ment. The economic loss from sheep and other stock diseases is considerable. I give the departmental officials credit for doing their best to ascertain the cause of the sheep disease. At the same time the Government must be prepared to spend a great deal more money on this investigation. Probably they will have to provide better laboratories. The officers of the department are working hard and I hope that before long they will discover the cause of the disease from which sheep are dying. When we discuss the items I shall have some remarks to offer on other matters. I urge the Government not to hesitate when little requests for the provision of a trucking yard or other facilities that will not involve great expenditure are made by the settlers. Such little conveniences should not be turned down on the plea that funds are not available. Above all the Government should not hesitate to spend a few pounds to advertise Western Australia in the other States. I congratulate the Government upon the sound and flourishing state of the finances, which I hope will continue in that state.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.30 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 26th October, 1926.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

1, Married Women's Protection Act Amendment.

2, Shipping Ordinance Amendment.

3, Co-operative and Provident Societies Act Amendment.

QUESTIONS (2)—MINE WORKERS, *Relief Fund.*

Hon. J. E. DODD asked the Chief Secretary: How much money has been contributed to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund to the 30th June, 1926, by (a) the employers; (b) the employees; (c) the Government?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The contributions made to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund up to 30th June, 1926, have been—(a) By the employers, £59,611; (b) By the employees, £59,470; (c) By the Government, £66,125.

State Insurance Claims, etc.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, How many claims have been made on the State for mining employees (a) on account of accidents; (b) under the Third Schedule, since the inception of State insurance? 2, What is the total amount of compensation paid under each heading? 3, What amount is still outstanding under these claims if full compensation is paid? 4, What amount has been paid in premiums?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, (a) 272; (b) 14. 2, (a) £2,929 2s. 11d.; (b) £174 8s. 9d. 3, The information is not at present available. 4, Though premiums are assessed annually, most of the mining companies are allowed to pay the annual premium in instalments, some monthly, some quarterly. 5, The annual premium income from mining companies is £45,938 19s. 7d., and the instalments paid up to date total £18,204 6s. 2d.

NOTICE OF MOTION—CITY MARKETS.

Order read for the moving of the following motion by the Hon. C. F. Baxter:—

That all papers relating to the establishment of city markets be laid on the Table of the House.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.36]: The Chief Secretary placed me under the necessity of giving notice of this motion. I asked, by way of question, for the production of the papers, and the Minister replied that I had better give notice of motion and move for them. Since doing that I have discovered a way out of the difficulty and will be able to obtain the information. With the leave of the House I desire to withdraw my notice.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.37]: I suggested that the hon. member should table a motion for the papers, not that there was any objection to producing them, but for other reasons that I have already explained to the House. Where an hon. member desires the production of files, no matter how simple the matter may be, it should be done in accordance with a motion passed by the House in order that the Minister producing the papers may be protected. He would not be protected if he tabled papers simply in response to a question.

Notice of motion, by leave, withdrawn.

BILL—GUARDIANSHIP OF INFANTS.

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

BILL—PUBLIC EDUCATION ACTS AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.39]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. H. STEWART (South-East) [4.40]: Unfortunately I was not present when the Bill was discussed and I should like to draw the attention of the Minister to one phase of it. I hope he will see fit to postpone further consideration of the Bill with a view to inserting an amendment that he, as Minister for Education, considers most appropriate to meet the circumstances. Doubtless owing to an oversight some hardship may be inflicted upon a section of the community who can least afford to bear it. I refer to the amendment of the compulsory provisions of the Act, particularly to the proviso contained in Subclause 3 of Clause 5 of the Bill. The Act provides that children of a certain ago shall attend school, even though they have to travel by conveyance. The proviso reads—

> Provided also that, subject to the regulations, a grant at a prescribed rate per day may be made to the parent or guardian of a child who rides to school, in lieu of the provision by the Minister of any other means of conveyance; and in such case the Minister shall be deemed to have provided a satisfactory means of conveyance within the meaning of paragraphs (d) and (e) of this section.

There is no difficulty in respect of a small farmer who has a conveyance, whose children may thus be taken to school and who receives the allowance; but beyond the prescribed distance for walking there may be farm employees having two, three or four children of school-going age. It is not obligatory on the employer to provide a vehicle for the conveyance of those children to school, and the worker may not have the capital to do so, although he would be entitled to receive the allowance if he did have a conveyance. The proviso will create a difficulty in that it will bring the farm worker, who is not in a position to provide a vehicle, into the position of having to send his children to school, or become liable under the measure. Anyone who lives in the country will realise that the proviso alters the existing law. It may be suggested that a man who can employ a married farm worker and provide him with wages and accommodation should also be in a position to provide a conveyance. However, there are all kinds and degrees of employers to be considered. The employer in question might still be in the struggling stage. Moreover, the conveyance would, in the circumstances, only be provided as an act of grace.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central—in reply) [4.46]: No such hardship as Mr. Stewart has indicated would be involved. If the employee to whom Mr. Stewart alludes does not wish to take advantage of the driving allowance, he need not send his children to school. On the other hand, if he takes the allowance, he should be compelled to send the children to school regularly.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—TIMBER INDUSTRY REGULATION.

Received from the Assembly, and read a first time.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 21st October; Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair, the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on postponed Clause 16, "Driver to stop when requested."

Hon. G. W. MILES: As indicated when the clause was last under consideration, I shall move an amendment—

That all words after "follows," in line 2, be struck out and the following inserted in lieu: "No driver of any motor vehicle shall pass any horse being driven, ridden or led, or any drove of animals, in such a manner or at such a rate as is likely to endanger the safety of such horse or drove of animals or the driver, rider, or leader thereof."

Under the clause as it stands, motor drivers would be placed at the mercy of any child driving or leading a horse or a cow along the road.

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

Postponed Clause 26—Amendment of Section 48:

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: I do not wish to move the amendment of which I have given notice.

Clause put and passed.

New clause:

Hon. H. STEWART: The subject of the new clause which appears in my name on the Notice Paper is dealt with in Clause 35, and I consider it better to defer my amendment until the Bill has been recommitted.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: When Clause 35 was under consideration I suggested the same course, but you, Mr. Chairman, considered that the new clause should be moved as such.

New clause:

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I move—

That the following clause be added to the Bill: "Every license granted to the driver of a motor vehicle of a specified kind shall entitle him, without further payment, to drive any other kind of motor vehicle; provided that he proves to the satisfaction of the examiner appointed by the Commissioner of Police that he is qualified so to do."

A motor owner may have a number of licensed motor vehicles, while his license defines the particular kind of vehicle which he is licensed to drive. He might find occasion to drive another description of vehicle, and he ought not to be called upon to hold three or four different licenses and pay a corresponding number of fees. At my place, there is a license to drive an Essex car and there are several licenses to drive Ford cars; but the holders of all those licenses could be summoned and fined if they drove a Ford lorry which I also use. The new clause gives the opportunity of including several different vehicles in one driving license, provided the holder of the license proves to the examiner his ability to drive those various classes of motors.

Hon. H. STEWART: The Bill as it stands would not merely require one person to take out several driving licenses, but in the case of an establishment with several people driving one or other of various motors at different times, would require each of them to have a separate license for each of those vehicles. Therefore, it is a question, under the Bill, of each of a number of people having to take out a number of licenses. The examiner should grant a license for several descriptions of vehicles if the applicant proves his ability to drive them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I referred this question to the Crown Solicitor. He did not like it and made the following remarks:—

(1) Section 21 of the Traffic Act provides that a driver's license is granted authorising the licensee to drive a motor vehicle of the kind therein specified. (2) In an Act of Parliament every word in the singular number is construed as including the plural number. (3) Therefore the same driver's license can, and should, if so required, authorise the licensee to drive motor vehicles of several kinds to be specified in the license, if the applicant is qualified to drive them. (4) The proposed amendment is not necessary.

Mr. Sayer drafted another amendment and suggested that it should take the place of the amendment submitted by Mr. Hamersley. It reads as follows:—

13a. Subsection 1 of Section 21 of the principal Act is hereby amended by substituting the word "any" for the word "a" in the fourth line, and by inserting the words "or kinds" after the word "kind" in the fifth line.

The second would then read as follows:—

21. (1) The Commissioner of Police and any member of the police force acting with his authority may, subject to this Act, on the application of any person, grant and issue an annual license to such person to drive any motor vehicle of the kind, or kinds, to be therein specified.

I think that amendment will cover the ground that Mr. Hamersley would like to see taken in.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I agree that that amendment will be better than mine and I therefore ask leave to withdraw the amendment I have moved.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That the following new clause be added to stand as 13a:—"Subsection 1 of Section 21 of the principal Act is hereby amended by substituting the word 'any' for the word 'a' in the fourth line, and by inserting the words 'or kinds' after the word 'kind' in the fifth line thereof."

New clause put and passed.

New clause:

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I move—

That the following new clause be added to stand as Clause 37:—"Part III. of the Third Schedule to the principal Act as amended by Section 2 of the Traffic Act Amendment Act, 1925, is amended by deleting the words 'one shilling,' in line eight, and inserting 'sixpence' in lieu thereof; and is further amended by striking out 'the minimum fee being fifteen shillings,' and inserting in lieu thereof 'the minimum fee shall be ten shillings.'"

When the Main Roads Select Committee were taking evidence, it was ascertained that the feeling was practically unanimous that the fees for horse-drawn vehicles were too high. That feeling prevailed more particularly in the metropolitan area, where motor traffic has been superseding horse-drawn traffic. Those engaged in the horse-drawn traffic are men of small means and they are feeling the existing impost rather keenly. The object of the amendment is to reduce the fees and I trust that the Committee will agree to it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This amendment and others have been sprung upon me. They require consideration and as there are other amendments still to be considered on recommittal, I think it would be advisable to report progress at this stage.

Progress reported.

BILL—STATE INSURANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 19th October.

HON. H. A. STEPHENSON (Metropoliton-Suburban) [5.13]: I listened attentively the other evening to the Leader of the House when he moved the second reading of this Bill. The arguments he advanced in favour of the Bill were not very convincing. I did not gain that idea, however, because of the Minister's lack of eloquence or his persuasive powers, but because he had a very weak case. The Chief Secretary also resorted to tactics that are sometimes practised by lawyers—when you have a weak case abuse the other side.

Hon. E. H. Harris: I hope you will not do that.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: I hope to be able to prove that the abuse of the insurance companies was not justified. I have before me a statement that was made by the Minister for Labour to the "West Australian" newspaper and published on the 26th June. In that statement he gave his reasons for establishing a State trading concern without the consent of Parliament. I also have here a statement published by the insurance companies four days afterwards giving their side of the case. I have no intention of wearying members by reading those statements. I have made extracts from them and summarised them, and will deal with them as briefly as possible. This Bill was brought in by the Government to legalise the illegal action of the Minister for Labour in establishing a State insurance concern against the law of the land. I strongly protest against that action, for which there was no justification. Section 4, Subsection 2 of the State Trading Concerns Act says:—

No trading concerns other than those to which this Act applies, or shall apply, shall unless expressly authorised by Parliament be hereafter established or carried on by the Government of the State or by any person acting on behalf of such Government or under its authority.

Subsection 3 says—

The expression "trading concern" means any concern carried on with a view to making profits or producing revenue or of competing with any trade or industry now or to be hereafter established, or of entering into any business beyond the usual functions of State Government.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Is there any definition of a public utility?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: I have not got it here. In the face of this Act and the conditions set forth therein the Minister for Labour rushed in and established another State trading concern. His action was that of a dictator who flouts the law of the land that he has sworn to obey and administer, and who endeavours to ride roughshod over Parliament.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Under Standing Order 394 offensive words must not be used regarding any member of another place.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: I withdraw the remark. The Minister for Labour stated that his reason for establishing the State Insurance Office was the attitude of the insurance companies in refusing to quote a figure for the insurance of miners suffering from the diseases specified in the Third Schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act, as amended. He also says he did everything in his power to come to a satisfactory arrangement with the companies. I do not think the Minister was sincere when he made that statement. After carefully reading the statements made by the Minister, and those made by the insurance companies, I have come to the conclusion that he did not do everything in his power to bring about a satisfactory arrangement. On the other hand he withheld essential information from the companies, and had evidently made up his mind to pick a quarrel with them, making that an excuse for starting a State Insurance Office, and thereby bluffing through the Legislative Assembly another plank of the Labour Party's platform, namely, State insurance. Let us see what actually happened in connection with the negotiations between the Government and companies on this subject. In the first place when the amendment to the Workers' Compensation Act was passed in 1924, it was for the first time made obligatory on every employer to effect an insurance. To protect the employers from any attempt on the part of the companies to combine and require unreasonable rates, provision was made in the Act that the insurance must be effected with an incorporated company approved by the Minister. That provision seemed to be a reasonable one, for it protected both the companies and the employers. At the first interview with the Minister for Labour and the companies, after the amendment was passed, the Minister stated that his desire was to see that the rates fixed were consistent with obtaining a reasonable profit for the conduct of the business. That was very fair as far as it went. Soon after the Act of 1924, which introduced this new principle, was passed, a conference was held with the Minister in reference to the rates needed for readjustment purposes, in view of the increased maximum liability from £500 per man to £870. It will be remembered that this House increased the rate from £500 to £870 all told. That was a big increase, and necessitated some readjustment. At that date the Government declared their intention of dealing with certain diseases in connection with the gold mining industry. The result of the conference was that the companies provisionally agreed to rate as required by the Minister for the usual workers' compensation risk, but not for the risks in connection with the miners' diseases referred to in the Third Schedule. Express provision was made in the agreement for the payment of increased rates should experience show that the rates agreed upon were inadequate. That was fair and reasonable. For this purpose a special body was created consisting of the Government Statistician, representing the Government, and the Auditor General as umpire between the Government and the companies. No rates, however, were fixed, and not even discussed in respect to the diseases in question. If these diseases were so included the risk would entirely depend upon the number of miners who were suffering from them. That was only reasonable. Had all the miners been free from these diseases estimates might have been prepared based on mortuary statistics, although even then they would not be very reliable. The principle of extra premiums for extra risks was well established, and data was to be obtained on which to make a readjustment. Insurances in respect to miners free from the diseases would have operated if effected 12 years prior to the appearance of the disease. Quite a different position was set up when the premium was made to apply alike to men not suffering from the diseases, and to those already suffering from them. Representatives of the companies at the conference pointed out to the Minister that the crucial point was to ascertain the number of miners already affected; otherwise it would be impossible for them to quote a reasonable figure. They must have some idea of the retrospective risks they were likely to take, and for

which they were asked to become liable. The Minister promised that inquiries would be made. A board of medical examiners was appointed to examine all miners engaged in the industry. Before the board began operations a commission was appointed to report to the Government as to what would be a fair and reasonable premium for insurances against the liability of the employer in respect to the diseases set forth in the Third Schedule. Here is a strange thing. Although the commission was appointed, no representatives of the companies were asked to act on that commission, nor were they invited to give evidence before it. Members would naturally say that if the Minister was sincere and earnest, and wished to bring about an amicable settlement, he would either have appointed a representative of the companies upon the commission, or asked witnesses from the companies to give evidence before it. He did not do that. The commission was, therefore, an ex parte one so far as the companies were concerned. On the data collected by the commission the companies were advised that it had reported in favour of a charge of £4 10s. per cent. to the gold mining employers and £1 per cent. to employers in the coal mining and quarrying industries, these amounts to be additional to the present rates. The commission also said that the companies would be justified in accepting risks attached to the diseases specified and in expecting a reasonable business profit. The whole value of these recommendations, and the only method of checking them, depended upon the number of miners affected by the diseases specified. The committee had no information on this point. Although the board of examiners had been appointed, no work had been commenced. Why the Minister for Labour could not have waited until that information was obtained for the committee I am at a loss to know. The board did not begin its work until, I think, the 15th September, 1925. The commissioner's report to the Minister for Labour was dated the 2nd June, 1925.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: I think the hon. member is referring to the committee.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: Yes.

Hon. J. Nicholson: They took evidence in September, 1925, so how could the report be submitted in June, 1925?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: If I said that the commission submitted a report, I made a mistake. The report of the committee was submitted to the Government in June, 1925.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: On what data was the report based?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: I can give the hon. member that information; it was rotten data, I can assure him.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: I thought it might, perhaps, be based on the mathematical probabilities of a ticket in Tatts.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: The Underwriters' Association wrote asking for information, both from the Minister for Mines and the Minister for Labour. On each occasion the association was met by a refusal. That refusal was expressed in a letter from the Minister for Works, a copy of which has already appeared in "Hansard." I understand that whilst the Minister for Works withheld the necessary data, he nevertheless made it quite clear to the insurance companies that if they did not agree to fix a rate to his satisfaction, the Government would undertake the business themselves.

Hon. J. R. Brown: What is wrong with that?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: That goes to prove my contention that the Minister was not sincere in his dealings with the insurance companies.

Hon. J. R. Brown: He was too sincere.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: Hon. members will agree that the request made by the companies that the Minister should furnish them with particulars regarding the number of miners affected by miners' diseases, and any other data available, was fair and reasonable. The information was necessary to place the companies in a position to quote a fair, safe and reasonable figure, bearing in mind the risks and liabilities they were asked to undertake. The Minister stated that the reason he would not supply the necessary information was that it was confidential. Yet we find that within a week or so of the negotiations being broken off, the very information that was asked for by the insurance companies was published in "The Worker"! There is further proof of the insincerity of the Minister for Labour. Is it reasonable to suppose that the insurance companies would deliberately turn down business? It has been said that they deliberately did so. There are to-day 60 or more insurance companies operating in Western Australia. Those companies have deposited with the Treasury, in accordance with the provisions of the Insurance Com-

panies Deposit Act, approximately £300,000, for which they receive 4½ per cent. interest. Those deposits have to be paid in order that the companies may be allowed to carry on operations. That £300,000 has been deposited as a guarantee that the companies will carry on their operations in a proper manner, and yet we are told that they have deliberately turned down business! It is too absurd!

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Perhaps they may use that money for State insurance purposes.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: The insurance companies have established an organisation extending throughout the State. Naturally they are in a position to, and are anxious to, increase their turnover. It would be absolutely absurd were their attitude other than that. What are the companies there for?

Hon. J. R. Brown: To bleed the people and rob the public.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: The companies are out to get as much business as possible. The bigger the turnover the better it is for them. I can assure you, Mr. President, that the great majority of the insurance companies are controlled by men of integrity who are held in the highest esteem not only throughout Australia, but throughout the world. Most of the companies are doing business all over the world and seldom does one hear of a complaint against them. It has been said that the companies contest and fight every claim that is lodged against them.

Hon. J. R. Brown: You never heard of any company going bung.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: I can state the facts only as I find them. On one occasion I was unfortunate myself. I had an experience regarding a fire involving damage amounting to between £15,000 and £20,000. The insurance policies were spread over a number of companies, and when it came to a settlement, I had practically no trouble whatever. Every adjustment was allowed practically to my satisfaction, and the money paid over in a short time. That was my experience in connection with insurance companies. Coming back to the argument I was advancing, it will be realised at once that, as business men, the representatives of the companies naturally declined to quote a figure for the insurance business until they were in a position to know the retrospective risks for which they were to become liable. Any business man who knows the rudiments of the game will appreciate that it was only a fair thing that they should have that information. No reasonable man could find fault with the companies for adopting safe principles in the conduct of their businesses. It must not be forgotten that when the Minister refused to give the companies the information necessary to enable them to quote a figure for the business, they offered, in March last, to undertake the business as agents for the Government, without profit. Was that the action of business men who desired to refuse business, and to create a deadlock? I say it was not. In the circumstances it was a fair and reasonable offer to make. Of course the Minister did not accept the offer.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Where did you get all this information?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: It is plain to me that the Minister for Labour had made up his mind not to accept any offer from the insurance companies, because he had already decided to establish a State Insurance office. I will draw the attention of hon. members to the report that has been referred to. That will enable them to realise upon what basis the Government established the State insurance business, a business that is likely to run into anything up to £500,000 a year or perhaps more. The commission was asked by the Minister to find out what action should be taken before issuing the necessary proclamation under the Miners' Phthisis Act 1902, and the Workers' Compensation Act 1912-24 so far as industrial diseases were concerned, including pneumoconiosis, miner's phthisis, ankylostomiasis and nystagamus, and also to advise as to what would be a fair and reasonable premium in respect of these diseases. I mentioned the fact that the commmission had not before them information that would have given them great assistance, and would no doubt have enabled them to come to a decision regarding a reasonable figure. I refer to the number of miners affected by the particular diseases I have mentioned. On that point I have nothing to say against members of the commission. I believe they are all capable men, and I do not wish to reflect upon them at all. I desire to refer to the information upon which they had to work. The commission could have done much better had the Minister for Labour been sincere and allowed them to wait until such time as the medical examination of the miners had taken place, and the commis-

sion could have been acquainted with details regarding the number of men affected, so that they would know the retrospective liability attached to the insurance question. On the other hand, the members of the commission discussed the Queensland Act and found that it was not satisfactory in its application to Western Australian conditions. They then paid attention to experiences at Broken Hill. Finally the commission came to the conclusion that the Mine Workers' Relief Fund operating in Western Australia was the only one that fitted the bill and it was on the operations of that scheme that they endeavoured to fix a price relating to the insurance scheme under the Miners' Phthisis Act. Most people, especially those on the goldfields, realise that the relief fund in question is only a small affair. It is a fund into which the employers and the employees have been paying for a number of years, but I understand it is very seldom that the men take advantage of it. That is because the payments on account of compensation have been very small.

Hon. E. H. Harris: It is in accordance with what they have paid in.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: Paragraph 7 of the report deals with that phase of the question. After they decided how to base the amount to be paid they said—

> The committee attempted to visualise the position that would have been revealed if the Miners' Phthisis Act of 1922 or the Workers' Compensation Act of 1912-24 had been in force.

There is the foundation of this business proposition that is likely to run the State into an annual amount of £500,000. It goes to prove, as Dr. Saw has pointed out, that it is absolutely guesswork. This attempt at visualisation makes me cross, for I know what the State has suffered by the visualisation of various people during the past 20 years. Some years ago a dock at Fremantle was visualised. What was the result? It ended in catastrophe, and £250,000 was dumped into the sea at the mouth of the Swan River. Again we had men who visualised what would happen if we had State steamers. We would be able to bring meat from the North-West and run off the meat kings then robbing the people, with the result that we should have meat at half the price. As a matter of fact it is 100 per cent. dearer to-day, and the people who were running the private steamers are still in the business. Then we had the visualisation of the Wyndham Meat Works, with the result of which we are all familiar. The State Implement Works was another attempt at visualisation. Men saw a big factory employing thousands of operatives and turning out all the agricultural machinery required for this State. What do we find to-day? This year alone one Victorian firm has sent 2,000 harvesters to Western Australia. Then by way of another visualisation we had the State Sawmills. Although those mills had the Public Works Department and the Railways for their customers, the best they could do was to co-operate with the private firms in fixing prices. There are many other instances of visualisation.

Hon. J. Cornell: The hon. member has forgotten the fish shops.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: Yes, there was the scheme under which fish were expected to blunder into the nets of steam trawlers and be sent to the metropolitan area and the goldfields.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: That scheme cost the State £6,000 in 18 months.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: During the last 20 years these various attempts at visualisation have cost the State hundreds of thousands of pounds and been the means of increasing the high rate of taxation. If the Bill passes, it will help to considerably increase that imposition. Moreover, the passing of the Bill will be the thin end of the wedge in respect of insurance. The Premier has already said it will remain for this or some other Government to drive the wedge home. As I see it, every sledge hammer between Wyndham and Eucla will be used by the present Government to drive home that wedge.

Hon. J. Cornell: What is going to happen if the Bill does not become an Act?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: That is for those to consider who rushed in as they did. Let me refer to the experience of other States and countries in attempting to bring miners' diseases within the scope of the Workers' Compensation Acts. In New Zealand the Workers' Compensation Act, which included miners' diseases, came into force on New Year's Day of 1909. A curious position then arose. The miners refused to undergo medical examination, and in the absence of the data that such examinations would have revealed even the State Insurance Office refused to undertake the risks. Here we find an exactly parallel position to that which existed in Western Australia in June of

this year, when the Minister for Works refused information to the companies. Six months later the sections in the New Zealand Act covering miners' diseases were repealed. Almost exactly the same thing happened in Tasmania. In 1919 a Bill was introduced into the Tasmania Parliament amending the Workers' Compensation Act of the previous year and including a list of industrial diseases. Amongst others were silicosis, miners' phthisis, and penumoconiosis. That Bill was passed and became the Workers' Compensation Act of 1920. Then the trouble began. It was found impossible to carry the Act into effect, and the amending Act of 1921, suspending the miners' diseases sections until Parliament otherwise provided, was passed. That action was taken largely as the result of the Tasmanian State Insurance Office refusing to insure against those risks. The suspension, made operative in 1921, is still in force. On the 4th July, 1923, a Parliamentary select committee was appointed to report on the formulating of a scheme whereby miners and those engaged in metallurgical workings might be brought under the operation of the Workers' Compensation Act. The committee took evidence all over Tasmania, and in their report noted that a majority of the witnesses examined thought it impossible to apply the Act to miners' diseases. They accordingly recommended against such action, suggesting instead the establishment of a fund, independent of the Act, to which the employees should contribute in the proportion of one-fifth, the employers two-fifths and the Government two-fifths. This proposal, contained in the report of the select committee presented to the Tasmanian Parliament on 21st February, 1924, has not yet been translated into action. There we have two instances of the inclusion of miners' diseases in Workers' Compensation Acts, and the subsequent suspension or repeal of the sections embodying such provisions. Now let us turn to South Africa, where miners' diseases were never included in the Workers' Compensation Act. Instead, they were included within the scope of the Miners' Phthisis Act. In the valuable report of the Hon. James Cornell, printed by order in 1922, it is noted that funds for the payment of diseased miners are provided by the mines on the following basis:—45 per cent. is calculated according to the earning of the underground workers, 35 per cent. according to the rate of miners' phthisis on each scheduled mine, and 20 per cent. in proportion to the amount each mine has to pay in income tax. The Government pay the whole cost of administration. It is evident that the South African Parliament appreciated from the beginning the futility of attempting to include miners' diseases in the scope of the Workers' Compensation Act. I submit that the only sane and logical way of dealing with the situation is to do as New Zealand and Tasmania have already done, and as South Africa foresaw the necessity for doing, that is, the removal of miners' diseases from the scope of the Workers' Compensation Act, and their inclusion under the Miners' Phthisis Act, to which they properly belong. In that way silicotic miners will be compensated, as are tubercular miners, from Consolidated Revenue. Of course compensated they must be.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: I do not think they have done that in New Zealand and Tasmania.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: I am giving what I believe to be facts.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: I do not think they have passed measures of that kind.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: Since the prosperity of the State has been largely dependent upon gold mining in the past, it is just that the whole State should bear the burden of compensation.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Do you suggest that Consolidate Revenue should compensate the injured of the mining industry throughout?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: If the mines are cleaned up and a fresh start is made, it might be possible, but the only way to deal with the miners already affected is as I have suggested.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: I do not think Tasmania and New Zealand have passed legislation. Some steps were taken by the one 15 years ago and by the other four years ago, but nothing has been done.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: That speaks for itself.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I think we should adopt the South African method.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: According to the report of the commission set up by the Government to recommend a rate for the acceptance of miners' diseases insurance, the number of gold miners employed on our goldfields was 3,500. The rate recommended —£4 10s. per cent. on an average wage of £221 per year—would result in a revenue of approximately £38,000 a year. According to

a statement by the Minister in reply to a question in another place, the number of miners already found by the medical examinations to be silicotic was 550, although I understand the examinations are far from complete.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Out of how many examined?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: I do not know. Each of those miners is a potential claimant for £870. A little sum, therefore, reveals the fact that a liability of £487,200 has been incurred by the State insurance office in exchange for a revenue of £38,000. That is not good business; an ordinary business man would not undertake it. Multiply 560 by 870 and we have an approximation in pounds sterling of the extent of the claims already proved.

Hon. J. Ewing: What position are the 560 miners in?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: Under the Workers' Compensation Act any incapacitated miner has a claim up to a maximum amount of £750, plus £120 for medical and burial expenses. As a result of the examinations at the Commonwealth Laboratory, 560 miners have been warned that they are silicotic to a degree that makes it unwise for them to remain on, in or about a mine.

Hon. H. Seddon: Not to the extent of being incapacitated.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: It is obvious that this enormous liability of £487,000, against which no premiums worth mentioning have been received, is not a fit subject for insurance. In introducing the Workers' Compensation Act Amendment Bill, the Minister for Works said—

> This law cannot be made retrospective.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member is not in order in referring to a debate of the current session in the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: The statement was made more than a year ago.

The PRESIDENT: If it was not made in the current session, the hon. member is in order in quoting it.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: I understand the statement was made in 1924 or 1925. Mr. McCallum said—

> This law cannot be made retrospective. We cannot by this law cover the men already stricken down with miners' phthisis.

Yet that is precisely what is being attempted by the State insurance office.

Hon. E. H. Harris: How do you arrive at that conclusion?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: I shall have to pass over that question for the time being. Men who have been warned by the medical examiners that they would be wise, in the interests of their health, to leave the industry are being accepted as risks against which the same amount of premium is being paid as is demanded for men who are free of disease and have only just entered the industry. When the Bill to amend the Workers' Compensation Act was being dealt with in Committee on the 15th October, 1924, the Minister for Works said that 98 or 99 per cent. of the claims would arise from mining. Despite that admission, Mr. McCallum professed to expect that the insurance companies would underwrite business arising out of the Third Schedule of the Act at the rate fixed and without a knowledge of the true percentage of potential claims. If the State insurance office be legalised and permitted to carry this business, the taxpayers will find themselves nearly half a million pounds out of pocket in this branch of the business alone. New Zealand and Tasmania each made an attempt to cover miners' diseases under the Workers' Compensation Act and, as I have pointed out, they have failed. I should now like to refer to the much-quoted State of Queensland, where the Workers' Compensation Act extends to miners' diseases. There the rate charged the mining companies has proved utterly insufficient to meet the liabilities. In eight years £75,915 has been transferred from other funds to meet the deficiency, a policy of robbing Peter to pay Paul. Notwithstanding that £75,915 was taken from other funds to make good the miners' diseases liabilities, a sum of £20,030 was carried to the debit of that account at the end of the financial year 1924-25. Under Section 14 of the Queensland Workers' Compensation Act, the provisions of which are practically identical with the miners' diseases sections of the Third Schedule of our Act, 803 claims have been admitted during eight years, an average of approximataely 100 claims a year. Western Australia has approximately nine times as many gold miners as has Queensland.

Hon. E. H. Harris: If this Bill be not passed, there will not be any.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: It is, therefore, fair to assume that we shall have nine times as many claims under the Third Schedule of our Act as there have been under the Queensland Act. Members will appreciate how huge is this liability that is being built on such an unsound foundation. It would mean that the State insurance office would receive an average of 900 claims per annum from disabled miners. Those men under the Act are entitled to compensation totalling £870 each, a fact that makes the probable expenditure under this heading reach the staggering total of £783,000 per annum. State trading concerns in Western Australia last year lost £62,500 of the taxpayers' money, and a State insurance office attempting to carry the burden of 560 silicotic miners, who represent immediate potential claims against which very few premiums have been received, would inevitably add greatly to that amount. To undertake the insurance of those miners would be deliberately to engage in unprofitable business. As I have already stated, the affected men must be compensated, but they should be compensated in the way I have suggested. It may be possible to find some other way, but to adopt the proposal of the Minister for Works would mean a tremendous drain on the taxpayers, who have already been bled practically white by the losses on the many State trading concerns. What those losses have been, it has been difficult to ascertain owing to the system of accountancy camouflaging the real position. I shall vote against the second reading.

On motion by Hon. Sir William Lathlain, debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL—SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly, and read a first time.

BILL—ALBANY HARBOUR BOARD.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [7.33] in moving the second reading said: In presenting this measure for the creation of an Albany Harbour Board, the Government firmly believe that members will welcome the opportunity of making provision for granting to the responsible business people of Albany a long-deferred claim for the control of our southern port. The first murmurings in the agitation for the local management of shipping facilities were heard as far back as 1907; and, since then, successive Governments have indicated sympathy with the desires of the citizens of Albany; but this is the first definite attempt to open the way to the statute-book. In 1917 the Wilson Government authorised the preparation of a Bill for the establishment of a board, but did not proceed with it because a sub-committee, appointed by the local bodies at Albany, took strong exception to a proviso in the measure stipulating that all property acquired from the Railway Department should be taken over by the board at the valuation thereof as fixed by the latest statement of the assets and liabilities of the department. This proviso has now been deleted in favour of an appraisement of the position as it will be upon the inauguration of the board. It is worthy of mention that the Great Southern Inter-District Conference, the Albany Chamber of Commerce, and all other interests at Albany are anxious that the control of the port should be vested in a local board possessing a thorough knowledge of the business offering. Albany is the legitimate outlet to oversea markets for the produce of an important section of the vast and fertile Great Southern District. A rightful share of the produce of our rich sourthern land should leave our shores for the world's markets via the adjacent port of Albany. At present most of our primary products, gathered by the far-flung railway system, reach shipping at the better-equipped ports of Fremantle and Bunbury. This enticement of products along bottle-neck routes, and the centralisation of loading facilities, can scarcely be regarded as desirable in the interests of the State. Every encouragement should be given for the loading of products at ports which are nearest to the centres at which the products have been raised. The Government Statistician has favoured me with figures revealing the prosperity of the adjacent wealthy districts of Katanning, Tambellup and Plantagenet for the past three years. I should mention that only those parts have been included which should be served by the port of Albany. The figures are given under the heading of "Statistical information concerning

the Katanning, Tambellup, and Plantagenet districts":—

Particulars.	Total for the three Districts.		
	1923–24.	1924–25.	1925–26.
WHEAT CROP—			
Acreage stripped for grain	44,181	30,978	60,063
Production in bushels	342,309	514,177	531,637
Acreage cut for hay	4,600	3,097	1,752
Production, tons ...	3,868	3,676	1,525
OAT CROP—			
Acreage stripped for grain	39,268	49,848	48,374
Production, bushels	401,361	706,845	477,806
Acreage cut for hay	27,484	37,194	37,456
Production, tons ...	21,145	38,157	32,218
FRUIT CROP—			
Acreage under fruit trees	5,536	5,327	5,328
Apples produced, bushels	180,002	288,004	219,879
Pears produced, bushels	15,020	24,275	22,478
SHEEP (No.)	673,381	670,343	804,057
Wool produced, lbs.	4,699,483	4,542,797	5,071,066

Mr. Camm, the Surveyor General and a member of the Railway Advisory Board, is greatly interested in the purpose of this Bill; and in a memo. to me, dated the 13th October, he states—

With the construction of the proposed Boyup Brook to Cranbrook railway, the Manjimup to Mt. Barker line, also recommended by the Railway Advisory Board, and the Pemberton to Denmark railway, which has been authorised, there seems no doubt that, when the country to be served by these lines is settled, a very large amount of produce indeed will eventually find its way to Albany for shipment to oversea ports. I consider that the Manjimup to Mt. Barker line especially will open up one of the most extensive and finest belts of country in the State for closer settlement, and the production of butter and allied products will be very large. Albany appears to me to be the natural port for this country. Also in connection with the development of the wheat areas east of Lake Grace and Newdegate and out to the No. 1 Rabbit-proof Fence, it seems to me that a fine natural harbour like Princess Royal harbour will have to be made use of as a port for the export of wheat and that, in view of the very large amount of freight now going to Fremantle, and which must be very largely increased when the Eastern wheat districts are more fully developed, the State will be forced to divert a good deal of the traffic to such a port as Albany.

A notable authority in Sir George Buchanan does not hesitate to say that we should give more attention to the port of Albany. Sir George has just released the first chapter of his impressions of Australia's harbour requirements. His introductory comments respecting the influences at play in the troubles of the Fremantle harbour lack originality, and for that reason must be cast aside. However, serious consideration should be given to the views of the eminent engineer when he touches on questions within the ambit of his qualifications. In the course of his report, published a few weeks ago, he states—

It is certainly a matter for regret that such a fine natural harbour as Albany should not play a more important part, and be a great trade centre. On the face of it, it would appear to be reasonable to develop communications behind Albany, and make it an oversea port. Wheat is now being grown east of Albany as far as Israelite Bay, which is 100 miles beyond Esperance, where there is a proposal to establish an overseas port, but a railway east of Albany combined with a coastal service from Esperance to Albany might be preferable to the establishment of yet another overseas port.

Further on, Sir George comments—

Albany is one of the finest natural harbours in Australia. Its development is naturally dependent on Government policy.

Members will understand the desire that some alteration should be made in the existing control of the harbour, so that it may be centred in one responsible body possessed of a knowledge of the working of the port and its requirements, and inspired by a zeal to advance the interests of the district in every legitimate way. To-day the control of the port of Albany is vested in the Railway Department and the Harbour and Light Department, and whilst these authorities discharge their obligations in what they believe the best interests of the State, the Albany business men feel that a local authority would be able much more expeditiously to finalise matters of administration, control and upkeep, and so avoid the circumlocution inseparable from the existing system of supervisors. Furthermore, they urge that a local board would, in its own interests, endeavour to attract trade rightly belonging to the port. If the measure creates this energetic force, something will have been done, indeed much will have been accomplished. Although Albany has had more prosperous and happier times, according to the list of the principal ports of Australia, compiled by the Commonwealth Statistician, it holds to-day on a "tonnage entered basis," the fourteenth position. Fremantle has the sixth. During the year ended 30th June, 1924, 148 vessels of 817,132 gross tons entered the port as against 183 vessels of 1,083,424 gross tons for the previous financial year. The decrease is attributable

to the reduced number of vessels calling at Albany for bunkers. The decline was in respect to wheat vessels proceeding overseas from the Eastern States, and was due mainly to the British seamen's strike. Eight vessels called for fruit during the same period and loaded 116,052 cases as against eight vessels loading 118,000 cases the previous season. Three vessels lifted part cargoes of wheat during the season, the quantity shipped being 43,407 bags. Twenty-five steamers called for "bunkers only" and shipped 14,358 tons as compared with 63 vessels loading 18,000 for the previous period. The passenger steamers of the Blue Funnel line are, in future, to run in conjunction with the vessels of the Aberdeen and Liverpool White Star line, and will make Albany their port of call outwards. This innovation should give a valuable stimulus to trade and prove a very welcome asset to the port. In comparing the activities at the ports of Albany and Bunbury during the year ended 30th June last, we get the following figures:—

——	Bunbury Harbour Board.	Albany.
	tons.	tons.
Cargo tonnage inwards	7,458	24,097
Cargo tonnage outwards, including coal bunkered	378,671	26,281
Vessels using the Port (No.) ...	138	148
Gross Tonnage of Vessels	555,862	817,132
Average gross tonnage	4,028	5,521

The revenue and expenditure figures are of interest. The earnings of the two jetties at Albany under the control of the Railway Department during the just closed financial year amounted to £7,660 as against £9,667 for the previous financial year. The expenditure for the same periods totalled £4,231 and £4,648. The Chief Harbour Master reports that his department collected revenue during the year ended 30th June, 1926, as follows:—Pilotage, £1,120 2s. 6d.; tonnage, £3,224 19s. 3d.; a total of £4,345 1s. 9d. The figures of the Harbour and Light Department for the previous financial year are almost the same as those just quoted. The clauses in this Bill are almost identical with the provisions of the Bunbury Harbour Act, so I will not weary members with a recital of something that is already on the statute-book. The sole difference from the Bunbury Act is in respect to Clause 61, Subclause (5), which provides that regulations for the care of explosives shall be subject to the provisions of the Explosives Act, 1895. The reference to the Explosives Act does not appear in the Bunbury Act. In conclusion I should like to emphasise the fact that the Act is to be brought into operation by proclamation. Power is only sought for the Government to create the corporate body when it is deemed desirable to do so. The authority asked is thus one that can be safely granted since local conditions will have to supply the motive for exercising it. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. Burvill, debate adjourned.

BILL—WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 20th October; Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 6—Amendment of Section 20:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That the following subclauses be added:—"(6) In the case of any liquors paying excise or customs duties, the measures set forth in any Act dealing with such liquors shall be held to satisfy the requirements of this section in regard to measure. (7.) This section shall not take effect until the expiration of six months from the commencement of this Act."

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I have been in communication with the Solicitor General in respect of this clause, but I have not been able to get anything finalised up to the present time. If the Leader of the House will allow the clause to be postponed, probably by to-morrow we may hear from the Solicitor General.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the further consideration of the clause be postponed.

Motion passed; the clause postponed.

Clauses 7 to 16—agreed to.

Clause 17—Amendment of Section 51:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of paragraph (q2) after the word "repairers," insert "other than persons employed by and working under the direct supervision of a licensed scale repairer."

The employer will be licensed, and, under the amendment, anyone conducting repairs

will be under the employer's supervision. The amendment modifies the clause.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: The Chief Secretary's amendment clarifies the position which I thought was somewhat cloudy. Knowing now that the amendment will allow the employer to be the licensed man, having full control over those who have skilled adjustment work to carry out, I am prepared to support the Chief Secretary's amendment and will not move the amendment appearing in my name on the Notice Paper.

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

Progress reported.

BILL—RESERVES (No. 1).

In Committee.

Resumed from 20th October; Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Proposed new Clause 14:

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Yelland had moved for the insertion of a new clause, to stand as Clause 14, as follows:—

Every sale made by virtue of this Act shall be by public auction, commencing at an upset price determined by the board of trustees in whom the land is vested: Provided that if no bid is received at or above the upset price so fixed, the land may be disposed of by private treaty, or otherwise.

New clause put and passed.

Schedule:

Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I move an amendment—

That the following be added to stand as Part III.:—"That portion of said Reserves 5574 and 8722, one chain wide, abutting on Richardson-street, which extends from Melville-terrace to the south-west boundary of the portion of Reserve 8722, set apart as a parking reserve, and that portion of Reserve 5574, one chain wide, abutting on Amherst-street, which extends from Melville-terrace to the south-west boundary of the portion of Reserve 5574, set apart as a parking reserve.

The people of South Perth are very keen on securing this amendment.

Hon. G. Potter: It seems very necessary.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I think the provision for a parking reserve should be struck out. It means that the motor traffic will have to cross the tram line and the only footpath there is in the area. A parking reserve should be made along the Zoo fence.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: The authorities of the Zoo could use their reserve for parking purposes, but that would cut into the big square which has already been agreed upon. This amendment will give to the people a perfect square which otherwise would not be obtainable.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—STATE CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Amendment of Section 20:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That the following words be added:—"and by inserting in paragraph (b) thereof, after the figures '1907,' the words and figures 'and Section 2 of the Public Education Acts Amendment Act, 1919.'"

The Education Act contains compulsory provisions obliging parents to send their children to school to receive the ordinary education, and provides for appearances in the Children's Court for failure in such cases. Under the Act of 1919 the parents of deaf, blind or mute children are also compelled to have them suitably instructed in various ways, but no provision was made for neglect in such cases to be dealt with in the Children's Court.

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

Clauses 6 to 14—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

House adjourned at 8.16 p.m.