

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 30th September, 1931.

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

QUESTION—UNEMPLOYMENT, ASSISTANCE.

Mr. J. H. SMITH asked the Minister for Works: 1, Under the latest scheme of employment, does he propose to employ the many hundreds of men out of work but not receiving assistance, under the same conditions as sustenance men? 2, If not, will he explain the reasons why this body of people should be penalised on account of having been thrifty in the past?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, These works are being put in hand with money provided to relieve sustenance payments by the Government to men who are without any means at all. So far as we can employ others, they also will be considered. 2, Answered by No. 1.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Lamond (Pilbara) on the ground of urgent private business, and for six weeks to Hon. T. Walker (Kanowna) on the ground of ill-health.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

1. Reserves (No. 2).
2. Roads Closure (No. 2).
Introduced by the Minister for Railways.
3. Licensing Act Amendment (No. 3).
Introduced by Hon. W. D. Johnson.

BILL—POOR PERSONS' LEGAL ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon.

T. A. L. Davy—West Perth) [J.40] in moving the second reading said: This is not a Bill for which I claim any great importance, but during the operations of the parent Act a few minor defects have discovered themselves, and the Bill is designed to rectify them. Under Section 7 of the principal Act, when approval has been given for the conduct of a poor person's case, the next step required is that an application shall be made by way of summons to a judge in Chambers under what is known as the in forma pauperis rule of the court. It has been found entirely unnecessary for the smooth working of the Act to make that application. It costs money and takes up the time of a judge unnecessarily. Actually, in no single instance has that application ever been made. As a result, if the rules of the court have been strictly observed, such applications must have been irregular. What I propose is that the law shall be brought into accord with the practice that has actually been followed, namely, that the practitioner assigned to act for a poor person shall continue to carry out such duties merely because he has been so assigned, and without the necessity for any application in forma pauperis to the court. As I have pointed out, no such application has ever been made, and that portion of the Act has been ignored. I do not believe in the law being ignored. If it can be ignored without harm to anyone, it should be repealed. That is what I propose to do, and to substitute the provision that appears in Clause 2 of the Bill. The next point dealt with is that under Section 13 of the principal Act it is provided that any costs that an unsuccessful poor person receiving legal assistance under the Act is liable to pay, shall be provided out of moneys appropriated by Parliament. The other day a case of this description was taken to the appeal stage, and the poor person was given the benefit of the Act. The appeal was unsuccessful, and later on the opposing side demanded that the Government should pay their costs. That put the other side in a much more favourable position than if the individual concerned had had enough money to finance his own litigation. That does not appear

to be a reasonable proposition. In quite a number of cases of litigation, the successful litigant finds himself unable to secure his costs, because the other man cannot pay them. That is his bad luck. I do not see any reason why the Crown should be placed in such a position, merely because it pays a very small fee to a lawyer to act for a poor person, and, in the event of an unsuccessful issue, to be required to pay the costs of the other side would be unfair. The Crown would be unfortunate in losing such an appeal.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: We would not come under the vexatious litigation legislation!

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It would not be fair, either. We do not take up these cases unless we think there are good grounds. We do not allow people to litigate at the expense of the Government merely because they desire to do so. We require that an individual shall have what appears to be a just case in law and equity; we do not allow speculative actions to be indulged in at the expense of the public purse. Accordingly, I desire to rectify the position that has arisen. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. C. Willcock, debate adjourned.

BILL—LOCAL COURTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. A. L. Davy—West Perth) [4.45] in moving the second reading said: This is to rectify what I regard as a mistake in the amendment of the Local Courts Act which we carried last year. The mistake made was entirely due to my own carelessness.

Mr. Marshall: That is not uncommon.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No, like the hon. member, I frequently make mistakes. What happened was this: In another place the measure was sent to a select committee and various amendments were made to it. Some criticism appeared because it was alleged that the result of the Bill would be to make Supreme Court judges travel all over the country. When the amendments came down here from another place—it was about 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, when it was easy to make mistakes—I jumped to the conclusion that one

of those amendments was to make it perfectly certain that the judges would not have to travel. I agreed to the amendment in that belief. What I told members was that the amendment in question made it quite clear that the judges would not have to travel. Actually the amendment did the very reverse, and made it quite clear that the judges would have to travel. I agree that as far as possible justice ought to be taken to the people, that they ought not to have to travel great distances, and eventually I hope we shall be able to afford to have the judges travel. But when originally I presented the measure to the House I gave an assurance that it would not involve the public purse in any extra expenditure; whereas by virtue of the amendment referred to it will do that. Therefore I have not proclaimed the Act until I could ask the House and another place to agree to a further amendment making it quite clear that when actions take place they shall be heard at any place a judge chooses; and of course he will not choose any other place but his own court. Therefore I propose a small amendment of Section 7 of the Local Courts Act to make that perfectly clear. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. C. Willcock, debate adjourned.

BILL—INTERSTATE DESTITUTE PERSONS' RELIEF ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. A. L. Davy—West Perth) [4.48] in moving the second reading said: This is a little measure which I have brought down at the request of the Federal Government. As hon. members know, under the Interstate Destitute Persons' Relief Act there is reciprocity between the States. Now it has been discovered that it is inconvenient that that reciprocity should not extend to the territories of the Commonwealth, such as New Guinea and the mandated territory up there. This Bill makes an amendment to the Act, extending the same provisions which operate between the States of the Commonwealth to the territories of the Commonwealth and the territories governed by the Commonwealth under the mandate.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Does not the existing Act apply to the Northern Territory?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No. This Bill will bring within the scope of the Act the Northern Territory, perhaps the Federal territory at Canberra, and New Guinea and the mandated territory. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. C. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [4.50]: I do not think there can be very much objection to the Bill. The principle of reciprocity in regard to the relief of destitute persons not only operates between the various States of the Commonwealth but is, I think, world-wide. It has been agreed to as a principle in this House, and the Bill merely widens the scope of the Act. I think we could let the Bill go through.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

BILL—STATE SAVINGS BANK TRANSFER.

Message.

Message from the Administrator received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.56] in moving the second reading said: Before I deal with the Bill I may perhaps be permitted to make a few remarks as to what led up to the agreement. It will be remembered that nine weeks ago I left for Melbourne. At that time there was no cause for anxiety about the bank. I knew, of course, we should have to realise some of our securities later. But I found the financial position in Melbourne very difficult, and that Commonwealth bonds were selling at a discount. They were quoted on the market at £83, and it was only nominal value. Also I found there were rumours of other banks, small banks, being in difficulties, including the Primary Producers' Bank. Another bank has since been absorbed by the

Bank of New South Wales. I realised that the financing of our State Savings Bank would daily grow more difficult, and that the withdrawals from the bank had been fairly consistent over a long time. Men who had put their savings into the bank were finding themselves in such a position that they had to live on their savings, and so were withdrawing them.

Mr. Raphael: The Government took out their share as well, did they not, for paying salaries?

The PREMIER: I will show the hon. member later what the Government did with the money. There had been pretty consistent withdrawals. One would expect there would be in bad times. In good times people pay their money into the savings bank, but in bad times they have to draw upon their accounts. No doubt people who had their money in the bank were withdrawing it to meet living expenses, for the payment of taxation and other accounts or to make investments. Whatever the cause, the withdrawals became heavier as the days went by. In July over £100,000 was withdrawn. The Under Treasurer then wired to me in Melbourne, telling me this, and within the next few days he wired again that the withdrawals were becoming heavier. I knew, of course, that the cash we had at our disposal would soon become exhausted.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: You mean the liquid funds of the bank?

The PREMIER: Yes. The security was there in Federal bonds, and could only be sold at a discount even then. There was no run on the bank at that time, but I realised the risk. I consulted the Governor of the Commonwealth Bank and found that I could not arrange finance to meet a serious run. I could not realise on the securities held by our Savings Bank. There was no chance of consulting members of this House, or Ministers. I felt that I should act, and I did act. The agreement, of course, is subject to the ratification of Parliament. It provides for the amalgamation of the State Savings Bank with the Commonwealth Savings Bank. I knew that I was taking a very serious risk of being misunderstood, and that I was incurring an equally serious risk of criticism. I knew of the objection entertained by people in this State to the transfer of any of our institutions or facilities to any body connected with the Commonwealth, but the risk had to be taken. There was just under £8,000,000 deposited in the State Sav-

ings Bank; that is, £8,000,000 of the £23,000,000 on deposit by the people of this State in the whole of the banks was deposited in the State Savings Bank. I knew that if the Savings Bank closed, in the first place it would bring great discredit on the State, and in the second place the £8,000,000 would become frozen at a time when money was wanted. I knew there were 270,000 accounts in the bank representing probably 150,000 depositors. I had to keep before me the interests of the 150,000 depositors, every one of whom is entitled to get his money whenever he desires it. I had to consider their interests, and I am sure that is what members would have had me do. Suppose the £8,000,000 had become frozen, as £59,000,000 is frozen in New South Wales, it would have been a very serious matter, not only for depositors, but for all of us. The depositors now know that they can get their money whenever they want it, and the very fact of having this knowledge helps them in their expenditure. They feel that they can spend their savings whenever they consider it necessary to do so. Every penny of the money deposited in the bank belongs to the depositors. The State owns not a penny of it.

Mr. Marshall: Then you are in the same position as Lang was.

The PREMIER: The Savings Bank has always been carried on on the money of its depositors, and has been conducted without capital. I hope that fact is clear in the minds of members. Consider what would have happened if depositors had been prevented for a week or two from withdrawing their money from the bank. There are times when public men must accept responsibility and act. I repeat that I had no opportunity to consult my colleagues. It could not have been done by wire or other means.

Mr. Marshall: What about telephone?

The PREMIER: That would have been excellent; the news would have been all over the place in about two minutes. The hon. member now has to face his responsibility in this matter. Even if he disagrees with what I have done, he can at least give the matter earnest consideration. He inferred just now that I was as bad as Lang. I presume he means the Premier of New South Wales. I think the Savings Bank of New South Wales had about £400,000 of accumulated profits, but lost £16,000,000 in deposits before the doors were closed. When the bank closed there were about 1,000,000 de-

positors, and £59,000,000 of money became snowed up and frozen.

Mr. Raphael: A political stunt, too.

The PREMIER: So far as I know, it was not a political stunt. Even if it was, no one in this State had anything to do with it. In my own mind I am satisfied it was not a political stunt.

Mr. Marshall: The only difference between you and Lang is that Lang said he would not pay, and you said you could not pay.

The PREMIER: The hon. member may be able to distinguish between those fine points, but I am satisfied nobody can follow him.

Mr. Marshall: I am not surprised that you cannot do so.

The PREMIER: It would give me great pleasure if I could agree with the irrepressible gentleman. The funds of the State Savings Bank are largely invested in Government stocks, the amount being £6,862,000. Of this sum £2,280,000 is in Federal bonds, which, for the reasons I have mentioned, are unsaleable at anything like face value. Those bonds have been accumulated over a considerable period, and appeared to be securities that could be readily realised. When I was in Melbourne they were quoted on the market at £83, and it was only a nominal value. After the end of July, we had £300,000 cash in the Savings Bank available to meet further withdrawals. It would not have taken much of a run to exhaust that £300,000. The bank has always invested in securities in the shape of Government bonds. The following shows the investment of funds:—

	£	s.	d.
Metropolitan Waterworks, Goldfields Water Supply debentures	258,069	3	0
Debentures under Agricultural Lands Purchase Act	247,873	6	7
Water Boards' debentures	28,995	17	1
Local inscribed stock certificates	4,122,906	15	0
Land Drainage Act debentures	7,789	13	4
Treasury bills	192,962	12	9
Treasury bonds	6,210	0	0
W.A. Government debentures	2,248,231	10	0
Commonwealth Government inscribed stock	31,950	0	0
	47,144,988	17	9

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Why are those figures different from the figures in the schedule?

The PREMIER: The figures I have quoted represent the position at the 30th June; those in the schedule were taken as the basis of the calculations. The agreement was drafted in Melbourne, and I had to do the business there. The difference, however, is immaterial; it is merely the basis.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: I thought that perhaps you were writing down the value of the stocks?

The PREMIER: No. The only investments with private people are represented by mortgages on freehold amounting to £39,553 13s. 2d., but the bank holds municipal debentures of £151,810 1s., road board debentures £188,126 18s. 3d., fixed deposits £400,000 and other small securities, the total being £780,897 17s. 7d., which makes a grand total of £7,925,886 15s. 4d. Ever since the State Savings Bank was started, it has been the practice to invest the funds in Government securities. Under the conditions of amalgamation, we are to receive 70 per cent. of the increased deposits of the amalgamated bank as from the 1st October, 1931. That will be calculated quarterly.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Whom do you mean by "we," the Government?

The PREMIER: The State. Seventy per cent. of the increase in the deposits will be loaned to the State Government.

Hon. P. Collier: Can we say how it will be invested?

The PREMIER: Commonwealth bonds will be given under the amalgamation; it will be an ordinary loan to the State. If at the end of any quarter a decrease of deposits is revealed, we shall get no more until the decrease has been made good. We shall get only the proportion of the actual increase. We will not be called upon to make good any decrease at any time, but the decrease in one quarter will be made good by the increase in the next quarter or in the quarter following. That is reasonable. The rate of interest is to be 1 per cent. over the rate paid by the Savings Bank. These securities, being Commonwealth securities, must carry sinking fund, which will be half per cent. to be paid on all loans. The profit and loss will be shared by the Commonwealth Bank and the State Government.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: What are the relative amounts of deposits in the Commonwealth Savings Bank and the State Savings Bank?

The PREMIER: We are not concerned with past deposits in the Commonwealth

Savings Bank; we are concerned only with future deposits.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Should not the profits be distributed pro rata according to the capital that each bank brings into the amalgamation?

The PREMIER: I should not think so. The cost of running the bank will be reduced and the profit will be greater because of the larger number of accounts.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: A lot of the accounts are duplicated; people have money in both banks.

The PREMIER: Some have, but we cannot judge how many. However, that is a provision of the agreement and I think it is a fair one.

Hon. A. McCallum: Are the profits to be divided equally?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. A. McCallum: That is rather one-sided.

The PREMIER: I do not think so.

Hon. A. McCallum: We have £8,000,000 of deposits, and the Commonwealth Savings Bank has £2,500,000.

The PREMIER: Our deposits yield a profit of £19,000 a year at present, so the profit is not very large and never can be large. We pay practically on the daily balance, and we have to keep considerable money in reserve to meet withdrawals. The profits we make are comparatively small, and must always be comparatively small in savings bank business. We guarantee the payment of interest on the securities, and principal as well. That really refers to the £39,000. Any decrease in deposits will be allowed for before the Government are entitled to further advances. It is provided that the State Treasurer shall be a member of the Savings Bank Advisory Board. The board's responsibility will be to fix the rate of interest, the maximum amount that may be taken, and the nature of the investments, and the terms and conditions of the advances to be made by the bank. After we take the seventy per cent., there will not be so much available for loans to municipalities or other people. The staff of 120 is to be taken over.

Hon. P. Collier: Who is going to control it?

The PREMIER: The Commonwealth Bank.

Hon. P. Collier: The bank authorities?

The PREMIER: The board will only exist for the purposes I have mentioned. It

will fix the rate of interest, the maximum amount that may be taken, and the nature of the investments that may be made, including the terms and conditions.

Hon. P. Collier: How will the board be formed?

The PREMIER: It will be the bank board, plus a representative of the State. We shall not be in the majority.

Hon. P. Collier: Do you mean the present Commonwealth Bank Board?

The PREMIER: Not that sitting in Melbourne. It will be set up here to deal with our own investments. It will be an advisory board. Investments are not greatly affected, because we shall certainly take 70 per cent. of the increased deposits.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Then this is not entirely an amalgamation: it is a kind of partnership. We have representation on the board that is to be formed.

The PREMIER: A board to do these few things. We do not require to be concerned in the management.

Hon. A. McCallum: To do them or to recommend them.

The PREMIER: It is merely an advisory board. Since we take 70 per cent. of the increased deposits, there will not be very much business done for a long time. The rights of the staff are to be preserved. There is a clause in the Bill dealing with them. Very few have pension rights.

Hon. P. Collier: There is not a guarantee to take over the whole staff, is there?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. P. Collier: Surely the amalgamation will mean a reduction in staff.

The PREMIER: Mr. Riddle says they can all be absorbed.

Hon. P. Collier: It is difficult to understand how all the officers can be absorbed if one branch of a business is taken away and joined up with another next door.

The PREMIER: The staff can be absorbed by the Commonwealth Bank, which has branches all over Australia.

Hon. P. Collier: I should say they were already fully staffed.

The PREMIER: Mr. Riddle says they can all be absorbed.

Hon. P. Collier: How can one business be closed and another opened next door, and the same staff retained?

The PREMIER: That occurred to me. I suggested that there might be a difficulty,

but Mr. Riddle said they could all be absorbed into their present system.

Hon. P. Collier: It is hard to understand.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: They have got to have a forward policy.

The PREMIER: Their operations are not confined to Western Australia.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Unless they open new branches they cannot have much in the way of an increase in staff in these times.

The PREMIER: I do not pretend to know. I am only telling members what I have been told. It occurred to me that the amalgamation would mean that some members of the staff would not be wanted, but Mr. Riddle assured me they could all be absorbed. I have no doubt that what Mr. Riddle said is correct. It may be that they are extending their business in some of the States.

Hon. P. Collier: In some cases there is a bank operating next door to the Commonwealth bank. They will not keep the two going. They must close one or the other. How are they to keep the staffs intact? I take it in our case they will not keep going the two premises that are so close to each other.

The PREMIER: Members will realise that the Governor of the Commonwealth Bank is the only man who knows that these officers are likely to be absorbed. We have transferred many departments to the Commonwealth in the past, and they have taken over the whole of the staffs. The post office was transferred in the same way, and other departments also went over. Under the Constitution the Commonwealth take over the staffs.

Mr. Withers: How will the small centres, such as where railway officers are controlling the State Savings Bank, get on for facilities?

The PREMIER: The Commonwealth will no doubt make the necessary arrangements. In most cases the storekeepers who act for the State Savings Bank are merely the agents. We have very few branches in the country. If the Commonwealth want the services of the station-masters they will have to pay for them. It may be that in some centres the station-master is the right person to provide these facilities.

Mr. Withers: So long as they do not take away facilities from small country districts it may be all right.

The PREMIER: They will not take away any facilities. In many centres there have been post offices as Commonwealth agencies. We have very few country agencies. I think in Bunbury there is a branch of the bank. Our officers are to be taken over and their rights are to be preserved. Care will be taken to see that they are preserved. I have no doubt they will be absorbed into the Commonwealth Bank system. They will probably be very much better off there than they would be in the State service. That refers particularly to the younger men who will have a chance of getting into the general banking system. The assets are to be taken over, other than the Barrack-street land. Members will recall that the State Savings Bank bought this land for £40,000. It forms part of the land on which our public offices are situated. We could not allow that to go. The amalgamation is to last for 25 years, with the option of renewal for another 20 years. It is also provided that if any better terms are to be granted to any other savings bank which becomes amalgamated these are to be available to Western Australia. We have no past experience as to the satisfactory working of such an amalgamation as this. I did, however, see the Queensland Treasurer in Melbourne, and he told me that the work under the amalgamation was highly satisfactory to his State. The experience there will surely be the experience here. I wish to make this clear to the House. We had this State Savings Bank. We were paying interest on deposits and we had to invest those deposits to earn interest. All Governments have made these investments, I think almost altogether in Government securities. In normal and easier times no doubt the securities might have been realised, but it is utterly impossible to realise on them to-day. I have been in the House for 25 years just as the Leader of the Opposition has. Over all that time we have found it possible to carry on with only a comparatively small amount in actual cash. We have always relied on the Treasurer being able to help with funds if necessary, as in better times it was possible to do.

Hon. P. Collier: Our cash was sometimes very low, but in normal times there was no occasion for apprehension.

The PREMIER: It was always a worry. We knew we had no banking facilities. In

those days, however, we could command a little money. The Leader of the Opposition knows we had only to send a cable to London to get a million of money without any trouble.

Hon. P. Collier: Or in Australia.

The PREMIER: To-day there is no chance of getting it either in Australia or in London. I was faced with a responsibility to those people who had their money in the State Savings Bank. I had to face that responsibility as Premier of the State. I could see it was my duty to take that responsibility. I was 2,000 miles away from Perth, and had no opportunity to confer with anyone. I had to take the responsibility of doing what I believed to be right and my duty. Now I come to the House and ask it to confirm the action I have taken. I ask members to pass this Bill I am now submitting. The arrangement is a good one; of that there is no doubt. The Commonwealth Bank has facilities to carry on this business of a more extensive nature than are possessed by the State. The Commonwealth can offer better facilities all through than we can.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: That applied equally two years ago, but you would not have dreamt of doing this then.

The PREMIER: The position has applied ever since we have federated. The present difficult times have never before been experienced.

Mr. Sleeman: This is the first step towards secession.

The PREMIER: This has nothing to do with secession, for or against it. To get secession we should first get back to the position we were in before we surrendered our freedom.

Mr. Marshall: Bar the deficit, you have not much left to surrender.

The PREMIER: There is one thing I would surrender to the Eastern States and that is one of our members, if they would take him.

The Minister for Mines: Put him on the State Savings Bank staff before the transfer takes place.

The PREMIER: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. P. Collier, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [5.28]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday next, October 6th.

Question put and passed.

CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENTS.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [5.29]: There is another luty we have to perform before the House adjourns. I daresay members have heard that our Clerk, Mr. A. R. Grant, has been promoted to the position of Clerk of the Parliaments.

Mr. Panton: Is it promotion?

The PREMIER: I am sorry Mr. Grant is leaving us. He was here 10 years before I came, and he has been here more years than anyone has been in the House.

Mr. Sleeman: It is a shame to send him up there after that record.

The PREMIER: I am prepared to agree with that remark. I am very sorry Mr. Grant is going. He certainly should be much happier here than in another place. I do not know quite how he will get on in another place. He has always been a party man, always a supporter of the Government in power. When I was in Opposition, I found him simply dreadful, as no doubt all hon. members have. Mr. Grant has been sitting on the Government side of the House for the last 25 years, always ruling against the Opposition when he got a chance. Or, at any rate, that was so when I was in Opposition. I think probably the members of the present Opposition will agree that that is Mr. Grant's attitude. But, still, he is always right; he has never been wrong in the rulings that he has helped to frame. He is a highly capable man, and has served the country capably for a number of years. He has been a friend to all of us, keeping us on the straight and narrow path. We have sat under him all these years, and we have not suffered much from it. He has helped many of us on many occasions, and now he is going to another place, where he can render the same help. My concern is merely as to what he will feel like when he is there if some question involving finance comes up on which the powers of the two Houses clash.

Mr. Corboy: He will have to stick to us.

The PREMIER: I think it possible that he will, to his own hurt. However, I dare say he is quite clever enough to look after himself in such a contingency. Mr. Grant, you have been here a very long time, and we have all had the delight, may I say, of your friendship, and it has been a pleasure to all of us to go to your room and talk with you, it may be on Parliamentary matters, it may be on other matters, it may be to have a smoke with you. We know Mr. Grant is an inveterate smoker. We have had many very pleasant moments with you in that room of yours. We shall visit you when you are in another place, and as we shall be visitors there the bell will be yours. I could tell many stories about Mr. Grant, but I suppose I had better not. For years he was the only orange grower in this House, and someone used to remind him at least once a day about orange growing. I remember the last occasion on which I wished to mention oranges to him, by inadvertence I mentioned orange blossoms, and by good luck it just happened that I struck the right note. That was a few years ago. Mr. Grant has never forgiven me for it. He says that I goaded him into marriage. I hope I did, because he has had a very happy time. It is delightful to have the friendship of Mr. Grant, and I am sure every member is very sorry that our Clerk is going. However, he will still be in the same building. Mr. Grant, you go from here with the good feeling and goodwill of every member of the House in which you have spent 36 years, and also, I venture to say, of members who are no longer here. I know that Mr. Grant has been writing his reminiscences for some time. He will be unable to publish them for years to come, as they are sure to be libellous. On behalf of hon. members generally, let me congratulate Mr. Grant on his promotion. We are all very sorry indeed that he is going, and we hope that he will have a long life in that much more peaceful place, and that all will be well with him.

HON. A. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [5.37]: On behalf of members sitting on this side of the Chamber I desire to associate myself with the sentiments expressed by the Premier, and to congratulate Mr. Grant on his promotion, if it means promotion, while at the same time sympathising with him in his transfer. I cannot, of course, speak with the long experience of this Chamber that is possessed by the Premier and the

Leader of the Opposition; but I remember that on entering the House as a novice I received a great deal of assistance from Mr. Grant in the matter of Parliamentary procedure and practice. Mr. Grant's wonderful fund of information on those matters has always been freely placed at the disposal of new members. Undoubtedly he has been of the greatest help to all newcomers here. I agree with the Premier's remark that Mr. Grant has been a persistent supporter of Governments. I know that when we were in office and wanted to do anything, a way was always found for us to do it. On the other hand, when one is in Opposition and wants to hamper the Government seriously, it is always impossible to be done; it would be outside the Standing Orders. Mr. Grant has proved very sound, very logical, and very helpful in the conduct of this Chamber's business, and as regards the interpretation of its Standing Orders and rules. In my opinion, it is largely due to the sound advice Mr. Grant has given in the conduct of business here that that conduct stands so well in comparison with the conduct of business in other Australian Parliaments. A large measure of the credit for that is due to the able advice and full information Mr. Grant has been able to give us. I regret that promotion to the position of Clerk of the Parliaments means the transfer of our Clerk to the other House. I do not know why the transfer should be necessary at all. I do not know why all these high functions and positions should be associated with the other Chamber. When we were in office I did my best to have the opening of Parliament transferred to this House.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: So it should be.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I fail to see why Parliament should always be opened in another place, seeing that this House represents the people and should really be the chief House. All the main business, including finance, is our prerogative. Therefore for the life of me I cannot see why the opening of Parliament should always take place in the other Chamber. This is the Chamber which has precedence in the minds of the people.

The Minister for Railways: We are herded in a corner in another place.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes, like a mob of sheep behind the bar. I should like to see members of another Chamber crowded behind the bar here. Again, I fail to see

why the Clerk of another place should be termed Clerk of the Parliaments and his position considered superior to that of the Clerk here, whilst the Assembly does so much more work and has more onerous duties than the other Chamber. However, that position has been built up during a number of years. Really, it is just a custom. There is nothing constitutional about it; it is just a practice that has grown up in the course of time. We are all sorry to lose Mr. Grant, but we know that in another place he will have a much easier time than he has had here. For one thing, he will not have to put up with those all-night sittings which are so frequent in this Chamber. On behalf of members on this side of the House I thank Mr. Grant for the information and advice he has at all times afforded us. I wish him, on our behalf, every possible good in the future.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [5.42]: With other speakers I join in expressing regret that we are to lose the presence of that kindly, generous and historic figure who for so many years has carried out the arduous duties of Clerk of this Chamber. In respect of Mr. Grant I stand in a peculiar position, a dual position. In one respect I am his servant, and in another respect I am to a very slight extent his master. I have had the honour of representing Mr. Grant in a House where he is already and has been for many years the master, guide and philosopher on whom the utmost reliance can be placed.

Mr. Corboy: That won't make him vote for you next time.

Mr. SAMPSON: Those qualities are not confined to the House. The kindness which is so striking a characteristic of Mr. Grant's nature extends outside. There is a little bright home on the banks of the Canning where hospitality and kindness are the outstanding qualities. Let me tell you just between ourselves, Mr. Speaker, that no matter what hour of the day or night you may pass along there, if you will step aside into "Shewglie," the home of the gentleman referred to, and of the equally kindly Mrs. Grant, a most hospitable welcome awaits you. Therefore, for more than one reason I shall regret the removal of Mr. Grant from this to another place. The alleged improvement in position is certainly paradoxical, because we fail to appreciate or to understand that there can be any in-

provement on this Chamber. I have on many occasions, in common with other members of the House, been indebted to Mr. Grant for advice given. When that advice has been followed, the right thing has been done and success has been achieved. When, as has happened on odd occasions, Mr. Grant has not been referred to, the other result has been brought about. Mr. Grant is a constitutional authority of outstanding merit. He has a knowledge of "May," not a froward person that hon. members perhaps think I am referring to, but the constitutional authority on whose words all Parliamentarians depend. I join with those who have spoken in expressing regret that we are losing Mr. Grant, and in the very sincere hope that for many years he will grace the other place and bring to it that wisdom which on odd occasions has been desirable, and which certainly, now that his appointment has been made, will be available.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [5.45]: I do not desire to delay the House to any extent, but I would like to add a few words on behalf of the members of the Country Party. I do so as the oldest member of the party in the House to-day. I remember when, in 1914, the first eight Country Party members were elected to the House, and I know that, as successive new members have entered this Chamber, each one of us belonging to that party have at all times received generous assistance from Mr. Grant in dealing with the difficulties and problems that arise in the course of Parliamentary procedure. I shall content myself with expressing my pleasure at his supposed promotion—I hope it is promotion financially, as well as from the standpoint of status—and the appreciation of members of the Country Party who have been indebted to him for so much assistance in the past.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. P. D. Ferguson—Irwin-Moore) [5.46]: I would like to associate myself with what has been said regarding our old friend, Mr. Grant. I do so because I dare say I have known the Clerk longer than anyone else in this House. My first recollection of him was 37 years ago, when he said, "Ferguson, stand out!" Then there was a whack! I shall never forget it. As an old pupil of his, I hope Mr. Grant will be spared for many years to carry out his

duties in his new position and that when his working career is concluded, he will have many more years of happiness before him.

MR. RICHARDSON (Subiaco) [5.47]: In my capacity as Chairman of Committees I trust I may join with the Premier, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and other hon. members in saying a few words in appreciation of the work of our old friend, Mr. Grant. I do really regret his departure from the Legislative Assembly, but I realise that while it may not be a move up so far as remuneration is concerned, it is generally recognised that the status of the other Chamber is superior to that of our own. I tender my sincere congratulations to our departing Clerk, but I must express my personal regret that he is leaving us. On taking over the position of Chairman of Committees, I did so with some degree of diffidence. I felt that in assuming the duties attached to that position, I might not be able to carry them out satisfactorily. My natural diffidence was to a great extent removed by the fact that I found Mr. Grant to be one of my warmest and closest friends. Whenever I was inclined to go a little bit astray, he led me gently along the right course. I am glad hon. members have not heard some of the comments that Mr. Grant has made while sitting at the Table. Some may, or may not, have appreciated what he said from time to time. I have heard a good many of Mr. Grant's comments, and I feel sure that in the calmer atmosphere of the Legislative Council, he will possibly have an easier time than he has experienced here. He has been a very good friend to all of us. I have consulted him on many occasions when I was doubtful about various matters, and I do not mind admitting that at times I was slightly astray in my opinions regarding the effect of Standing Orders. I have always been put right, the explanations being given to me in a very clear and satisfactory manner, with the result that on entering the House, I had no doubt whatever in giving decisions on the points raised. I hope Mr. Grant may be spared for many years to act as Clerk of the Parliaments. As he is merely moving further along the corridor, I know he will always maintain his great interest in the Legislative Assembly, and that the Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, or the Deputy Chairmen will have no difficulty in availing themselves of his advice. They will simply have to walk along the corridor and get it.

I do not know whether we shall require to follow that course, because I understand the Clerk Assistant, Mr. Steere, is to take up the position vacated by Mr. Grant. In those circumstances possibly we shall be able to get along without conferring with Mr. Grant very often. I desire to thank Mr. Grant very sincerely for the many kindnesses he has shown me as Chairman of Committees.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [5.50]: As one who has been associated with Mr. Grant for longer than anyone else in this House as a member of Parliament, I desire to join in the congratulations regarding the so-called promotion, which he, as the senior officer of the House, has received. I am the only member left in this Chamber who was associated with him in the old Legislative Assembly when the Lower House was located in what is now the State Savings Bank building. From that day onwards, I have always received kindly and helpful treatment from Mr. Grant. He was courteous to me as a Minister, and as a private member I have received the same consideration from him. I have had to avail myself of his experience and knowledge on many occasions, and he has saved me from making many mistakes. I desire to say briefly that I am glad his special qualifications and ability have been recognised, and I trust the environment of another place will be just as pleasurable to him as that of this Chamber has been for so many years. I hope that as an officer of this House, promoted to another place, he will remember the ambitions of members here and on special occasions he will just give us a hand with a little bit of lobbying.

Mr. SPEAKER [5.52]: May I be permitted to add my quota in supplementing the remarks that have been made about our worthy old friend, Mr. Grant. It will be appreciated that 36 years represent a long time to be connected with a House of Parliament, and that is the period our Chief Clerk has been associated with the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia. I am sure I am echoing the sentiment of every hon. member when I say we trust he will be spared for many more years of useful service. I hope he will not forget his changed position. I utter a warning to him. I hope that when he attends the House on Tuesday next he will not forget what has happened

and that he will not appear in this Chamber by mistake. He will have to remember that he has been transferred to another place. I am certain Mr. Grant will carry with him the esteem and respect of every member of this Chamber. Time passes quickly. You, Mr. Grant, in your long experience have seen many faces come and go. But you, like the old bay tree, still flourish as green as ever.

The Minister for Railways: Not so very green!

Mr. SPEAKER: I ask you to accept my heartfelt gratitude for many acts of kindness and for the assistance I have received from you during my term as Chairman of Committees and during the past year and a half while I have acted as Speaker. I join with other hon. members, Mr. Grant, in expressing regret at your departure from the Chamber, but our regret is tempered by the knowledge that you are receiving promotion. We trust that although you will be going down to another place, we shall often have the pleasure of meeting you.

MR. GRANT: I do not need to read the Orders of the Day, and, since I have to make a speech, I am glad that you, Sir, have restricted me to half a dozen words. I thank members very sincerely indeed for their kind references to me, and also I wish to express my regret at leaving the service of the Assembly after so many years.

The **PREMIER**: I think we might also express our congratulations to Mr. Steere on his promotion. However, not until after 12 o'clock to-night shall we be entitled to do that.

House adjourned at 5.56 p.m.
