

requirements of the public. The manner in which the convenience of the public is neglected represents the most wicked example of what can be done. Members have only to look at the conveniences provided to realise that they are the most disgraceful that anyone could conjure up in his mind.

Mr. Hegney: Now, what do you really mean by that?

Mr. LAMBERT: I hope the Bill will be rejected and that the House will give instructions to the Minister to tell the Commissioner of Railways that the conveniences for the public in the metropolitan area are antiquated, out of date and a disgrace to the department. It is a great pity that the Commissioner and his officers are not called upon to take the risks that the travelling public have to incur, all through the inefficiency and incapacity of the Railway Department.

On motion by Mr. Cross, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.46 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 25th October, 1938.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieutenant-Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Alsatian Dog Act Amendment.
- 2, Northam Municipality Loan Authorisation.

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

The PRESIDENT: I have received from the Auditor General a copy of his report on the Treasurer's statement of the Public Accounts for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1938. It will be laid on the Table of the House.

QUESTION—WORKERS' HOMES.

Number Erected on Goldfields.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL asked the Chief Secretary: How many workers' homes have been erected and at what centres—(a) on the Eastern Goldfields; (b) on the Murchison or East Murchison Goldfields?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1 and 2, For many years it was the policy of the Workers' Homes Board not to erect houses in goldfields areas. It has since been possible to cater only for the Kalgoorlie district where a great shortage of houses existed. Forty houses have been completed and a further 18 approved. Generally speaking, the large mining companies on the Murchison and East Murchison have done commendable work in providing housing accommodation for their employees and the shortage is not so acute.

QUESTIONS (2)—NATIVE ADMINISTRATION ACT.

As to Regulations.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: In view of the fact that the regulations made under the Native Administration Act, 1936, and published in the "Government Gazette" on the 29th April, 1938, have not yet been laid on the Table of the House, will the Minister correct the statement that these regulations are now in force?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: It is expected that these regulations will be laid on the Table of the House this week.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: Arising from the answer given to the question I have just asked, will the Chief Secretary state whether the regulations referred to are in force?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: I have just given a reply to a question asked by the hon. member indicating that the regu-

tations will be laid on the Table of the House this week.

Hon. H. Seddon: Are the others in force?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The regulations that have been amended by those to be tabled this week were in operation up to the time the question was raised and amendments were asked for. They were then withdrawn. The regulations have been amended, and the amended regulations will be laid on the Table of the House this week.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The Chief Secretary has not answered my second question. Are the regulations in question in force?

The Chief Secretary: I have answered the question.

The PRESIDENT: I take it that the second question asked by the hon. member arises out of the answer given by the Chief Secretary to the first question. It is in accordance with Parliamentary practice to ask a question without notice, but the Leader of the House can exercise his discretion whether he answers it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I thought I had answered the question. The regulations were in force up to the time the Government decided to amend them, and they were then withdrawn. They have now been amended, and the amended regulations will be laid on the Table of the House this week.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The amended regulations, of course, are operative.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Have the amended regulations been gazetted?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No, and they will not be operative until they have been gazetted.

BILL—LOCAL COURTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Reports of Committee adopted.

BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 18th October.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West—in reply) [4.42]: The House has given this measure a more gratifying reception than that extended to other measures brought down in previous sessions to legalise the establishment of the State Government Insurance Office. While I ex-

press pleasure at the changed attitude on the part of some members, those of us who believe in State insurance regret that on previous occasions this branch of the Legislature refused to give the office legal status. We view the matter from that standpoint, not because State insurance represents a plank of the Labour Party's platform, but because we consider that if the State Insurance Office were permitted to operate in a wider field, business people would reap greater advantage. We are gratified that on this occasion most members have indicated their intention to support the second reading. Some, nevertheless, still persist in maintaining an attitude of uncompromising hostility to anything savouring of State trading. On that point Mr. Baxter said—

The privilege (self-government) was accorded to us that we might develop the State, not that we should embark upon State trading concerns.

Similar arguments were used by some other members, but that contention, if pursued to its logical conclusion, would not be likely to appeal to many people carrying on business in Western Australia. According to Mr. Baxter, the State should leave private enterprise to run railways, provide country water supplies and the various other services which the Government now makes available and which, in the past, have so materially aided the development of the State.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Who said that?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Baxter. I doubt whether various employers who have made use of the State Insurance Office, because it has provided a better service than that rendered by the private insurance companies, hold the same point of view as does Mr. Baxter.

To-day insurance of all kinds, but more particularly insurance compensation to injured workers, is largely social in character, so much so that it is receiving the attention of the League of Nations. Surely no member would deny that where social services are involved, the State has a duty to perform. Instances may arise where the interests of the community make it necessary for the State to undertake, concurrently with private enterprise, the provision of a social service. This was so with the present State Insurance Office, which was brought into being in 1926 to perform a social service in

relation to workers' compensation business that the private insurance companies could not, or would not, perform in the best interests of the community. Over the years much argument has been indulged in regarding this issue, and little will be gained by traversing past history. Suffice it to say that the private insurance companies did not undertake the business, and the State Insurance Office was called upon to fulfil that function.

Since then the State office, which has carried on business side by side with the private companies, has, obviously, served the community well. The demand for its services has increased year by year, and is still increasing. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and it is futile for members to say, as Mr. Nicholson did, that this class of work can much better be undertaken by those companies that make it their special business. The fact that employers are content to place an increasing volume of workers' compensation business with the State office, notwithstanding that the services of private companies are available, is conclusive proof to the contrary. Some members have emphasised that the State Insurance Office has been carried on without legal authority, notwithstanding that Parliament has on six previous occasions rejected Bills designed to give it a legal constitution. If any blame is attributable, surely this House is to blame for the present position of the State Insurance Office.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: How can this House be blamed when you started the insurance office without legal authority?

The HONORARY MINISTER: We have been asked that question often, and the hon. member will not be convinced as to the rights or wrongs of the argument. He will not listen to any reasonable explanation why the State Insurance Office first started business. If the various Governments, as a matter of policy—

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I treat them all the same.

The HONORARY MINISTER: But the hon. member supported other Governments.

Hon. A. Thomson: I do not think he has supported any Government.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If various Governments, as a matter of policy, have considered necessary the continuance of the State office, surely that is the most convincing reason for giving it legal authority.

The only question that remains is the determination of the class of business that the office shall be authorised to transact.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is set out in the Bill.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes. Notwithstanding Mr. Nicholson's assertion that "the State Insurance Office already undertakes fire insurance, guarantees, and other classes of risks, which it is suggested no other company will undertake," its business, so far as the public is concerned, has been confined exclusively to workers' compensation risks. I would refer members to Question 1159: if the evidence given before the select committee, to which last year's Bill was referred. The Government Actuary, in reply to a question asked by the chairman of that committee, said—

"The State Government Insurance Office, as a Government institution doing business with the outside public, does only workers' compensation business. For Government departments and risks in which the Government as owner or mortgagee is interested, we do fire business. We do also motor car insurance, and we protect the various Government departments under the Workers' Compensation Act, but with the outside public we transact no business other than workers' compensation, except, of course, as I have said, where the Government is interested as owner or mortgagee. There is nothing unusual in that business being done by the State office."

I emphasise that the State Insurance Office, as a business concern, will confine its activities to workers' compensation business.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: Will it want a monopoly?

The HONORARY MINISTER: No, it will not even want a monopoly. The Government Actuary, Mr. S. Bennett, has supplied the following statement:—

"The State Insurance Office transacts only one class of business with the general public—that relating to workers' compensation."

I hope that will answer the statement to the contrary. Members will realise, therefore, that there is no substance in Mr. Nicholson's contention that certain words read in conjunction with Clause 6 may possibly be construed as enabling the State office to continue its operations in connection with many other branches of insurance work, and not merely to confine operations to those activities referred to in paragraph (b) of Clause 2. I should also like to correct another assertion by the hon. member to the effect that the State office re-insures workers' compensation business, including miners' risks.

That statement is absolutely without foundation. I am fortified in that opinion by a report from the Government Actuary as follows:—

At no time since the State Insurance Office was set up in 1926 has there been any re-insurance of workers' compensation risks. In 1913 the Government Workers' Compensation Fund was commenced. This fund deals only with claims by Government employees.

It is probable that some misapprehension exists because of the fact that there are self-insurance, or internal Government funds relating to the insurance of certain risks (fire, marine and miscellaneous) in which the Government is the owner or controls the assets. These insurances are, however, quite independent of the State Insurance Office, though they come under my control as Government Actuary. No fire, marine or general insurances are arranged direct with the public. Though many such applications have been received, they have been definitely declined.

In view of that clear cut statement by the Government Actuary, I hope the hon. member may be induced to reconsider his attitude to the Bill. Without the authority of Parliament the State office can transact only workers' compensation business.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: That shows a change of front since the previous Bill was before us.

The HONORARY MINISTER: We want the permission of Parliament to carry on the State Insurance Office, and in order to obtain that permission, we have confined the scope of the measure to workers' compensation business plus Government business.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Why have not you made that clear in the Bill?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is clear now.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It is not.

The HONORARY MINISTER: We have no desire to force upon the people anything that Parliament is not prepared to authorise. Because the office was originally established to carry on workers' compensation business—and that is still the main and primary object—the claim to legislation to continue the transaction of such insurance seems incontestable.

I feel, too, that there can be no serious objection to the proposal to authorise the office to engage in personal accident insurance. I have already pointed out that certain workers are excluded from the protection of the Workers' Compensation Act because their wage or salary is above the statutory limit, and that they not infrequently

obtain an insurance policy for protection in the event of accident. The premium cost of such policies may, in some instances, be met by the employer. Business of this nature is social in character, and accordingly there is every reason why people seeking personal accident cover should be allowed to take out policies at the lowest possible cost.

A suggestion by Mr. Baxter was that this Bill would give to the State Insurance Office an absolute monopoly of workers' compensation business. That is not the Government's desire. The clause providing that the office shall be deemed an incorporated insurance office has been inserted solely to enable the office to be placed on the same footing as that of private companies. Had this provision not been embodied in the Bill, it would not be legally possible for the Minister to approve the State office under Section 10 of the Workers' Compensation Act.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Do you intend to amend Section 10 of the Workers' Compensation Act?

The HONORARY MINISTER: A Bill has been introduced in another place having for one of its objects the amendment of Section 10 of that Act. In conclusion, I earnestly appeal to members to pass the second reading, firstly because we desire that the State Insurance Office should be conducted with Parliamentary authority, and secondly because it is in the interests of citizens that the office should be legalised and carried on in open competition with the companies.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	14
Noes	..	..	..	..	8
Majority for	..	..	..	..	6

AYES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo
Hon. J. Cornell
Hon. L. Craig
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt
Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. E. H. H. Hall

Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. C. B. Williams
(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. L. B. Bolton
Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. J. J. Holmes

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. H. Tuckey
(Teller.)

PATRS.

AYES.

Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. T. Moore

NOES.

Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. T. Franklin
Hon. H. V. Piesse

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Interpretation:

Hon. H. SEDDON: I suggest that the Committee stage of the measure be postponed. Failing such postponement, I move an amendment—

That the words "For the purposes of Section 6 of this Act the term also includes all other classes of insurance business which, prior to the commencement of this Act, the State Government Insurance Office, as carried on prior to the commencement of this Act, had engaged in, carried on and conducted" be struck out.

I am prepared to authorise the conduct of a State Government Insurance Office for the purposes of workers' compensation and employers' liability insurance, but not for the purpose of any other kind of insurance.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If such amendments are to be moved, progress had better be reported and the amendments placed on the notice paper.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest to Mr. Seddon that, for more reasons than one, he should withdraw his amendment for the present, and place it on the notice paper.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Very well. I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: If this course is adopted, will it prevent us from going back to the earlier portion of the clause?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member can place on the notice paper for to-morrow any amendment referring to Clause 2.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Progress reported.

BILLS (5)—FIRST READING.

1, Supply (No. 2). £1,200,000.

2, Mines Regulation Act Amendment.

3, Workers' Compensation Act Amendment.

4, Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 1). (Hon. J. M. Drew in charge).

5, Jury Act Amendment. (Hon. J. Nicholson in charge).

Received from the Assembly.

RESOLUTION—YAMPI SOUND IRON ORE DEPOSITS.

Commonwealth Embargo.

Debate resumed from the 18th October on motion by the Chief Secretary to concur in the Assembly's resolution as follows:—

That this Parliament of Western Australia emphatically protests against the embargo placed by the Commonwealth Government on the export of iron ore from Australia, in view of its disastrous effects upon the development of the State. We consider that the information available does not warrant such drastic action, and we urge the Commonwealth Government to remove the embargo.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [5.15]: I feel I cannot support the motion, but I desire to make a few remarks upon the result of the embargo to Western Australia, and particularly to that portion of the State which at present is attracting so much attention. There is not the slightest doubt that the resources of the North are very little appreciated in the South. For that reason, I personally would have been in favour of the proposal to hand over to the Commonwealth the whole of the State north of the 20th parallel of latitude, so that the Commonwealth might administer it as a territory and facilitate its development. Without doubt, the Commonwealth could utilise the power it has to administer its territories to the great advantage of that portion of the State. Much has been said about the steps that were taken to develop the enormous body of iron ore at Yampi Sound, but very little has been said about what the State intended to do in the matter.

When one comes to realise the peculiar circumstances affecting this huge ore body and the extraordinary tidal conditions at Yampi Sound, one cannot help thinking that there are in the world engineers who, in spite of the verdict of authorities, could devise means of generating power by the tides and using it for the purpose of electric smelting. A tremendous advance has been made during the last few years in the field of electric smelting, and the possibility of producing cheap power by the aid of the tide, which rises 30 feet twice in 24 hours, is something that must not be overlooked. Although, as has been pointed out, the establishment of large steel works involves the expenditure of much capital, the fact remains that there are industries in Western Australia in which special steels are used, and these could cer-

tainly be manufactured in the North-West by the utilisation of power derived from the 30-ft. tide I have mentioned.

Much has also been said about the people who were attempting to develop the iron ore body. We must realise that those people belong to a virile race, which has made patriotism and the development of its country little short of a religion. The way in which they have brought their country out of the depths of feudalism, the way in which they have harnessed such powers as they possess, and the way in which they have developed the ability of their people are an object lesson to us. By their wonderful work, they have placed themselves in the forefront of the nations. They are a race to be reckoned with.

Hon. A. Thomson: Are you referring to the Japanese?

Hon. H. SEDDON: Yes. I point out that one of the accepted methods of Empire expansion to-day is that of economic penetration. When one nation establishes economic interests in the country of another nation, it acquires an interest in that country, an interest that must be followed up and protected. A recognised feature of empire expansion is that a nation, having established such an interest, acquires some sort of say in the carrying on of the industries of that country. These facts must be borne in mind. To establish an electric steel manufactory in the North may cost a large sum of money, but we must realise how much the trade of our State is at the mercy of overseas transportation. We should examine the scientific possibilities of the State. The way our funds have been wasted in the past has created a load of debt that is becoming more and more burdensome.

If there was one lesson that the Great War should have taught us, it was the absolute necessity of our becoming, as far as possible, self-contained. Had the war scare of a month ago materialised and war been declared, within a very short time the greater number of our motor vehicles would have been brought to a stand-still. Some of our leading industries would have stopped, and all because of our dependence upon motor fuels imported from other countries. That lesson, I say, should have been driven home to us 20 years ago; yet to-day we find ourselves in the same position. That is a state of affairs which demands serious consideration by those who are occupying re-

sponsible positions. For that reason, I desire the resources of the North to be developed. In order that they may be developed, the best brains of the country must be utilised. The resolution asks the Commonwealth Government to remove the embargo and allow the exportation of this ore. The suggestion has also been made that the Federal Government should recompense the people who have gone to a considerable amount of expense in developing the ore body.

Hon. A. Thomson: Do not you think this resolution should be held up until the matter has been dealt with by the Federal Parliament?

Hon. H. SEDDON: That would be a good idea, because at present it is being discussed in the Senate and a decision may shortly be reached that will render further discussion unnecessary. The debate might very well have been adjourned, but it was brought on and I desired to make these few remarks. Personally, I think we should do everything possible to develop the resources of the North. Both the State Government and the Federal Government have shown their willingness to do so in certain directions. They offer generous help, and I feel convinced that the Commonwealth is prepared to go a great deal further if we would give it the necessary power. That power, however, is not available to the Commonwealth so long as the North is part of Western Australia. However, that is beside the motion and I have merely touched on it in passing. I cannot support the motion.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.24]: I intend to vote against the motion. I did not intend to join in the debate, because I felt that everything that could be said both for and against the resolution had been said. Since the resolution was introduced into this House on the 14th September, it has occupied more than six and a half hours of debate. It has been before us on eleven sittings and 20 members have spoken to it, so that any member who may have been uncertain of his attitude must now surely have made up his mind how he will vote when the division is called. I remember that during the debate on the Address-in-reply, not one, but many members expressed the hope—it may have been a pious hope—that this session would not be a repetition of the two preceding sessions,

during which I understand legislation was delayed through the dilatory way in which the House dealt with Bills. Then, towards the end of the session, long sittings were necessary and insufficient attention was devoted to the legislation submitted to the House.

Hon. H. Seddon: It will be the same this session.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I was hoping that at least I might be able to induce members to come to a decision on this resolution and so get it off the notice paper.

Hon. J. Cornell: The session last year finished earlier than the sessions for many years previously.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: Let us set an example this session. I ask members to give me their support in voting against any further adjournment of the debate.

On motion by Hon. E. H. H. Hall, debate adjourned.

BILL—POLICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 14th September.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.27]: I propose to offer a few brief remarks on this measure, which deals with a vexed and at the same time an important problem. Almost every week statements appear in the Press regarding the operations of betting control legislation in at least two States of the Commonwealth. These statements have shown that there are marked differences of opinion as to the manner in which the betting problems of our own State should be tackled. I have on more than one occasion said that the Government intends to bring down a Bill this session dealing with betting control, and therefore I do not propose now to anticipate the nature of that legislation, which will be very soon before us; neither do I propose to enter into a discussion upon the relative merits of the systems in operation in the other States for legalising or restricting starting-price betting. This Bill has, however, been referred by me to the Solicitor General, who advises that it should be withdrawn for redrafting.

Hon. J. Cornell: It could not be printed in a Consolidation Act.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am not putting myself forward as an expert on

that matter. The Solicitor General points out that the title of the Bill is incorrect, and should be "a Bill for an Act to amend the Police Act Amendment Act, 1893 (No. 1)." Moreover, he states that the Bill contains new substantive sections which have no place in the Police Act, 1892, and that the present drafting of the Bill renders impossible the inclusion of its provisions in any reprint of the principal Act. Again, he draws attention to Clause 3 of the Bill, which amends Section 10 of the Police Act Amendment Act. That is something not authorised by the long title of the Bill and, therefore, improperly included in the measure.

The provision seeking to make it obligatory for the police simultaneously to prosecute the owner, the occupier and the keeper of starting price betting shops is open to some objection. If this Bill became law, an entirely innocent owner might possibly be forced to incur legal expenses in defending himself against a charge brought only as a stepping stone to obtaining a conviction against another offender. In this connection the Solicitor General makes the following comment:—

This possibility can also raise the question of rights of an innocent owner charged as aforesaid to take an action for damages for malicious prosecution against the police officer or person who makes the said charge against him when such charge is made merely for the purpose of obtaining a conviction against another offender.

With regard to the provision in Clause 2, Sub-clause 2, providing for notice being given by the police to an owner or occupier, which in subsequent prosecutions will relieve the prosecution of the task of proving that defendant acted "knowingly or wilfully" in permitting any place to be used as a betting shop, the Solicitor General advises as follows:—

This clause requires some qualifications because in its present form it will impose an undue hardship upon owners and occupiers. For example, as the sub-clause is worded, a notice given by the police to an owner in 1938 would stand as a notice in 1940, although following the receipt of the notice in 1938, the owner had taken steps to remove the tenant whose use of the premises had caused the police to give notice.

Hon. J. Cornell interjected.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am giving the House the benefit of the Solicitor General's opinion. I do not wish to anticipate the arguments that I will probably have to

use in introducing the Government's Bill on this subject, but, if we are to have a debate on this Bill before the Government measure is introduced, members of the House should be apprised of the views of the Solicitor General as conveyed to me. The Commissioner of Police suggests that if the Bill is passed in its present form it will drive the men frequenting s.p. shops into the streets. He considers that in such places as Kalgoorlie and Boulder, and other mining centres, this would have the effect of turning the streets into miniature racecourses.

Hon. L. Craig: Could not the police take action?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is not for the police. It rests with the local authority.

Hon. J. Cornell: The police took action against street bettors the other day.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The local authorities that control traffic in the streets have in the past refused to take any action in this matter, and would no doubt maintain the same attitude in the future.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Commissioner's opinion postulates that he is in favour of legalising the practice.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Nothing of the kind; I do not think we can draw that inference. If the hon. member does, I ask him to wait a little longer until another Bill is being considered and we probably have some more views before us. These are the views of the Commissioner of Police. This matter has been in the hands of the local authorities and up to date they have not been prepared to take any action.

Hon. H. Tuckey: The local authorities could not stop it under the Act. They have not the power.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The local authorities have not the power?

Hon. H. Tuckey: They have no way of stopping betting in the streets.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am pointing out that the local authorities that have control of the traffic have not taken any action. The Commissioner of Police advises that, from information at his disposal, he doubts very much whether the local authorities would be prepared to take any action. Those of us who have had any experience at all, particularly in mining centres, must realise what the position is to-day in regard to this matter. At Collie, in the main street are to be seen large congregations of men

who do not go to any trouble to hide the fact that they are interested in racing.

Hon. L. Craig: Is that a matter for the municipal council at Collie?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. Other centres might be instanceed in which members know full well that similar conditions prevail. I am speaking of the control of traffic. We have had experience of persons carrying on this particular business, not in any premises, but in the street.

Hon. L. Craig: It seems as though the Commissioner is evading the issue.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why did the police raid a two-up school in the bush?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Because that game has to be played in the open.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Cornell mentioned that there are 60 betting shops and gambling houses at Kalgoorlie and Boulder. He seems to have exaggerated the position, unless the hon. member has information not in the possession of the Commissioner of Police. My information is that there are only 21 such premises—14 at Kalgoorlie and seven at Boulder.

Hon. J. Cornell: The balance are immune from raids.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There are 14 at Kalgoorlie and seven at Boulder, and I have a list of the premises here if members desire to see it. The hon. member was rather upset because an opportunity was not afforded to members to debate the measure earlier. He should have realised the state of the notice paper and the position in which I was placed on that account. However, members now have an opportunity of debating the Bill. I repeat that the Government's intention is to introduce a measure of its own dealing with this vexed problem.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: When do you think it will be brought down?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: As far as I am able to say it will not be very long, but I cannot give a definite date.

Hon. G. B. Wood: It cannot be very long before it is introduced because the session will soon be over.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Members will have ample opportunity to debate the Bill. It may be introduced not here, but in another place.

Hon. J. Cornell: It may be defeated in another place, too.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If I am any judge at all of the feeling on this question,

the Bill, if introduced in the Assembly, will eventually come to this Chamber.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is good news.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is my opinion. I agree that the time has arrived when we should have a definite Act dealing with this question, and when Parliament should declare whether it is in favour of the abolition or the restriction of this practice. However, I had better not say any more or I shall find myself debating the different systems in force in other States, which I am not at liberty to do at present in view of the statement I have made.

On motion by Hon. H. S. W. Parker, debate adjourned.

BILL—PARKS AND RESERVES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 18th October.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [5.40]: A little heat was imported into the debate when the second reading of this Bill was moved by Mr. Cornell. That was unfortunate. After all, the hon. member sought only to have publicity given to the accounts of the different departments concerned in the control of the reserves dealt with. His Bill went further than was anticipated, but he made it fairly clear what was in his mind, namely, that he intended it to apply to the four bodies named. I do not think his speech could be taken to imply that there is anything radically wrong. Everything is all right. I would go further and say that the advancement made in the development of those reserves during the past few years has been remarkable and reflects the greatest credit upon the controlling bodies. More especially does that apply to Rottneest Island, Yanehep, National Park and the Zoological Gardens. Excellent progress has also been made in the development of King's Park over a great number of years. The State is unique in having a man prepared, day and night, to give his own time for the benefit of the various concerns into which he has put his heart and soul. I refer to Mr. Shapecott. The State is fortunate also that Mr. Shapecott has such an artistic turn of mind. The innovations he has made in the reserves under his control are excellent. Above all, however, is the success that

has attended the development of those concerns, and his ability to raise the money necessary to enable that high state of efficiency to be achieved.

Having said all that, I now return to the purport of the Bill, which has to do with the auditing of the accounts. A sound principle would be to have the accounts of those several reserves audited by outside bodies, as at present, but with a provision that the result of the audit should be submitted to the Auditor General for his inspection and also laid on the Table of the House for the information of members. Irrespective of whether the Government finds money or not for these reserves, they are really Government concerns in which the taxpayers are interested. I know perfectly well that nothing is wrong. At the same time, now that a move has been made in the direction indicated by the Bill, the Chamber ought to adopt the suggestion and have the reports tabled. I quite agree that the Auditor-General would not have the time at his disposal to carry out the whole of this work, and neither could we expect him to do so. It would be necessary to add considerably to the staff, and we would not be wise to keep on extending Government activities. The auditing of the parks and gardens accounts could still be carried on by private auditors, and the result of their work could be submitted to the Auditor General and then laid on the Table of both Houses. I shall give the second reading of the Bill my support with that end in view.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [5.46]: From time to time I have expressed my want of sympathy and concurrence with the various sentiments voiced by Mr. Cornell, but on this occasion we are indebted to him for bringing forward the very important matter contained in the Bill. What form of Government do we profess to follow? Surely we subscribe to democracy and not dictatorship! The information given to this Chamber the other evening by Mr. Cornell savoured of dictatorship rather than democracy. Not only did I listen to Mr. Cornell's speech, but I read it afterwards, and I consider he made quite plain the fact that he was not imputing motives, especially wrong motives, to anybody connected with the Class A reserves. If the Bill does nothing else, it will render a public service. The policy of appointing special boards to manage Class A

reserves should receive the consideration it merits. The existing policy should be revised for very good reasons. Members of the various provinces must be aware that boards have been appointed to administer Class A reserves, and that many members of those boards have either left the district or crossed the Great Divide.

I cannot understand why the local governing authority in a district in which a reserve is situated should not be given power to deal with that reserve. I do not mean to say that such a suggestion should apply to places like Rottneest Island or the Zoological Gardens; it could well apply, however, to many Class A reserves in various parts of the State. I have one Class A reserve in mind, the controlling members of which have all disappeared. Men may come and men may go, but local authorities go on for ever. Therefore, why not vest in the local body the power to control the reserves in its district? I trust that consideration will be given to this point. Local authorities are elected by the people, and it is not necessary to seek the aid of a member of Parliament to learn who constitutes that authority, as is the case when one wants to learn who is controlling a particular reserve. Consequently I trust the procedure adopted in the past will be revised.

In the case of private companies, the auditors are appointed by the shareholders and thus are the servants of the shareholders. It is our proud boast that the Auditor General is the highest public servant in the State and that he reports direct to Parliament. He is not subservient to any particular Minister, and in the course of his duties he frequently finds it necessary to castigate the Government, or at least, point out where, in his opinion, the Government is not acting in accord with correct practice. That being so, why should a particular board, whether in control of a Class A reserve or anything else, depart from the recognised principle of electing its auditors? This is a matter that should receive consideration because the auditors, if they are the servants of the board, can hardly be expected adversely to criticise, and at times it might be found necessary by the auditors to criticise the people to whom they owe their positions. I might be asked, who would appoint such a board? The board should be appointed by the Government of the day. The difference might be regarded as being that of tweedledum and tweedledee,

but I really cannot agree to any board appointing auditors to audit its own accounts.

I am not going to say that we have anything of which we need be afraid. The name of one particular gentleman has been mentioned. I consider we are fortunate to have so able a public servant as Mr. Shapcott, but Mr. Shapcott will some day leave the service and someone else will take his place. Our duty and the duty of the Government is to make it as difficult as possible for people to go wrong. I was once placed in charge of a big department over which there had been very little supervision. I assumed this position during the War and there were hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of goods being handled—and loosely handled. My training in the public service enabled me to produce something like order out of chaos. Later I had occasion to give evidence before one of the biggest Royal Commissions that ever sat in the Commonwealth, and because of that I was denied the opportunity of going overseas. That, however, is another story. Our duty is to make it as difficult as possible for men handling public funds to go wrong. Notwithstanding the precautions that may be taken, almost every week we find men breaking through rules and regulations and making use of money to which they have no right. Mr. Cornell has rendered a public service in bringing this question before Parliament, and members will agree that it is about time the matter was put on a proper basis.

As an officer with 25 years' experience in Government departments, I was shocked to learn that huge sums of money are being handled without proper supervision. There is only one way in which public funds should be handled. We are entitled to ask that the auditing of accounts should be carried out under the supervision of the Audit Department, and that the audited reports should be laid on the Table of the House. Perhaps I have said enough to show where I stand. If we were handling our own money in our own businesses we could, of course, do so as loosely and as freely as we liked, but we are not dealing with our own funds. I have had experience of a local governing authority, and I found with regret that an executive officer of that body had broken the rules and regulations and had caused a great amount of worry and concern to the mayor and councillors. My experience im-

pels me to give support to the proposal so that every penny may be accounted for. This is what I have been accustomed to, and what has been good enough for me should not be departed from in the auditing of the affairs of the State reserves, not even for a Mr. Shapcott. If the Bill is not all that members desire, it can be moulded into correct form. I intend to support the second reading, and I hope other members will do the same.

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

House adjourned at 5.56 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 25th October, 1938.

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

QUESTION—EAST PERTH POWER HOUSE.

Cost of Current, Cottesloe.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Has the recent reduction of electricity charges secured by the member for

North-East Fremantle had the effect of increasing the consumption of current in Cottesloe and its environs? 2, Does he recall an answer given to me last session to the effect that, when the new power plant at East Perth had been thoroughly tested, reductions of electricity charges would follow in the Cottesloe district? 3, If so, does that promise still hold good?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. 2, Charges were reduced by 1d. per unit in December, 1937. 3, Answered by No. 2.

QUESTION—CARRIER'S LICENSE.

Mr. SHEARN asked the Minister for Works: 1, Are applicants for a new carrier's license for the metropolitan area required to produce evidence as to their financial position or financial capacity to undertake the business of a carrier? 2, If so, under what authority are such assurances required?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No. 2, See No. 1.

QUESTION—MT. LAWLEY SUBWAY, WIDENING.

Mr. J. MacCALLUM SMITH asked the Minister for Works: When will a start be made with the long delayed widening of the Mount Lawley subway?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: The work will be started when the steel is received. Order for the steel was placed in June last but delivery is not expected until early next year.

QUESTION—FERRY SERVICE.

Double-end Boat.

Mr. CROSS asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Have tenders been called for the construction of a double-end ferry-boat for the Mends-street-Barrack-street service? 2, If so, has a tender been accepted? 3, When is it expected that the new boat will be available for the service?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Tenders, returnable on 13th October in London, were called for propelling machinery. 2, No. 3, It is impossible to say until tenders are accepted.