Government buildings there! Continuing—

361. You said that only a limited amount of space was available for development in the western part of the city. Would not you be limited in any eastern extension by the river?—But take the distance from the south side of St. George's-terrace, at the foot of Malcolm-street, in a southerly direction to the river, and compare it with the distance between the south side of the Terrace at Christian Brothers' College to the river. There is a big difference. We have to allow of course in the latter case that a substantial area consists of newly reclaimed land, which is a permanent reserve. The commercial and retail expansion easterly would be along the Terrace and Hay-street, while industrial expansion would be more in the direction of the Power Station. All this will have an effect in causing the city to expand in an easterly direction.

365. You said that the presence of governmental buildings tends to retard the values in the retail and commercial areas in the vicinity. Would the erection of an administrative block on the Government Domain site adversely affect the values of buildings in the vicinity?—In my opinion it would definitely enhance values in that locality, and that enhancement would continue until such time as the area became developed for intense retail and commercial purposes.

It is extraordinary reasoning that buildings in the city used for Government offices retard and reduce values, but that if Government offices are built on Government Domain values will be enhanced. I cannot see how he reconciles those two statements.

Mr. Patrick: One is a residential area and the other a retail business area.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: He does not make that clear. Then we get the following—

369. Can you suggest any unsuitable features in connection with the use of the Government Domain site for offices?—The most important disadvantage of that site is that for a considerable time it will cause a certain amount of inconvenience to solicitors and others who visit Government offices on business, through their having to travel a greater distance than at present, but that disadvantage will decrease as the years go by.

On this question of public convenience Mr. Clare said (Question 125)—

The Terrace is the main business and professional axis of the city. So much money has been invested in the Terrace that the business centre will not be removed. So far as I can see the city will develop westward until it reaches the foot of Malcolm-street; it may even reach the top of Malcolm-street, when

progress will be arrested in that direction by King's Park. I feel that what will happen if we are wise, is that the northern boundary of Adelaide-terrace will be set back to coincide with the northern boundary of St. George's-terrace. The city will then have a thoroughfare through to the Causeway about 125 feet wide—a magnificent roadway. The business and professional axis of the city will then progress towards the Causeway. If that happens, the centre of the city will then be close to Government House, that is, the centre of the main business axis.

The extraordinary thing is that portions of the city other than the eastern end are not dealt with, but I will deal with them before I resume my seat. Mr. Holmes asked the witness (Question 127) whether he considered the river would prevent the city from expanding eastward or southward, and he replied—

I do not say the city will expand southwards; but to develop the city from Malcolm-street along St. George's terrace to the Causeway would probably occupy 75 years, or even longer. When that centre is fully developed the group of proposed buildings will be right in the centre of the main axis.

Question 128 and the answer were as follows—

By Hon. W. J. Mann: What reasons do you advance against the progress of the city northward?—I think the city will expand northward, but the expansion in that direction will be retarded by the railway. I am not so much concerned about the growth of the city northward; we should make use of our waterfront. That is the first item. It is a wonderful opportunity that should not be lost. The second item is that we should locate our public buildings on the main professional and business axis of the city, because that is where most of the people are located who have dealings with Government departments. Those departments should be convenient to the various termini of transport, which would be the case if the buildings are erected at or near the proposed site.

Question 129 and the answer were—

By Hon. C. F. Baxter: Do you consider that of more importance than to have the Government buildings close to Parliament House?—Yes, but I recognise there is a certain amount of importance attaching to the proximity of Government departments to Parliament House; that would be the case, however, only during the period Parliament is in session.

In answer to Question 130, the witness said—

The area of the proposed site near Government House—

Mr. Patrick: Whom are you quoting now?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Mr. Clare. He said—

The area of the proposed site near Government House is 8 acres and 1 perch, including the land upon which the Christian Brothers' College is erected. The site on the Esplanade—

I will not read the remainder of the answer, which deals with other sites in which we are not interested.

The Minister for Lands: But which were all considered.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I suppose they were; I am interested in only two. The Chairman asked the witness (Question 138), "What about parking facilities?" To that the witness replied—

There is not much space available for that purpose.

He was referring to Parliament House grounds, and continued—

As an architect I am certain that the erection of public buildings here would ruin Parliament House. Plans "G" and "F" provide alternative suggestions, but the erection of buildings that will ultimately dwarf Parliament House cannot be avoided. That is the main objection to this site. Another objection is that in the course of time this place will not be in the centre of the city. It will be at one end of the business centre instead of being in the middle of the main axis. It is not particularly well located in respect to the termini of the various means of transport. It is well situated for the buses passing this building, but passengers on the buses from Victoria Park, South Perth and North Perth have to break their journey at the centre of the city and transfer to other vehicles in order to get here. The main objection however is the effect the erection of buildings here would have on Parliament House.

In Question 168 the witness was asked whether the tendency was for the city to develop west and north, and he replied, "It will go west until it reaches the bottom of the hill." Question 170 and the answer were—

By Mr. Patrick: Leaving out the Christian Brothers' College, could you erect a good set of buildings on Government House Domain, plus the other piece you had in mind—I think that would spoil Government House at present.

I have already referred to the fact that Mr. Clare considered that the erection of buildings would cost £1,000,000. That is dealt with in Question 762. I now propose to turn to Mr. Armstrong's evidence.

669. By Hon. J. J. Holmes: You mean the north side of Adelaide-terrace from Victoria-avenue to Adelaide-street?—Yes. Adelaide-

street is a small thoroughfare. At that spot Adelaide-terrace widens out to meet the Causeway, and I do not think it would be necessary to go beyond that street in any widening operations. There are several two-storey buildings and a weatherboard tobacco shop, and the trolley bus barn in that section, which could be left.

670. By Mr. McDonald: What you have in mind is the resumption of all the allotments on the north side of Adelaide-terrace?—Yes. The balance of the land, at the back of the resumed portions would then be available for re-sale or use in some direction. The sale would bring in a fair amount.

I am quoting this to show that the City Council is involved in the purchasing of land. Let me quote Questions 680 and 681—

You think the City Council is unlikely to go on with a general widening scheme, particularly owing to the fact that Adelaide-terrace has now been relieved of so much traffic by Riverside-drive?—I am not authorised to put that forward as the view of the City Council.

You think that because of approvals that have been given for the construction of flats and other buildings, it is unlikely that the council will proceed with any policy for the widening of Adelaide-terrace?—I think that is the position.

There are difficulties in the way of widening the terrace in the vicinity of Government Domain. In reply to Question 695, Mr. Armstrong said—

I think that the big consideration is the cost. First of all there is the cost, then the great possibility of the proposal being turned down by the ratepayers. I am of the opinion that we are not warranted in doing the work, more especially in view of the relief given to Adelaide-terrace by the opening of Riverside-drive.

This concludes the quotations I wish to make from the evidence, but I had to get them on record in order to prove my contention that the evidence is not against the Parliament House site and in favour of Government Domain site. Anyone taking the evidence as printed and submitted to Parliament must admit that the weight of testimony is in favour of Parliament House site. In considering Parliament House reserve, we must bear in mind that Parliament House is not likely to be extended on any big scale. Every member knows perfectly well that the work of the State Parliament has been reduced enormously. I have raised this point on more than one occasion. The last 36 years have been the period of greatest development in this

State and Parliament House has been sufficient for all needs under the extended powers that the State then exercised, and it would be ludicrous to suggest that we can at this stage contemplate Parliament House being extended upon any palatial basis. It is interesting to compare the situation of our Parliament House and General Post Office with that of the Parliament House and General Post Office in Sydney. A most extraordinary fact is that the distance, so far as I can remember—and I have been there recently—is about the same.

The Premier: Oh, no.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes, the distance from the G.P.O. in Martin place to Parliament House in Macquarie street is about the same as the distance from our G.P.O. to Parliament House. The Premier might say that our Parliament House is straight up Murray street from the post office—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I see no connection between Sydney's roads and highways and this Bill.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am drawing a comparison.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member proposes to link up his remarks with the Bill.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes. We are about the same distance from the Perth G.P.O. as the Parliament House in Macquarie street is from the Sydney G.P.O. The grade is just as steep; as a matter of fact, the grade from Martin place to Macquarie street is steeper. Then it is stated in opposition to the Parliament House site that there would be parking difficulties. Let me draw a comparison with the House of Commons in Whitehall. The House of Commons is situated right on the route of the thickest traffic. Roads come in from all directions, and the area set aside at the House of Commons, where there are 600 members and all the other officers associated with Parliament, is not much greater than that available here, or, if we include the bowling green, the areas would be about equal. I went over the House of Commons area two or three times, and there is just about the same area set aside for parking space there as is available here. If traffic congestion does not interfere with the House of Commons—and there the traffic is enormous—how can

anyone argue that it is going to interfere with this site when the population of the State is only about 470,000? Therefore there is no danger of congestion in regard to traffic and there is not likely to be any difficulty in the matter of parking space, bearing in mind the area available at the House of Commons.

There is strong evidence in support of using Parliament House grounds, and the evidence against Parliament House grounds is not convincing. Turning to the city trade—and this is important because much was made of the trend of the city eastward to justify the building of Government offices on the domain—there has been an extraordinary silence about the continued use of the Treasury building. No attention has been given to the possibility of utilising that building, remodelling it on modern lines, piece by piece, which could be done on an economic basis.

Mr. Patrick: In any event, it will be required for 25 years.

[The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Withers) took the Chair.]

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: There is no evidence regarding the trend of the city south-west, north-west and west. The whole of the evidence has been in favour of dragging the city eastward to justify the erection of Government offices on the domain. Notwithstanding all the disabilities stressed about expansion in a westerly direction, I ask members to visualise where the trend of the city has been and where the city is developing. We hear about Victoria Park and the inconvenience to people through having to change trams in order to come to Parliament House, but not a word is said about Nedlands, not a word about Hollywood, nothing about West Subiaco.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Mt. Hawthorn is expanding.

Mr. Sampson: And so is Inglewood.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The trend of expansion is quite definite. There are Subiaco in the west, Nedlands and Hollywood in the south-west, and there are North Perth, Leederville, Mt. Hawthorn, Wembley and Scarborough. If members visited those parts, they would be astonished at the development. Consider the development at Nedlands and Hollywood. Cannot members see that business, in addition to residential

population, is increasing? Is it not a fact that business to a large extent follows population? Therefore it would be wrong to say we are going to put offices in a remote part of the city because we can force the city to stop growing as it has been growing—that was the argument used by Mr. Fyfe—and force it to expand eastwards.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The river is the limit to the east.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The reason why the city developed so much to the north and north-west was because of the facilities for getting over the railway line. The maximum stress is laid upon the difficulty of extending the city northward, taking into consideration the numerous lines of railway that are built between Melbourne road and East Perth. A definite bar exists there. Until that is lifted, it does constitute an interference. Through West Perth, however, there is ample room to get either under or over the railway. It is remarkable how the railway lends itself to city development in that direction. The Parliament House site is definitely assisted by the fact that it can be made accessible because of the ease with which the railway can be bridged both to and from; and not only that, but it would be economical for this work to be done. Members may not be aware that there is a bank known as the Subiaco bank. Some 25 years ago the management of the railways decided to lower that bank, and by that means increase the load per train that could be carried over it. An argument, however, developed as to whether the work should be done by the A.W.U. or the railway employees. Because of that, the Government said, "If there is going to be an argument about industrial standards, conditions and control, we had better allow the work to stand over for the time being." A Labour Government was in office at the time and I think I was a member of it; at any rate, I was associated with Parliament. That bank has remained ever since. I say to the Premier that one of the most reproductive works he could undertake in the metropolitan area is the cutting away of the Subiaco bank. That work would make an enormous difference to the carrying capacity of trains between Perth and Fremantle. The country on either side of the railway at that point could readily be utilised after a roof had been put over the cutting, and in that way a tunnel could be constructed in a

very inexpensive manner for the passage of trains. The foundations are ideal. The dropping of the line by the deepening of the cutting would provide the necessary walls. All that would be necessary would be the erection of an archway or roof over the railway, which at that point would be sunk to a much lower level. The city could then extend in that direction without any inconvenience whatever. Apparently that point has not been thought of. People realise that the trend of the city is in that direction. The area could be made accessible to the Parliament House site, which would thus become central as the city developed in the way it will naturally develop. For many years the city will not develop in an easterly direction, if ever it does.

Mr. Styants: That bank was cut about 40 years ago.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It was not cut down then.

Mr. Styants: It was cut down about 40 years ago.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The hon. member may be a better authority on that point than I am, but I do remember the work being stopped.

Hon. C. G. Latham: So do I.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: And I have been associated ever since with industrial conditions, and do not remember the decision then arrived at being altered. If the bank has been cut down, then the work has been done. It would be possible to pass over that cutting for a considerable distance by dropping a roof over it and making the adjoining country level with the crossing. It is wrong to disregard the direction in which the city is growing. The best part of the metropolitan area lies in the direction towards which the city is now trending. Take Hollywood, Dalkeith, Nedlands, and the area controlled by the University, which is another part awaiting development. In Subiaco there is an enormous business area, and a great amount of business is done that never comes out of Subiaco. The natural trend of the city is towards the sea. We are blessed with most attractive residential areas in that direction. Let me instance Wembley, Scarborough, and Mt. Hawthorn.

Mr. Cross: And South Perth. Those districts cannot be compared with South Perth.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: South Perth has its attractions, but also its disabilities. The area towards the sea has no disabilities. It

is attractive from any point of view. The subsoil is good and the undulations provide splendid sites for residences and businesses. In an easterly direction we come to low-lying, foggy country. East Perth is low-lying, although it is said the city is going to develop in that direction. Portions of East Perth are on high ground, but at the top of Murray-street development is interfered with by the Cathedral on the one part and the educational institutions adjoining it. That area is very suitable, but it is already wisely occupied for purposes that are under the control of the church authorities. The East Perth railway yards also occupy a large area. The Railway Department resumed certain land in anticipation of the Great Western line coming into Perth. It is endeavouring to lease portion of that land, which it is now realised will not be required for railway purposes. The idea is to lease those sites for factory purposes. To endeavour to force the city in that direction is to do a grave wrong, and Parliament should not tolerate it. People in the better areas, where the larger populations are domiciled, should raise their voices against the proposal to transfer the public offices from what experts declare is the best site in Australia. It would be the best site as the city grew, and would become more central and still more convenient for the big areas of population.

I am opposed to the Bill. I have stated my reasons. I think the measure is against the weight of evidence. I do not think we are in possession of all the reasons which the committee had for coming to its decision. If the second reading is passed, I shall strenuously oppose the idea of building a road on the eastern end of Government Domain. That would place the building at a disadvantage—would make it possible, as Mr. Clare pointed out, for buildings to be erected adjoining it which, compared with the Government offices, would be of an undesirable type and would make the corner an island where there would be a very short frontage from the road that it is proposed to put in on the east side of Government Domain and Victoria-avenue. I trust the House will not pass the Bill. The very least I hope is that members will, at all events, disagree to the putting-through of that road. If this Assembly passes the measure, then I shall be whole-heartedly in support of, and will ad-

vocate, the acquiring of the Christian Brothers' College. If we adopt the Government Domain site, we shall have to purchase the site of the college. Unless we purchase it, there is no argument in favour of the Government Domain site. It is the acquiring of the college site that will give it its attraction, if it has any attraction at all. If we delete the college site from the attractiveness of the Government Domain site, that site should never be considered, let alone recommended by a Parliamentary committee.

In conclusion let me quote a letter appearing on page 30 of the evidence. The chairman is there reported as follows:—

I have a letter which I desire to read to the committee. It is addressed to me as chairman of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Public Buildings, from the Perth Chamber of Commerce. It is dated the 14th December, and reads as follows:—

Dear Sir,—Site for Government offices.—I have to advise that the Chamber of Commerce convened a meeting of representatives from the Royal Automobile Club of W.A., the Institution of Engineers (W.A.), Perth Chamber of Commerce, W.A. Chamber of Manufactures, Perth City Council, Central Ratepayers' Association, Royal Institute of Architects, Ratepayers' Association, Local Government Association, Road Boards Association, and the Town Planning Commissioner, in connection with the site for Government buildings. Members considered that a suitable site for the Government offices was a matter of scientific study of the present position in respect to transport and traffic and the future growth of the city. They considered that a site should be selected that is centrally and geographically situated not only in relation to Perth, but also in relation to the suburbs and the country generally. After a full discussion on this matter, the following resolution was carried (Mr. Davidson dissenting):—

Mr. Davidson's was the only dissentient voice.

Hon. C. G. Latham: He was merely a Government official there.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I continue the reading of the letter of the Perth Chamber of Commerce.

—and I have been asked to convey same to you for your committee's consideration:—
“That this conference recommends to the Parliamentary Committee that the question of the site for the Government offices, having regard to the future town planning and development of the city, should be referred to a technical commission, representative of governmental and general communal inter-

ests, for the final recommendation to the Government."—Yours faithfully, E. S. Saw, Secretary.

Resolved: That, in reply to the communication received through the Perth Chamber of Commerce, the conference be informed that the committee has been appointed by Parliament and is charged with the duty of inquiring into the question of sites for public buildings and reporting thereon to the Governor. The committee will be glad to hear the evidence of any gentleman whom the conference may suggest for that purpose.

Now I have done my part as I think it my duty. I hold that from the aspect of public policy we must inquire further into the subject. Otherwise a wrong will be done to the city. The Bill is against the best interests of the city. To pass it will not help the city in its growth in the areas in which Perth can be made great and beautiful. To go down to the low-lying parts of the city and reclaim land from the river for the purpose of using it in connection with city development is utterly wrong. The city is developing to-day, and the Parliament House grounds are the natural site for public buildings and for the limited Parliament House that is now required. Therefore I do trust that this Assembly will not be stampeded, but will give the subject very careful consideration. This, I believe, is the third time the subject has been before us; and I hold that even now, at the third time of asking, we should give it further consideration. Again, I submit that the need for going on with the proposal is not as great to-day as it was when this committee was appointed. The world has changed since, and conditions to-day are greatly different from what they were. Conditions are extremely unsettled, and we cannot determine what is going to happen. To pass the Bill under such conditions would be decidedly wrong. I hope the measure will not be passed.

MR. PATRICK (Greenough) [9.27]: I intend to speak but briefly on the question, and certainly shall not wade through the mass of evidence as has been done by the previous speaker. At the same time I am rather surprised at the attitude the hon. member has adopted, because when the report of the committee was presented, there appeared in one of our daily papers "Labour Notes," which took certain members of that committee severely to task for the "obstructionist tactics" they had adopted to-

wards the Bill. There was also a statement that those members evidently had not enough intelligence to act on the evidence then before Parliament. However, we have been forced by the weight of evidence to come to the conclusion that there was only one site in it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: There were worse statements made.

Mr. PATRICK: The member for Guildford-Midland is now in the same category. I have voted against this proposal previously, but without speaking on the subject. I was not one of those who regarded it from the sentimental point of view that the Government Domain must not be touched. My own personal opinion at the time was, and now is, that better sites could be acquired. However, when it came to a question of making a decision, I was not going to be one to hold up the matter possibly as the Perth Town Hall question has been held up—for 30 or 40 years simply because I was in a minority, possibly in a minority of one, as to the site selected. The committee took evidence regarding numerous sites, but that evidence eventually narrowed our selection down to two sites—Parliament House grounds and Government Domain. The evidence was definite at least in that one respect. The other sites examined were impossible propositions because they would have involved enormous expenditure for land resumption. One point upon which all members of the committee were in special agreement was that they were not in favour of spending money on resuming land. I favoured one particular site—Parliament House, to which the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) has referred extensively. At the same time I was not prepared to hold up a decision on that ground.

As regards the evidence, I say quite candidly that I was not impressed by that tendered by the public servants. In my view their evidence was designed to fit in with one particular proposal. In fact, some of the evidence was rather absurd. For instance, there was the testimony of the Government Architect, Mr. Clare, concerning the dwarfing of Parliament House. He submitted plans which, in my opinion, were absolutely ridiculous, and my contention was confirmed by other architects who ridiculed them from that point of view. With the member for Guildford-Midland, I regard the Parliament House reserve as a magnificent site for pub-

lic offices. After listening to the various witnesses, I wondered what was really required for Government offices. For instance, we were told of the necessity for a parking area. One witness particularly complained about the noise of traffic interfering with work in the present Treasury building. While that complaint was made, we now find that the new Taxation office has been located at what is probably the busiest corner in the city. Under the new arrangements, probably more people will visit that office than any other in Perth, and yet there are absolutely no parking facilities there. The Taxation office is situated at probably the noisiest portion of the city with trams running on two sides of the location. All the witnesses agreed upon the advisability of the new Government offices being placed in a garden setting. That is very desirable where possible, but one thing that surprised me in that regard was that while it was considered necessary to place Government offices in a garden setting—the employees are only engaged in those offices for a certain number of hours each day—when it came to a question of erecting a new hospital where sick people have to remain in bed for the full 24 hours of each day, the building is being erected on a site that provides no parking area at all, and is in one of the most undesirable portions of the city from the standpoint of noise. I do not know what the ideas of the Town Planning Commissioner (Mr. Davidson) are on that question, or whether he gave evidence regarding the matter when consideration was given to the erection of the new hospital building.

Hon. C. G. Latham: He probably selected the site.

Mr. PATRICK: I am speaking in this strain in order to give members my candid opinion of some of the evidence, and to indicate that I was not greatly impressed by it. As I stated earlier, I have always preferred high ground for buildings, and have always considered that an ideal site for Government offices would be Parliament House reserve. At the same time, I consider the Treasury building should be retained for the accommodation of those departments with which the public are in close contact. I still think that even though the new offices are erected on Government Domain, departments such as the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Department, in connection with which such a large volume of rates

must be paid, the Workers' Homes Board, the State Government Insurance Office, the State Sawmills Department, and so on, all departments with which the public are in close contact, should be housed in a centre such as the Treasury building. That is what obtains in Melbourne, where all the administrative buildings are grouped around Parliament House, whereas other Governmental offices, such as the State Insurance Office, are located in the business part of the city. While that was my opinion regarding the site, I found I could not get much support for it from the other members of the committee, nor yet, despite the remarks of the member for Guildford-Midland, from the weight of evidence. In fact, I consider the weight of evidence was decidedly in favour of the Government Domain site recommended by the committee. As I mentioned before, I was not prepared to hold up what I regarded as an urgent requirement. I realised that a definite decision was desirable, otherwise the question might drag on year after year, like that of the Town Hall site. I therefore accepted the weight of evidence.

Ample opportunity was afforded outsiders to tender evidence. I was rather disappointed at the evidence available, apart from that of the public officers. The member for Guildford-Midland referred to the letter received from the Chamber of Commerce, but that did not embody much of a suggestion at all. If the commercial community was interested in the question of Government offices, surely witnesses could have been available to furnish evidence of some value. Realising the urgent need for accommodation for the public service, I was prepared to agree to the decision arrived at by the committee, provided certain conditions were laid down. Those conditions included a realisation that the purchase of private land was not justified, that there should be no land resumption, and that an area should be reserved for a roadway at the eastern end of the site. In my opinion, the reservation of a roadway as I have indicated puts the chosen site in exactly the same position as if it extended to Victoria-avenue. Mr. Clare's contention was that if the buildings were to abut on the Christian Brothers' College, any sort of a building might be erected there that would interfere with the requirements of the new Government offices. With the provision of a road-

way the buildings will be in exactly the same position as if the site extended to Victoria-avenue, because buildings could be erected on the other side of the existing street which might cause interference as suggested by the member for Guildford-Midland.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Victoria-avenue is a pretty wide street.

Mr. PATRICK: It is not wide.

Mr. Cross: In fact, it is a narrow street.

Mr. PATRICK: I do not think it is more than a chain in width?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Is not that the street where so many trees are growing?

Mr. PATRICK: Yes, and the buses proceed down that thoroughfare. It is, in fact, a very narrow street. Even after making provision for a street a chain wide, a sufficient area is left that places the whole site in just as good a situation as if it reached to Victoria-avenue itself. Another condition was that the first building should be erected at the western end of the St. George's-terrace frontage, which is the nearest to the city. Those conditions cannot very well be specified in the Bill, but I presume the Government intends to carry out the recommendations of the committee. I intend to support the Bill if an undertaking is forthcoming to that effect.

To summarise my opinion on this matter, I say that extra accommodation is urgently required for certain departments, notably the Titles Office and the Department of Agriculture. The committee aimed at settling a question that otherwise might have hung fire for years. The committee has provided a large site without the expense of the resumption of private property. The buildings, when completed, will be an ornament to the city and have a garden setting that will be unique in the Commonwealth. After making an allowance of two acres for the purpose of the proposed buildings, six acres of at present unattractive land will be converted into gardens that will be available to the public. That is all I have to say on this question. I do not think any good purpose can be served by wading through the evidence. Most members have already read it, or have grasped its purport. Subject to the reservations I have made, I support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [9.47]: I desire to make a few remarks in support of the Bill. I compliment the member for

Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) on the case he put up; it was a worthy effort, of course in support of his contentions. What agitates me is whether this Assembly really desires the centralisation of public departments. Long before and ever since I have been a member, we have constantly heard a call from first one member and then another for the centralisation of Government offices. It has been an almost continuous call. But as soon as a definite and concrete attempt is made to do what all members for years past have been calling upon the Government to do, then members become full of hesitancy and actually overflow with protests on some ground or other. All through the years I was wedded to the Treasury site. I believed this to be the most central and was under the impression that the building could be reconstructed and made suitable for the housing of Government departments. The longer I have listened to discussions on a suitable site, however, the stronger have I become convinced that I was wrong. I was prepared to change my opinion and I thought the Leader of the Opposition would change his, so that what we all desire might be put into effect. Strange to say, the land the subject of the Bill has always remained partly in its natural state, and it has been used for years, without complaint, as a dumping ground for refuse. It has practically been an eyesore and no attempt has been made to beautify it. But when the Government desires to use the site as a first step to the centralisation of Government offices and in doing so also to beautify the site, objection is taken, as though there was something subtle and wrong in the Government's proposal.

Another remarkable aspect is that, notwithstanding that Government offices are spread throughout the city, the city has expanded in all directions during the last 20 years. I suggest the expansion has been no greater westward than eastward. It may have been a little greater in a northerly direction than in a southerly direction, but that can be accounted for. Nevertheless, South Perth has developed rapidly and is still developing. Although the residents of that suburb suffer some inconvenience in their transport to the city, yet no more appropriate site to serve their interests can be found than the spot chosen by the Government. Practically all transport from the south side of the river has its terminus close to that site. I emphasise that if we hesitate

about centralising Government offices and wait until we can finally ascertain in which direction the city will ultimately expand, then we ought not to proceed with the Bill, because that point possibly will never be settled.

Mr. Patrick: It was considered by the committee.

Mr. MARSHALL: While this young State continues to increase in population—as we all hope it will—who can say in what direction the city will ultimately expand? I put it to the House that while it is impossible for the city to extend more than a few miles westward, we have an unlimited area eastward; as the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie would say, “We have countless millions of square miles.” No matter where the offices are situated, some people will have to travel further than others in order to transact business with the Government. If I thought the present proposal was not the commencement of a definite scheme of centralisation of departmental offices, I would vote against the measure. In my opinion, it would be most objectionable to provide a building for one or two departments, such as the Agricultural Department and the Land Titles Office, and then erect another building in a different locality for other Government offices. To that extent I am in agreement with the member on my right; his argument on the point was sound. I would even go so far as to say that all Government offices should be erected on the proposed site, even the Tourist Bureau, the State Sawmills, and all other departments of a commercial character. Why should not they be placed there? People who now wish to do business with those departments do not find it inconvenient to go to Murray-street for one and to Carlisle for another. Notwithstanding that some of these offices are situated in the suburbs they still maintain their quota of business. Yet it is suggested that to centralise the offices on the proposed site would be unwise, inconvenient and unprofitable. We have heard much talk about architectural beauty. The Leader of the Opposition said that if the buildings were placed on the proposed site, then in the course of years—even, if to-day they were architecturally beautiful—they would become unsightly. Would they be less beautiful in 50 years if they were erected on Parliament House ground than if erected on the Domain site? What an argument to advance!

Mr. Patrick: It is a question of elevation, is it not?

Mr. MARSHALL: The elevation makes the site more ghastly. The cramped appearance of the building would be more noticeable because of the elevation.

Mr. Doney: Age does not mean unsightliness.

Mr. MARSHALL: Notwithstanding what has been said about Parliament House site, I have never favoured it. Modern trends are along the lines of open spaces and natural beauty embellished by artificial and scientific means. The idea is to provide beautiful parks, lawns and open spaces which tend to beautify a city. I am not arguing that buildings erected here would dwarf Parliament House, but I would not care very much if they did. That aspect of the matter does not interest me. But let us suppose a building to house all the departmental offices were erected here, covering an area fronting St. George's-place on the one side and Malcolm-street on the other probably up to the highest point at the intersection of Malcolm-street and Harvest-terrace. Could a more magnificent view of nature be obtained and yet would not buildings on these grounds appear from that viewpoint cramped and ugly through lack of space? Would not the rear portion of those buildings mar all the natural beauty of what little ground we have got? In my humble judgment it would. With the passing of the years the buildings would look cramped and out of place. Contrast that with the site desired by the Government. There at least is ample space and the buildings would be surrounded by gardens. Would that not be a more pleasing spectacle than to have buildings with a cramped appearance due to an excessive quantity of bricks and mortar and a limited number of lawns and gardens such as would be the case if Government offices were established on the Parliament House site? I suggest it would.

Then as to the question of people doing business with Government departments, my contention is that provided we do not go too far out of reach of what might be said to be the central portion of the city, no one would be much more inconvenienced than people have been ever since the inception of Government departments. As a matter of fact, nearly all the transport termini—including those of the railways, tramways

and omnibuses—are at a reasonable distance from the Government Domain site, which would serve almost all the suburbs except the western end of the city. I suggest that people do not make special visits to do business with Government departments except on rare occasions. They come to the city for the dual purpose of doing business both with Government departments and other establishments. If Government offices were erected on Parliament House grounds, many people would first go into Perth and transact the business they had to do there and would then return to this end of the city to transact business with the Government offices. If we are to endeavour to centralise Government offices, we can do nothing better than to have the various departments housed together as close as possible to the city, and that end will be achieved by the use of the site suggested in the Bill. As far as the present Treasury site is concerned, all hon. members who transact much business there—and most hon. members visit the Treasury building frequently—know that it is most difficult to have a conversation with a Minister or an Under Secretary without being interrupted by the infernal and confounded noise of motor cars and trams. If departmental offices are to have plenty of sunshine and light those noises cannot be obviated in that locality. Another objection to the utilisation of that site is that the offices would be extremely cramped. I do not agree with the contention of the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) that the Government will sell that block. I remember that the Government received a very severe thrashing for endeavouring to sell blocks of much less value.

Mr. Patrick: That block was included in the Bill, I think.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, but it was not the only piece of land to the sale of which exception was taken. The Government, however, could lease that block for a long period of years just as another block has been leased by the Federal Government in the city and the leasing of the site would probably bring an excellent return. If buildings are erected on the site proposed by the Government, lawns, shady spots and resting places will be provided for people visiting Government departments and for others who wish to have some relaxation and enjoy solitude and quietness. Those are conveniences that cannot be obtained on that block to-day.

I support the measure principally because it will result in the beginning of the centralisation of departmental activities and the removal of that objectionable feature of our public life, namely, the scattering of Ministers and offices all over the city. We cannot definitely fix the exact centre of the city or accurately estimate what its exact centre will be in time to come. As far as we can gather from past experience the city will spread in all directions and consequently the site selected is the most central one. It is the most convenient site for buildings of this sort. Air, sunshine and beauty will prevail there, and we can expect to receive efficiency from our officers and render efficient service to the public.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [10.0]: I intend to oppose the second reading, not that I do not think the offices are necessary but because I believe the site recommended is the wrong one. For many years I have advocated that the administrative offices of the Government should be built on Parliament House site. The offices of the Government should be concentrated, and I believe Parliament House site is the one that should be selected. The committee was not unanimous.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, it was.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: But to-night a discordant note was sounded by the member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick), who said that possibly Government Domain was not the best site but that for the sake of unanimity he had agreed to it. I believe that the committee was influenced by public officers.

Mr. Patrick: No.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Members should have a good deal to say in this matter. We have the last word, and our duty to our electors necessitates our interviewing the officials of various departments. The member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) said the chief of one of the departments stated that although there would be only three or four chains difference in the distance, he preferred to see the offices built on Government Domain because it would save some walking. But what about members of Parliament? We shall have to walk down there and then back to Parliament House to our work. Parliament House reserve is practically the most elevated site in the city, and the buildings constructed here would enhance the city not only architectur-

ally but also from other points of view. It is certainly one of the finest sites to be found in any city of Australia.

Mr. Patrick: The Joint House Committee gave evidence against building the offices on Parliament House reserve.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Perhaps the members of the committee were jealous of the grounds in their charge and wished to retain them. Surely the at present unused area to the south of Parliament House affords ample room for the proposed Government offices. There is no need to build them so far away as at the Government Domain. If buildings of three or four storeys were constructed at the Barracks site, Parliament House would not be obscured from view in the terrace. In my opinion Parliament House site would eventually prove to be much more central than would the Government Domain site. This is the direction in which the city is extending and where the population is to be found. The talk about there being a tendency for the city to expand eastward is quite wrong. Even if the trend was in that direction, it could not continue beyond the Causeway, whereas there is scope for almost unlimited expansion in a westerly direction. The member for Canning (Mr. Cross) referred to the growth of South Perth, but it will be a matter of only a little time before a bridge must be built to South Perth and then the people of that district would best be served by offices on the most central site—Parliament House grounds. I am very anxious to see the whole of our Government offices concentrated on one area. The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) spoke of the Treasury site. That site must be retained, because it will be needed for some of the purposes mentioned by the member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick). The member for Murchison spoke of the possibility of leasing the Treasury building. Of what use would the internal fittings be to anybody? What purpose could the building serve?

Mr. Patrick: It will be required by the Government for the next 25 years. The new offices will not be completed in one year.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Treasury building should certainly be retained by the Government. However, I for one am opposed to the Government Domain site and shall vote against the second reading of the Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne—in reply) [10.5]: This debate has afforded a very interest-

ing instance of how much discussion a very small Bill can provoke, particularly when all the aspects ventilated have previously been thoroughly examined and commented upon, even without as much evidence before the House as there is this evening. The joint committee was constituted of members holding very divergent views on the subject. Of the eight members, five or six had previously voted against the proposal to use portion of the land included in the present Bill. Members of the committee worked with great thoroughness. They had a background of information and documentary evidence that does not appear in the evidence before the House. Although the member for Guildford-Midland suggests that, on the evidence, the committee could not come to that conclusion, he has heard a member who at one stage was not whole-heartedly a supporter of the proposal say that in his view the weight of evidence was in favour of the site mentioned in the Bill. Quite apart from that, the committee was not constituted as is a court of law. Its function was not to hear evidence, examine that evidence only and base a decision on only that evidence. The committee was charged with a very grave and important responsibility—to endeavour to select the best site now available, not necessarily the ideal site, but the best site now available for the purposes of Government buildings.

The committee was charged with the responsibility of examining all possible sites, and I say very definitely that it executed this function in a most painstaking manner. Every possibility was explored; every opportunity was taken to obtain expert evidence. Everybody whose opinion was considered to be worth while was invited to attend in person; contributions from others were invited by advertisement. It is quite idle for those whose have spoken in opposition to the measure to say that the decision was reached simply because those who gave evidence were preponderantly Government servants. If we were to get the opinions of those whose evidence was worth having, the first we would call would be those capable of giving expert advice. I assure the House that the committee gave great consideration to the question of those persons it would call if they would not volunteer to give evidence. Although a certain slur has been cast upon and slighting remarks have been made against the civil

servants who gave evidence, if members who made those remarks had read all the evidence or had themselves been members of the committee, their conclusion would have been no different from that which has been reached. I was surprised to learn that on the committee were very unsophisticated persons whose minds could be warped and twisted at the will of the Chairman. Amongst them were persons who 40 years ago were members of a Government, two of them being ex-Cabinet Ministers. Notwithstanding that, we are expected to believe that the minds of those members were easily swayed. Imagine the personnel! Take the member for the North Province, the Hon. J. J. Holmes, not very malleable, unless a very substantial argument is presented to him!

Mr. Patrick: He was very reasonable.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Most reasonable. I would say that all members of the committee were actuated by one desire—in spite of their preconceived notions—to make an honest examination of every site and a close study of all the evidence submitted.

Mr. Patrick: And achieve finality.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. Take the Hon. C. F. Baxter! One would hardly charge him with being easily swayed by specious arguments. Yet we are expected, by one member who spoke this evening, to believe that. If any of those members who have spoken against the Bill had been members of the committee, there would never have been any other conclusion. To one remark of the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) I desire particularly to refer, namely, the extraordinary silence—that is what he terms it—in connection with the Treasury site. He said he could find no reference to the Treasury building or to a suggestion for the utilisation of that site. The remark showed how much his speech was worth. If he had read the evidence completely, even the evidence that he quoted, he could never have made that accusation. He would get a start in that direction if he referred to questions 140, 300, 301, 348, 349, and 468. Those are amongst a few questions dealing with the subject. He will find in Question 140 even a suggestion of how the buildings should be treated as such, whether the foundations would stand the additional storeys, and whether the framework would have to be built inside the present structure to enable the present buildings to be used

effectively for any public buildings scheme. If he took the evidence of Mr. Summerhayes, which he quoted in part, he would find references of a like nature. It was very obvious that the member for Guildford-Midland did not desire to quote some of the evidence. He criticised very bitterly the “uncentral” position of this site. That phase is not dealt with to any great extent in the report, but he admitted that he had not read Mr. Millen’s evidence. Who but those associated with transport would be expected to give such evidence? The hon. member ignored it!

During the course of the examination of these proposals, the committee went to the trouble of finding out how many passengers dismounted from trams, buses, trains and trolley buses within half-a-mile of every site under consideration. It had a plan prepared showing the Observatory site, Parliament House site, the site north of the railway, the existing public buildings, the Esplanade, and every site which is now with any degree of possibility available even in spite of resumptions. We knew how many passengers dismounted from every type of vehicle. It may surprise the hon. member to know that the site represented in this Bill is the most central for the majority of passengers dismounting from all types of vehicles within a half-mile radius. There is no other site near which so many people alight from public vehicles, as our traffic is constituted to-day.

Mr. Doney: Not even in the case of the present public buildings?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. I am referring to public vehicles of all sorts including trams, trains and trolley buses.

The Premier: And ferries.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, they were all included. I repeat that notwithstanding the evidence printed and submitted, which has again been quoted to be printed again, this was not all that was considered by the committee. The committee spent hours for many days, not merely in considering the evidence, but the evidence of former committees, considering plans of all sorts in regard to all sites and locations. I say without fear of its being successfully contradicted, that no greater thoroughness nor more earnestness could have been displayed than was shown by that committee in an endeavour to reach a solution of this great problem. The member for Guildford-Midland also said that if the Christian Brothers’ site had been

included he would have been disposed to admit some merit in the proposal. I remind him that he had that opportunity last year but turned it down.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I did not say there was any merit in it, but I said that you had removed what little merit there was in it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Had the hon. member read all the evidence and weighed the pros and cons of what was contributed by way of evidence given in this Chamber, he would have found that the balance was in favour of the proposed site. Had he possessed the privilege of being on the committee, and of having access to all the information available, undoubtedly he would have been converted. I would say the same of the Leader of the Opposition. Without doubt it is as well the public should know the mood that hon. member was in when he delivered his speech, one of the most ineffective of his speeches, if I may say so. He spoke with great levity and facetiousness, and could hardly contain his mirth during one period of half-an-hour of the two hours that he was on his feet. In cold print the speech reads in all seriousness, as if it had been a well-considered effort.

Mr. Doney: I recall that he made references to his own feelings in the matter.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He made no pretence that he was in a serious mood when he made that speech. He was obviously highly amused at something.

Mr. Doney: That may have been so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He made the speech in a facetious mood, and I suggest it should be regarded as a facetious speech. Obviously, too, the hon. member had not read the report. He was not quite sure when beginning to quote some of the questions and answers whether he should finish his quotations, because they did not reach the conclusions he desired. That was very obvious. The speech either disclosed carelessness in the hon. member's attitude towards this matter, or it disclosed that he did not wish in any circumstances to support the area referred to in the Bill. In spite of that, in spite of his easy criticism and his playful manner, I submit that the report of the committee, as made available, is of great value. It was an investigation held with every desire to meet the circumstances of to-day, and it is of great value to the community. As the member for Murchison (Mr.

Marshall) pointed out, we have now dwindled to two or three possible sites. In 1928 eleven sites were available.

Mr. Patrick: There are really only two.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Some of those sites could not be resumed to-day under £200,000. If the number has dwindled to two, should we not consider ourselves lucky to have two in this year of 1940? And if we still have two, should not we desire to avail ourselves of the best of them? Therefore I do not wish the House to get any mistaken idea that the committee, or any member of it, thinks that the site chosen is the ideal site. The committee members think it is the best site offering; and because they think that it does conform to the major number of requirements for public buildings, they think we should take advantage of the opportunity and secure that site for the future of the State. The Leader of the Opposition stated there was sufficient land for Government offices where the Agricultural Department now is. Obviously the hon. gentleman has not read the evidence of what is required and the floor space necessary for the two departments in most urgent need of accommodation, because they alone could not be accommodated on that site unless we went up to 10 or 12 storeys. So that although the hon. gentleman also suggested purchasing the Hale School site he even compromised in the finish of his speech by saying that the Christian Brothers' site would be all right.

Mr. Patrick: Did he?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Leader of the Opposition said that. If the hon. member wishes to refer to it, he will find it in the last sentence of the speech.

Mr. Patrick: I did not hear his speech.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member may read it. The Deputy Speaker might see me reading it.

Mr. Doney: If you say the statement is there, that is good enough.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Leader of the Opposition said that if this site was added to the Christian Brothers' College site, there would be some merit in it. The observation appears on page 459 of this session's "Hansard" No. 6. So that it is obvious the Leader of the Opposition was not very serious either in his proposals or in his criticisms. What a difference, then, we find in his present opposition as

compared with his attitude last year towards the site which included the Christian Brothers' College area!

There is only one other matter to which I desire to refer, and that is the unfair conclusions drawn by the Leader of the Opposition from the evidence of the Under Treasurer. I should say that, although the Leader of the Opposition went so far as to state that even temporary buildings would be better than this proposal, his antagonism to the State Government Insurance Office was really the gem of his speech. He said that the State Government Insurance Office was evidently brought into existence for the purpose of finding money for these proposed buildings. Was there ever anything more ridiculous? The hon. member knows full well the history of the State Government Insurance Office. He even went so far as to say that the Government must have been fleecing the community to build up reserves in this manner. The hon. gentleman was a responsible member of a Government, and he knew full well that it was necessary to build up reserves for the State Government Insurance Office. Because those reserves were awaiting other investment and the opportunity arose to select an area for public buildings, and therefore an opportunity to invest that money in a manner provided and within the Act, those funds were allowed temporarily to accumulate. The Leader of the Opposition knew full well that that is what was meant; that the fund was deliberately built up at that stage to serve this purpose. I will quote what was said on that aspect, so that there shall be no doubt about it. The Leader of the Opposition read part of that evidence—the part that it suited him to pick out in order to cast some aspersions against the Government and the State Government Insurance Office. The Under Treasurer stated —

If the State Insurance Office funds are used to meet the cost of Government offices under the authority of either the Public Buildings Act, 1937, or the State Insurance Act, 1938, the State's loan programme as approved by the Loan Council will not be reduced. The State Insurance Office funds are not loan moneys within the meaning of the Financial Agreement.

That answers the point raised by the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald).

On the other hand if the funds of the Insurance Office were invested in Commonwealth loans, no addition to our loan programme would result.

To sum up the position, the Government has the money available now for the erection of the first section of the new offices. It is most probable that the use of this money will not impose any burden on the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The money could not be used for ordinary governmental loan undertakings, and its use for the erection of Government offices will not in any way interfere with our approved loan programme.

So that if one will read the Under Treasurer's statement, there is a direct answer to the question raised by the member for West Perth in regard to the availability of the money and its effect on the loan programme, and also to the allegations of the Leader of the Opposition.

It is not my desire to prolong this debate. We have had very many extracts quoted from the report of the committee. I propose to quote no other than that part of the Under Treasurer's statement. I think that if the House will concede to the members of the committee even a little of what is due to them, it will say that on the evidence as submitted, and on all the evidence available, it presented a true and faithful report.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 10.29 p.m.