

The **CHAIRMAN**: I suggest that to facilitate matters, Mr. Baxter withdraws his amendment and he can deal with it further on recommitment.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I will adopt that course and ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 10.24 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 14th November, 1939.

	PAGE
Question: Electricity Supply, imported small coal, quantity, and cost	1898
Bills: Builders' Registration, 3R.	1898
Traffic Act Amendment (No. 2), 3R.	1898
Sunday Observance, message	1901
Main Roads Act Amendment, report	1901
War Funds Regulation, Com.	1901
Superannuation and Family Benefits Act Amendment, 2R.	1903
Reserves (No. 2), 2R.	1911
Sunday Observance, 2R.	1930
Noxious Weeds Act Amendment, returned	1934
Transfer of Land Act Amendment, returned	1934
Dentists, returned	1934

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

QUESTION—ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.

Imported Small Coal, Quantity and Cost.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What was the quantity of imported small coal used each month by the East Perth Power House for generating purposes during the year ended the 31st October 1939? 2, What was the quantity used for other purposes by the East Perth Power House? 3, What were the prices paid for the coal in waggons at the East Perth Power House station?

The **MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS** replied: 1, November, 1938, to March, 1939, nil; April, 1939, 1,435 tons; May, 1939, 120 tons; June, 1939, 130 tons; July, 1939, to October, 1939, nil. 2, Nil. 3, 45s. per ton.

BILL—BUILDERS' REGISTRATION.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [4.35]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [4.36]: I take this opportunity to voice my objection to the passing of the Bill. It would be a most improper and undemocratic thing to permit it to reach the statute-book. So far as I can understand, no one wants the Bill, and no one has asked for it.

Mr. Cross: How did it get here, if no one wanted it?

Mr. DONEY: I have in my hand a letter that I will read in due course for the further amusement and enlightenment of the interjector. I should have said just now that no one wanted the Bill except members sitting on the Government front bench. This measure is likely to develop into a source of very real trouble to the local governing bodies. I am under the impression that Government supporters are themselves unhappy about it. I imagine they either do not know whether to do as they are told and vote with the Government, or vote against the Bill and do as metropolitan local governing bodies wish them to do, thus keeping in line with their own consciences. Three members at least on the Government side of the House said they would not support the measure unless certain undertakings were given by the Government. I do not recall that those undertakings were given.

Mr. Needham: Yes; they were.

Mr. DONEY: I hope that hon. members concerned will make good the promise they gave to the House.

Mr. Needham: You did not understand them.

Mr. DONEY: I understood what they said and what they meant. This much has already been made plain to the House, that probably every local governing body in the metropolitan area has expressed its opposition to the Bill, and that similar protests have been submitted from all over the State. Surely local governing bodies are entitled to be heard in a matter of this kind. On the second reading I voiced the conviction of all members on this side of the House that the recoup to the local governing bodies would be made at the expense of the fund that is normally used for the construction and maintenance of country roads. I asked the Minister for information on the point, or of an assurance that my fears were groundless; but the Minister did not reply to me. I think he was in possession of all the information needed, and he should have given me a reply. The House is entitled to any relevant information that may be available concerning any Bill that comes before us. I seem to remember the member for Canning stating that the local governing bodies in his electorate had raised no objection to the Government's proposal.

Mr. Thorn: That is what he said.

Mr. Sampson: There is silence there now.

Mr. DONEY: Members may judge from the letter I am now about to read whether that is so. The letter is from the South Perth Road Board, and is dated the 16th October last. It is addressed to one member of the Chamber, but no doubt is a circular letter, and is in the possession of other members. It reads:—

Dear Sir.—At a board meeting held on the 13th inst. I was directed to inform you that very strong objection is taken by this board to the Government's proposal to vary the existing procedure of making available to local authorities a share of motor license fees, although it is intended, under certain conditions, to distribute a portion of the petrol tax. The board would appreciate your assistance with a view to ensuring that the existing practice continue.

I offer that letter to the House for its consumption and the special consumption of the member for Canning (Mr. Cross). I oppose the third reading of the Bill.

MR. HILL (Albany) [4.39]: I also oppose the third reading. It is generally recognised that the member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) is one of the outstanding figures of the Labour movement in Aus-

tralia. When he was Premier I remember his saying that we were living in a fool's paradise, were borrowing and spending money but not creating assets to the value of the money spent. On another occasion he said the very high interest bill that the State must pay was the cause of our unemployment. We should look to production in industry to provide work, and not to public works undertaken with borrowed money. The policy of borrowing money to relieve unemployment will increase our difficulties. Capital charges on borrowed money must be paid, and the extra costs must handicap all production.

Mr. Styants: Do you not want a bitumen road to Albany?

Mr. HILL: Yes, I do. The hon. member is referring to one phase only of the policy of the Main Roads Board. I wanted bitumen-surfaced roads in other places, but the argument advanced was that that type of construction did not provide sufficient employment. If the sole task of the department had been to provide roads, I am sure we would have more bitumen surfaced than we have to-day. As I pointed out on the second reading, the Commonwealth Government appointed a committee of experts to furnish recommendations regarding the transport policy. Unfortunately that body's proposals have not been adopted by the State Government. For instance, the Commonwealth Transport Committee recommended that we should make our road policy conform to our economic needs, and that when loan moneys were spent on road construction, provision should be made for meeting the capital charges on the money expended instead of looking to Consolidated Revenue to provide funds for that purpose. The Commonwealth and State Governments and the local governing authorities all have their parts in road construction work throughout the State. The Commonwealth and State Governments receive their funds from the petrol tax, and one of the principal sources of revenue for the local governing authorities is the traffic fees. That motorists should pay the interest charges on legitimate road construction expenditure is merely fair, but it is not right that they should be expected to provide work for the unemployed. The State Government has failed to carry out the recommendations of the Commonwealth experts,

and the figures I shall quote furnish an explanation of why it is short of funds. The Labour Government took office in 1924 and the following table shows the loan liability and the deficit, or surplus, resulting from the operations of the three activities mentioned, and contrasts the position in 1924 with that of 1939:—

	1924. Loan Liability. £	Deficit. £	Surplus. £
Railways	10,638,000	30,707	4,889
Tramways	912,000	...	117,797
Fremantle Harbour Trust	2,156,000	...	796
Bunbury Harbour Board	453,000
	1939. Loan Liability. £	Deficit. £	Surplus. £
Railways	26,442,000	567,706	...
Tramways	1,236,000	7,630	...
Fremantle Harbour Trust	3,040,000	...	116,320
Bunbury Harbour Board	680,000	22,821	...

The loan liability on roads and bridges during the same period has increased from £1,000,000 to £3,000,000. The average annual expenditure from Loan Funds by Labour Governments has been about £176,000, and interest charges on roads and bridges to-day is about £143,000. The total loss on our transport activities last year was £766,710 and 26 per cent. of the aggregate taxation revenue was required to meet that deficiency.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member will link up the statistics with the motion for the third reading of the Bill.

Mr. HILL: I am showing that the Government is responsible for the present position. I have quoted the figures regarding the Bunbury Harbour Board because that is the only outpost for which the 1924 figures are available. Now the Government proposes to take about £140,000 from local governing bodies and to repay them a corresponding amount from petrol tax collections. That means that less money will be spent from revenue for road work, and to maintain the expenditure in that direction the Government proposes to increase loan expenditure from £65,000 for last year to about £267,678 this year. Of the latter amount, £117,678 is to be spent in recouping the loan suspense account. Other expenditure will absorb the balance of £150,000. It would appear that the Government's policy is to penetrate further into the fool's paradise to which I alluded earlier, and I suggest that instead of completing the stages of the Bill before the House, the Government should carry out the recommendations of the Commonwealth experts. If that course were pursued, econo-

mies could be affected that would dispense with the necessity for the Bill, the effect of which amounts, more or less, to juggling and twisting our finances.

Mr. CROSS (Canning) [4.46]: The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney) endeavoured to make capital out of the receipt of a circular letter from the South Perth Road Board. Most of the six local authorities in my electorate sent out similar circulars, which, for the most part, were despatched before the Minister moved the second reading of the Bill. As a matter of fact, the circular issued by the South Perth Road Board, which was probably seared by the utterances of scandal-mongers—

Mr. Thorn: You are the best judge of that.

Mr. CROSS: —was dated the 13th October.

Mr. Doney: It was signed by the secretary of the road board.

Mr. CROSS: There is nothing wrong with that.

Mr. Doney: I thought you said it had been sent by scandal-mongers.

Mr. CROSS: No, I did not.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CROSS: I said that the letter was actuated by the remarks of scandal-mongers, who conveyed false information to the board.

Mr. Thorn: You do not suggest that the member for Williams-Narrogin is the scandal-monger?

The Minister for Lands: No. He was not there.

Mr. CROSS: The Minister moved the second reading of the Bill on the 25th October, 11 days after the board's circular had been issued. Thus the members of the South Perth Road Board could not have known the contents of the Bill, because members of this Chamber had not that information themselves. I went further into the matter and ascertained that the Bill had not even been drafted on the 13th October. So how could the board have known what were the Government's intentions?

Mr. Doney: Then the board should have sent a further circular correcting its original one.

Mr. CROSS: It simply shows that the local authorities were not altogether au fait with the position. I have a circular dated

the 1st November—that was after the Minister had moved the second reading of the Bill—which was sent out by the Local Government Association of Western Australia and signed by the secretary, Mr. E. H. Rosman, who should have known better. In his circular Mr. Rosman said—

If the proposals of the Government were to be given effect to, the result would undoubtedly mean considerably increased rates on the ratepayers of local authorities . . . and consequent unemployment, especially among road workers.

That is not true!

Mr. Thorn: Do you mean to say—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CROSS: Now that the matter has been fully explained, I have taken the trouble to write a circular letter to the local authorities setting out the position. I have spoken to several members of those bodies, and they agree that the Government's proposals will make no difference to them.

Mr. Hill: They will make a difference!

Mr. CROSS: As to the suggestion that Government supporters were told they would have to vote for the Bill, they were told nothing of the sort!

Mr. Thorn: Too right, you were!

Mr. CROSS: We support the Bill because it conforms to common sense.

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

Ayes	20
Noes	17
Majority for .. .	3

AYES.	
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Panton
Mr. Cross	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Fox	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hawke	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Styant
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Triat
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Needham	Mr. Wise
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Withers

(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Berry	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Boyle	Mr. Seward
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Doney	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Hill	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Warner
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Watts
Mr. North	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Patrick	

(Teller.)

PAIR.	
AVE.	No.
Mr. Willcock	Mr. Latham

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time.

BILL—SUNDAY OBSERVANCE.

Message.

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

BILL—MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—WAR FUNDS REGULATION.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 7th November: Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on the new clause moved by the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson), to which the Minister for Mines had moved an amendment to insert in lieu of Subclause (1), which had been struck out, the following:—“(1) There is hereby established for the purposes of this Act a council to be known as ‘The War Funds Council of Western Australia,’ which shall consist of the Chief Secretary as chairman and three other members to be appointed by the Governor.” By an amendment on this amendment the word “three” had been struck out.

Mr. WILSON: I move—

That the amendment be amended by inserting the word “four” in lieu of the word struck out.

Mr. SAMPSON: I understand that the member for Collie desires the Committee to consist of five members, namely, four as provided in the amendment, and the Chief Secretary. I was hopeful that the Minister, in view of the hon. member's reasonable attitude, would accept the amendment.

The Minister for Mines: I am not opposing it, am I?

Mr. SAMPSON: If that is so, I am quite satisfied.

Amendment on amendment put and passed; the subclause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3, Subclause (2):

Mr. WILSON: I propose to accept the suggestion of the Minister—

The Minister for Mines: I have not made any suggestion.

Mr. WILSON: Then I will make it for the Minister. There has been a good deal of talk about the chairman having both a deliberative and a casting vote. I desire that he shall be given one vote only, but in view of the word that has been inserted, I shall have to re-draft my amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could achieve his objective by moving to strike out all the words after "deliberative" and adding the after the word "deliberative" the word "only."

Mr. WILSON: I move—

That the amendment be amended by striking out the words "a deliberative and, where the votes are equal."

The MINISTER FOR MINES: This is not a fair proposition. I am agreeable to striking out the provision for a casting vote, but the Minister representing the Government is surely entitled to a deliberative vote.

Mr. McDONALD: The member for Collie would achieve his object by striking out all the words after "thereof." There is no need to refer to votes because automatically each member of the committee would have one vote. The amendment on the amendment might mean that when the vice-chairman was present, he would have no vote at all.

Mr. WILSON: I accept the hon. member's suggestion and ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment on amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. WILSON: I move—

That the amendment be amended by striking out all the words of Subclause (2) after the word "thereof."

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: What would be the position if four members were present and the voting was equal?

The Minister for Mines: The question would pass in the negative.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The common practice is for the chairman to exercise a casting vote. We should set out exactly what is intended.

Mr. McDONALD: Some organisations do not give the chairman a casting vote. If the voting was equal the proposal could not be carried, but would have to be adjourned to permit of the attendance of another member.

Mr. WILSON: If two members are to form a quorum, one of them should not

have two votes. That is what I wish to guard against. The matter might be left to the common sense of those present to determine whether the chairman should have a casting vote.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Road Districts Act provides that where the voting is equal, the decision shall pass in the negative.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But this proposal does not.

Mr. SAMPSON: Perhaps the member for Collie would agree to add the words "and where the voting is equal, the motion shall be determined in the negative." That would prevent the possibility of the chairman's overruling one other member of the committee.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Subclause (4) of the amendment provides that a matter shall be decided by the majority of votes. Therefore no further provision is necessary.

Amendment on amendment put and passed.

Mr. SAMPSON: I move—

That the amendment be amended by adding after "thereof" the words "and where the voting is equal, the motion shall be determined in the negative."

The Minister for Mines: You are assuming that there will be only four present.

Mr. SAMPSON: But one member should not have a preponderating influence.

Mr. WILSON: I oppose the amendment. The Chief Secretary will be the chairman and the Governor may appoint another member to be vice-chairman. I do not think any deadlock would occur in the proceedings of such a body.

Amendment on amendment put and negatived.

Mr. WILSON: I move—

That the amendment be amended by striking out of Subclause (4) the word "three" and inserting the word "four" in lieu.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not much concerned whether the number is three or four. The member for Collie in the first place asked for a committee of six; now the number is down to five, and the hon. member suggests that four of the five should be necessary to form a quorum.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I suggest to the mover that he leave the clause as printed. A quorum of three out of five represents the usual practice, and if we adopt the usual practice there will be no misunderstanding.

Mr. WILSON: Last time there was a committee of about ten, and hardly any meetings were held. In this city three or four men can be found able and willing to do the work, and prepared to devote the necessary time and energy to it. Four out of five members would be a small enough quorum for so huge a responsibility as here involved.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is to be hoped that the full five members will attend. However, three would be a majority; and it is customary for a majority to constitute a quorum.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause, as previously amended, put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—SUPERANNUATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 9th November.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [5.21]: I desire to make only a few observations on this Bill, and it is my intention to confine those observations to what is pertinent to the measure. The Bill is designed to cure anomalies and omissions which by experience have been found in the principal Act. I would point out to the Minister one omission or anomaly which is important to be dealt with and which the Bill does not cover. The present position is that any member of the public service who has been ten years in the public service can, at any age, by subscribing 26 contributions become eligible for the benefits of the Act. And so the public servant 59 years of age could subscribe the necessary number of contributions and then retire at 60; but, strange to say, if he is over 60, although he can still, provided he has the necessary qualifications, by subscribing the 26 contributions become eligible, he is not allowed to retire from the service until he has reached the age of 65 years. I am told that the effect of that is disastrous, because men who are over 60 in many cases, though not always, have lost a great deal of their physical capacity, and this Bill, and the Act which it seeks to amend, of course

deal very largely with men who have lost part of their physical capacity and whose work is entirely such as requires physical capacity. For instance, in the Government workshops at Midland Junction—which the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) will allow me to refer to—there are, I am informed, many men over 60 years of age and eligible to come in under this scheme and coming in under it, but there are also, unfortunately, in some cases men who are physically unfit for the work which they are engaged in, and who are willing, even anxious, to retire from the public service if they can get pensions. In that case they do not want to hang on until they are 65 years of age. They are quite willing to retire from their positions if they will be allowed the same right as a man of 59 will enjoy at 60, to retire either this year or in the year following the necessary completion of the period entitling them to a pension.

The worst side of it is this: There are a number of apprentices engaged in the works whose time will be completed by Christmas or early in the New Year, and some of them are young men of the highest competence, and they will be lost to the public service, and lost even to the work they are trained for, because the scope for it in the engineering world is limited. If the men who are quite prepared to retire if provision is made for them to be enabled to retire did in fact retire, then these apprentices who have shown great merit—not all of them—

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The majority of them.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Yes, the majority of them. That majority would have an opportunity of being retained, and would be retained, because although I am not so well aware of the existing facts at the works as is the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) I am sure that the amount of work that is done there would well warrant the taking up of these young men if the vacancies were there to be filled. And those vacancies would be there if the provision was made which I suggest—namely, a provision enabling a man over 60 years who has become an applicant for a pension, and whose application has been favourably dealt with, to retire at any age less than 65 at which he is prepared to retire. That is an anomaly or an omission which I recommend the Minister to consider. I do not propose to move an amendment, because I would like

the matter to be carefully considered by the Minister and then—

The Minister for Mines: You are not looking at me, are you?

Hon. N. KEENAN: Are you not the Minister?

The Minister for Mines: No. The Treasurer is the Minister concerned; or you might look at the Acting Premier instead of me. I am a very junior member of the Ministry.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Whether or not the Minister in charge is here today, these observations will be on record, and they can receive his consideration. In portions of the Bill reference is made to the case of some public servants who might claim that they were entitled under the Act of 1871 to receive pensions. I must confess that to me it appears that those references are more or less in the nature of window-dressing, because there is not the smallest chance of any public servant to whom the Public Service Act of 1904 applies—except of course so relatively few of such public servants that they are not to be considered—obtaining any pension under the Act of 1871. In the first place the only persons to whom that Act could possibly apply must, of course, be public servants who were in the public service prior to 1904 and also, strictly speaking, who were in the public service for ten years prior to 1904; because the Act of 1871 imposed a qualification on any person claiming its benefits that that person must have been in the public service for ten years or more. Now, how many members of the public service of to-day have 45 years' service? How many? We know, of course, that there must be relatively very few; and there is this, further, in connection with the matter, that the references in question are more or less hypocritical, having regard to the consistent policy of all Governments since 1904. A very grave misconception had existed for years of what the Act of 1871 means. All that it means is that if the Governor of the State in Executive Council—which means, of course, the Ministry of the day—chooses to do so, he can grant a pension to a public servant who has complied with the conditions set out in the Act of 1871. The grant is purely and simply what is termed an eleemosynary grant, a gift. There is no claim to it whatever. It can be refused at discretion, and even when granted

it can be refused at discretion, as, for instance, if some former member of the public service was in receipt of a pension under the Act of 1871 he would not be entitled to claim a pension next year, or the year after, or indeed any pension at all. That was established when in 1931 we reduced the amount of pensions payable. The reduction was at that time challenged by some who were pensioners and who claimed their pensions as a right. Unfortunately for them, it had to be explained to them that the pension was simply a gift and not a right at all; and that being only a gift in the first instance it could be refused in any subsequent year or only portion paid. So I think it is something we ought to keep clear of encouraging in the minds of any of the very few to whom it applies, that there is any hope of their obtaining pensions under the Act of 1871. For that reason, while of course all that appears in the Bill is that if they comply with the conditions of the Bill and subsequently at any time before their retirement apply for and are given a pension under the Act of 1871, then the amount they have contributed under the conditions of this measure will be refunded. But it undoubtedly will awaken once more in the minds of public servants a hope which, unfortunately, is not warranted by the history of this State. In 1927, a Mrs. Laffer claimed that she was entitled to receive a pension under the 1871 Act. At first her claim was disputed on the ground that she had not the 10 years' necessary service. She was a teacher. The matter went before the Public Service Appeal Board, which decided that she had all the qualifications required by the 1871 Act and which directed—in the language of the Public Service Appeal Board Act—that the Executive should give effect to the board's finding. The Executive did no such thing. The Executive flatly refused to give the lady any pension at all. And that was in 1927, when things were fairly prosperous in this State, and when there was an opportunity to show liberality. Mrs. Laffer took proceedings in the law courts. The case went to the High Court, where a dissenting judgment in her favour was delivered by Sir Isaac Isaacs, who was then Chief Justice of the High Court. The majority of the court, however, ruled in favour of the contention of the Government that Mrs. Laffer had no right whatever to a pension, notwithstand-

ing the peculiar finding of the Public Service Appeal Board. So strong was the dissenting judgment of Sir Isaac Isaacs that Mrs. Laffer was advised to take the case to the Privy Council; and the Privy Council delivered a decision which must now be accepted definitely as the law, that the 1871 Act simply gave the Crown power to make a payment, if it chose in its own uncontrolled will, to any member of the Public Service who had the necessary qualifications set forth in the Act. That was all. Therefore, Mrs. Laffer's claim failed. If that claim failed in 1927, what is the use of encouraging any hope in the minds of public servants to-day that they may be able to receive different treatment from that meted out to Mrs. Laffer, especially when we remember that the circumstances to-day and in 1927 were that, whereas in 1927 there was much prosperity in the State and therefore an opportunity to allow a certain degree of generosity, nowadays that state of affairs no longer exists?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Of course, you lost sight of the "established capacity" provision; that is, that every public servant who has served the State in an established capacity can still get the pension.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I hope the member for Guildford-Midland has done me the honour to follow me. Those public servants can get it, but they do not get it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I do not want the hon. member to convey the impression that some Government servants to-day may be denied a pension. So long as they have served in an established capacity—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Guildford-Midland is making a speech, not interjecting.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The hon. member is not only making a speech, but making a most fallacious statement, which adds to the enormity of his interruption. No member of the Public Service is, or ever has been, entitled since 1871 to a pension.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You cannot discriminate.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The only persons in this land that I know of who are absolutely entitled to a pension are, for instance, our judges. Their right to a pension has been created by statute; but, apart from those persons, not a single member of the Public Service has since 1871 been entitled to a pension.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: No, but the public servants get it all the same.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. N. KEENAN: The member for Guildford-Midland is getting into bad habits. I hope he will mend. I desire briefly to refer to the general scheme of this Act and to a matter which I consider to be of great importance. There is this difference between this Act and the 1871 Act, that this Act is a contract. By it the Government undertakes to pay to certain persons who have complied with the provisions of the Act a pension when that pension becomes due. The 1871 Act was, as I have pointed out to the House, merely a question of a gift and therefore at any time the State Government could refuse to make the gift if its finances did not warrant its so doing, or it could discontinue a gift already made. But this is a contract. Under this Act, the position of a public servant is identical with that of a person who has insured with a public company. He is entitled to have the conditions of the contract carried out. At first the conception was that the public servant would pay a certain amount to be arrived at by an actuarial calculation; the State Government would pay a similar amount, and the two amounts would give rise to or create a fund which would be sufficient—again by actuarial calculation—to pay a certain pension. That was the conception; but, of course, the State is not contributing a single penny. It is not adding to the fund a contribution equal to the contributions made by the public servants. What it is doing is that it is receiving those contributions, investing them in such a manner as to get some income to increase the fund, and then paying out of Consolidated Revenue whatever is the amount that the State has contracted to pay as a pension. When the principal measure was before the House, I suggested that it would be far wiser for the State each year simply to pay into the fund exactly the same amount as was paid to it by the public servants. Then, of course, the public servants would be certain that the contract would be carried out. But conceive for a moment the position that may arise if this State falls into very serious financial difficulties. What then is going to happen? A fund which is now

subsisting only on the contributions of public servants would be hopelessly inadequate to provide pensions, and so arises the great possibility of default. And this is a contract! It may prove equally ruinous to both the State and the individual. I myself would very much like to have a report by some actuary on the whole scheme, because for many reasons it suggests a possibility that it may break down. It has not been supported by the public servants as one might expect it to be supported.

The Minister for Mines: The big majority of the public servants have contributed.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Undoubtedly, those who applied to come into the scheme. The young people have not done so. The first great mistake made in this legislation—a mistake which can be cured by this Bill, if the House so wishes—is that the scheme was not made compulsory. Here we have unfortunately a very attractive—one might say—investment for the older public servants, but one which is not by any means so attractive to the young public servant.

Mr. Withers: He will want the same privilege when he gets old, without paying for it in the meantime.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Possibly. Why I mention this matter is because of an observation I made a moment ago about obtaining a report from some actuary of the possibilities of the scheme proving successful and achieving its ends. Of course the actuary must assume some facts. I should say what is very certain is that he will assume there would be a very large subscription by the public servants to the scheme. Unfortunately, the subscriptions are confined very largely to the senior servants. That can, of course, be cured at once—as I mentioned a moment ago—to a certain degree, to a very considerable degree, by making the scheme compulsory. I want that matter to be carefully considered. I want to make certain that this scheme will work; because, as I repeat once more, it is a contract and defaulting under a contract is a very serious matter. In order to make certain that the scheme will work, we must know whether the partial support given to this voluntary scheme is sufficient to make it work. Personally, I am by no means satisfied that it is, and so I hope the matter will be given grave consideration by the Minister in charge. I

do not want to speak further at this stage; nor, indeed, have I addressed myself, in the absence of the Minister in charge of the Bill, except to a few details. The measure is a very important one and should not be disposed of as we unfortunately have the habit of sometimes disposing of measures, in an offhand way. We should make sure we are doing something which is for the benefit of the Public Service and which assures that benefit to them. We should also make sure that the scheme is one which the State, with its possibly limited resources in the future, will be able to carry out.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [5.43]: I desire to make only one or two observations in reply to some of the points raised by the previous speaker. The amendments contemplated by the Bill are due to anomalies that have been discovered since the Act was passed. Everybody was more or less prepared for such anomalies, since this is new legislation dealing with a very large number of employees, young, middle-aged and old and of both sexes. I desire to assure the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) that there is nothing hypocritical in the clause dealing with the 1871 Act; there is no window-dressing in it at all, notwithstanding all that the hon. member said with regard to it. We undoubtedly agree that the Government of the day may grant a pension—there is no argument about that—but the fact is that all Governments, since the Act of 1871 was passed, have granted pensions where the established capacity has been proved. The hon. member will agree with that. Where the Government has been satisfied about the question of established capacity it has granted pensions. Although 44 years have passed there are still a number of civil servants who believe that they are entitled to a pension. But the strange thing about the 1871 Act is that nobody seems to know whether he is entitled to a pension under that Act until he actually retires. Then the argument begins and the applicant either gets a pension or he does not. The Superannuation Board, realising the position, approached the Premier with a view to having the matter safeguarded. It is realised that there are not many of these people—men and perhaps women—who believe they are entitled to superannuation under that Act. I agree with the member

for Nedlands that there cannot be a great number. On reaching 65 years of age many had great difficulty in proving their position. If those people just simply went on, waited until they were 65 years of age, and then found that they were not entitled to a pension under the 1871 Act, they would not come under the scheme. All the Government has done is to give those people the right to come under the general superannuation scheme and on reaching the retiring age of 65, if it is found that they are entitled to a pension under the 1871 Act, they will have returned to them the payments they have made. If they are not entitled to a pension under that Act, they will be entitled to superannuation under the Act now in force. That is all that the clause sets out; it makes the position clear for those people about whom there may be some doubt. The Public Service Commissioner and the Appeal Board seemed unable to determine that fact.

Mr. Styants: They did not want to.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have asked the board in charge of the superannuation scheme and the Public Service Commissioner to try to find out the number of people entitled to pensions under the 1871 Act, but no one seems to know.

Mr. Styants: Have they been instructed to find out?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have given the reply that the Government has received. The Government is justified in protecting those people up to that stage and that is all that has been done. I assure the House and the member for Nedlands that there is nothing at all political in the matter. The Government was specifically asked by those people that they be protected as far as possible and that is all the clause does.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [5.49]: I tried by interjection to assist the member for Nedlands, but I failed. The hon. member started out by saying that it was wrong—and I agreed with him—to lead people to believe that under the 1871 Act they were entitled to a pension. Like the hon. member, over the years I have had quite a lot of applications made to me, and it has been difficult to justify one person getting a pension and denying it to another. The hon. member's idea is that there was no right under the 1871 Act, but he went on to say, as far as I could understand, that those who were entitled to a

pension by reason of their having been in an established capacity, could be carried on under the provisions of the measure we are now discussing. That is not so. Those who are qualified by service up to the 1904 Act and who can prove established capacity—and that term is very well defined although we know there have been scores of decisions on it—will not have their claims refused. The fact remains that there are quite a number of civil servants today drawing pensions under the 1871 Act because they were qualified by having been in an established capacity. I need not go into that question because members will know that the definition of "established capacity" has been accepted by successive Governments over many years. There are others in the service today who will be able to prove "established capacity" and no doubt they will receive pensions. I was afraid that the member for Nedlands would lead one section to believe that they would get pensions and others to believe that though they were entitled to pensions, they would be denied them. I do not want that to be broadcast. I do not want to interfere with those who are qualified under the 1871 Act to draw pensions. I know that they have to prove their case, but they may be able to do so as others have done. I could name quite a number. The member for Nedlands also knows quite a number today living within a stone's throw of Parliament House who are drawing pensions under the 1871 Act, because it was decided that they had been employed in an "established capacity." Unfortunately, others were denied pensions because they were not so firmly established in the Public Service as were those who had their salaries fixed from time to time and drew it from Consolidated Revenue, whereas others drew theirs from loan money. However, I do not wish to go into those details; all I desire to convey to the Government is that I do not want to interfere with the rights of those who come under the 1871 Act. If they can prove their "established capacity," they will get their pensions like scores of others. But, as the Minister for Mines has pointed out, if they cannot claim a pension under that Act, they have the Superannuation Act passed last year to fall back upon. It is true that a pension under the 1871 Act can be granted or refused by the Governor-in-

Council and that after a pension has been given it can be taken away; but I emphasise again that a public servant who can prove his claim under "established capacity," will not have his claim refused because of the Bill now being discussed.

Mr. Patrick: Is there the power to take it away?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: There is the power but it would be morally wrong to do so. The remaining few in the service who can prove "established capacity" must be treated as others have been treated, when their time comes for retirement. If they fail under the old Act, they will fail under this one.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [5.56]: I should like to draw attention to one section of the community that is concerned about the question of superannuation. When the parent Act was before Parliament, I discussed with the Premier the possibility of bringing the members of the fire brigades throughout the State under some scheme similar to that proposed for the members of the service. When the financial emergency legislation was passed some years ago, members of the fire brigades had to submit to drastic reductions in their salaries and wages. The Premier rightly pointed out that there were provisions under the Fire Brigades Act by which a scheme of superannuation could operate at any time. The Premier added that that scheme could be more generous than any the Government could carry out, and therefore he did not wish to make any provision for the members of the brigades in the measure that was being considered. The Bill now before us makes provision for granting superannuation to semi-governmental bodies, but in the meantime the firemen and the board are being reminded of the position. Incidentally they have been agitating for a scheme of superannuation for some years. A proposal was submitted to the Fire Brigades Board and the board approved of it several months ago. Because of the fact that the Government finds one-fourth of the revenue of the board, the scheme had to be submitted to the Premier. Now considerable dissatisfaction exists amongst the men because the Government has not so far given its sanction to the scheme, though I understand extensive inquiries have been made on the subject in the Eastern States. The men have become rest-

less because they have not had a reply. When the emergency cut was imposed, it was imposed quickly, but now that the members of the fire brigades are seeking a form of superannuation, it is taking a long time to put it into effect. Consequently, they are dissatisfied. I trust the Minister will take this hint and see that the men are given an early reply. Their scheme is not nearly so expensive as that of the Government. The proposal received the approval of the Crown Law Department and generally speaking there seemed to be no obstacle in the way of putting it into effect. I trust also that the Government will see that other semi-governmental bodies that may submit proposals for superannuation under the Bill will not be hung up in the same way as have been the members of the fire brigades, whose proposals were submitted to the Government several months ago. With these few remarks I shall support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [6.0]: I wish to refer only to two or three features of this Bill. I am very pleased to find that the production of a medical certificate from men who have been in the service for 30 or 40 years will not be insisted upon. They had to undergo medical examination, a test for their eyesight and hearing in addition to their physical fitness, when they entered the service, and many of them have suffered in health by reason of the arduous nature of their callings whilst in the service. I cannot say that I had a very long service in the Railway Department myself, but I remember that we were often sent out to developmental lines around the wheatbelt, to places where there was no accommodation either provided for us or available to us. We had to sleep on the ground in the bush. Men were sent to Carron where no accommodation was procurable. In those days we worked long hours, in shifts of from 14 to 16 or 18 hours. That was before the introduction of the penalty rate, which penalised the department for working men in shifts exceeding eight hours in length. I have sometimes worked a shift of up to 20 hours, and then was stood down for a day so that it could not be said I had exceeded the schedule for the week. Many men have lost their health because of the arduous nature of their calling in the service. I am pleased that the authorities are not going to insist upon a man who

has had long years of service getting a doctor's certificate before being able to become a contributor to the fund.

There is a point about this Bill which, if it is not cleared up, will lead to arguments that will necessitate yet another amendment being made to the Act. I refer to the case of a worker who first elects to retire at the age of 60, and then decides to continue on until he is 65. Under the Act he would not have to pay any contribution after he reached the age of 60.

The Minister for Mines: If he retired.

Mr. STYANTS: If he continued on in the service. The Bill proposes to amend that provision so that if a man wishes to continue on duty after reaching the age of 60, until either he is 65 or some years older than 60, he can pay contributions for four units at the rate provided for an officer of 30. That is all right so far as it goes, but we have to take into consideration the anomaly that exists, namely that there are two rates of contribution for an officer aged 30. There is the contribution in the case of a man who elects to retire at the age of 60, that is 10s. 4d. a fortnight, whereas if he elects to retire at 65, the payment is 9s. 5d. a fortnight. In Committee we shall have to make it clear what rate has to be paid in a case of that kind. Will the officer pay at a rate assuming that he is retiring at 60, or will he pay at a rate assuming that he is retiring at 65?

Hon. C. G. Latham: I think the Government intends to obtain an actuarial decision on that point.

Mr. STYANTS: The position should be clarified. If the Bill goes through without clarification on that point, immediately it becomes law the man who had decided to retire at 60 and then wished to continue until he was 65, would want to know which rate he had to pay, either the rate of 10s. 4d. a fortnight, or the rate of 9s. 5d. As the Bill is framed at present it contains nothing to guide officers of the board as to which rate will have to be paid. It would be well that the Minister in charge of the measure should take that aspect of the matter into consideration and make clear what rate will have to be paid.

I also wish to refer to those people who may be eligible for pensions under the 1871 Act. I am not referring to those who are wages men, and whose case was dealt with extensively by the House quite recently.

There is a doubt whether they are entitled to come under the provisions of the 1871 Act. I have in mind an official, a foreman, of the Water Supply Department on the goldfields. That man possesses two letters from the chief of the Water Supply Department, dated as far back as 1903, appointing him an official of the department for the purpose of carrying out the regulations of the department. One letter is dated 1903, and the other was written in 1904. For the purpose of reductions in salary and the reinstatement of salaries under the financial emergency provisions, this man was treated as an official of the department, but he cannot get full recognition as an official for the purpose of the 1871 Superannuation Act. He has applied to have his case decided. He is aged about 63½ years and is rapidly failing in health. If he knew he was entitled to come under the provisions of the 1871 Act he would retire immediately, but he cannot get a decision from the Public Service Board as to whether he is an official of the Water Supply Department, and therefore entitled to a pension under the 1871 Act. If he failed to take out cover under the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act, and it was decided subsequently by the board that he was not an official of the Water Supply Department in 1903, and was not therefore entitled to come under the provisions of the 1871 Act, he would not get a pension of any kind. Except for this Bill becoming law, however, if he had paid in his contributions, and it was then found he was entitled to come under the provisions of the 1871 Act, he stood to lose all he had paid in. The proposed amendment to the Act will obviate that trouble. The point I wish to make is, why cannot the Public Service Board decide a man's case now as well as it can 18 months hence? It has all the information in its possession, just as it will have in 18 months' time. The board knows the record of the man of whom I am speaking, and can trace it on the files of the department. Why cannot the board come to a decision now, for the man in question will be compelled to retire at the age of 65. If he could get a decision now, and was entitled to come under the provisions of the 1871 Act, he would retire at once, and probably find that his health was restored in a great measure. As things are, he must continue in the service because of the uncertainty of his position. The Public Service Board

should be instructed to investigate all claims similar to this, and tell the men concerned whether they are entitled to come under the provisions of the 1871 Act, because it is in a position to do so now just as well as it would be in 18 months' time. As these cases crop up, the board should be instructed by the Government to consider them and come to a decision without delay, so that the men concerned may know where they are, whether they are entitled to come under the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act, or will be entitled to a pension under the 1871 Act.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [6.10]: Most members will agree that this is wholly a technical Bill. For my own part I do not feel qualified to express many opinions concerning it. With the principle of superannuation we are agreed, because that was decided when the parent Act was passed. It is not surprising to find, under an Act of this kind, that anomalies exist, but the Government seeks to eliminate them by this measure. I am prepared to vote for the Bill on the understanding that the Government takes full responsibility for the actuarial soundness of the proposals, just as it must take full responsibility for the actuarial soundness of the original proposal.

The Minister for Mines: We can only take the experts' advice.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes, and if that is clear, the Government is entitled to act upon it.

Mr. Hughes: Experts do not always agree.

Mr. McDONALD: On reading through the Bill I find that conditions have changed since the Act was proclaimed last year. I would like an assurance from the Government that the actuary has taken into account the altered circumstances. He may have drawn up his plan and arrived at his conclusions upon the basis of a larger number of officers who have agreed to contribute to the fund, or upon the age basis of the various classes being different from that which will now obtain.

The Minister for Mines: He is the chairman of the board.

Mr. McDONALD: I should like to feel that he has taken the altered circumstances into account.

The Minister for Mines: He is a very conservative man.

Mr. McDONALD: And I should also like to feel that he has made a careful survey of the actuarial soundness of the amendments that are in some respects definitely liberalising the right of people to obtain pensions. I should like to feel sure that all these factors have been taken into consideration. When a new measure of this kind is brought into existence there are bound to be numbers of civil servants who occupy anomalous positions. They do not quite fit into the general scheme, either because they are in some department which is not an ordinary department of the Public Service, or because they occupy some special positions or have arrived at some particular age. I should like the Government to make certain that such persons are now included in the scheme with all others who are to receive consideration. The member for Canning (Mr. Cross) has referred to one class of persons, but upon the merits of his proposal I do not profess to be able to pronounce an opinion. His case was an instance of people who think they should be permitted to come under the scheme but apparently are not yet under it. My attention was drawn to one of the members of the Arbitration Court. Members of that court are outside the scheme, although the President, coming as he does under a special Act, occupies I think, the same position as a judge of the Supreme Court. One member of the Arbitration Court has occupied his position, I think, for 34 years continuously, and is still in office. As things are at present he could get no benefits for himself or his family under the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act. Cases like that might be considered in conjunction with any others that fall within the class of those holding anomalous positions. If there are other classes that could well be brought within the scope of the Act we might as well bring them in now, and close the door once and for all. I have a good deal of sympathy for the view expressed by the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) that we should make some contribution to the Treasury towards the fund that is to support the superannuation payments. If we cannot pay the whole lot immediately, that is the whole of our half share of the payments, we should make some payment. Unless we make provision now, when the full brunt of these payments devolves upon the Treasury considerable hardship will also

fall upon the people. The majority of those who make up the taxpayers of the State are not in the happy position of receiving pensions, unless in some cases it be an old age pension.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. McDONALD: We must remember that the contributions that will have to be made by the Crown towards the payment of superannuation will be found almost entirely by members of the public who themselves will not receive pensions. In the interests of the public, who will have to find the money in due course, and who, as I have pointed out, almost in all cases will receive no pension, and in the interests of the civil servants who will become entitled to pensions, we should make the foundation of the scheme as sound as possible. At present we are paying out an amount almost equivalent to the limit of the liabilities we shall sustain under the Pensions Act of 1871. I think between £120,000 and £130,000 a year is being spent now to meet our commitments under that measure, and that obligation will be a diminishing quantity from now onwards. We can at all events, instead of taking advantage of the consequent gradual reduction in the demand upon general revenue, ensure that our contributions shall remain at upwards of £130,000. To the extent that we need not pay out portion of that money, we can devote the money so in hand towards meeting our ultimate obligations under the Bill now before us. When the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act was considered by Parliament last year, the legislation was to some extent in the air. It was provisional. The Government did not know, nor did the House, how many civil servants would apply to be contributors under the Act, nor did we know what the obligation of the State would be for its share of the pensions to be paid. Now that the obligations under the Act have become crystallised—we know that some 11,000 civil servants have applied to be contributors under the Act—I suggest that the Premier lay on the Table of the House, for the information of members, a statement drawn up by the Government Actuary as to what the State's obligations will be from time to time, on the basis of his estimate. I refer to the obligation devolving upon the State to meet its share of the pensions payable to

civil servants. Members would find it of distinct advantage to know what the ultimate obligation will be. I do not know whether, when the claims for pensions are in full swing, the amount to be payable by the State will be £100,000 or £500,000 a year. Such information is very material for members to have at hand. Should the obligation reach £500,000 a year, which is a very large sum, it surely becomes all the more urgent to start now to lay aside contributions towards the fund in order to assist us in meeting the ultimate liabilities that we have undertaken. I suggest, therefore, that now the State's obligations under the Act have been ascertained, with the knowledge of the number of subscribers, the Government should table a report by the Government Actuary to inform the House as to the ultimate duty devolving upon the State. With that information at our disposal, we can decide with more judgment whether we can pursue our present policy of putting nothing into the fund and drawing a promissory note on the future, or whether, to safeguard the taxpayers and civil servants alike, we should commence to make contributions to the fund in order that we may lessen the burden that the full pension payments will involve.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—RESERVES (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 7th November.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [7.57]: Despite the fact that the Minister for Lands told us that the Bill was not similar to that of last session, I find plenty of room for disagreeing with him on the point. I have compared the present Bill with the provision included in the general Reserves Bill of last year, and I find that last year's measure contained exactly the same wording as the present Bill. True, the description provided in the schedule is slightly different, but I cannot quite understand one discrepancy in the Bill compared with the measure of last year. On referring to "Hansard" for last session, I find that the then Minister for Lands (Hon. M. F. Troy), when moving the second reading of the Reserves Bill, stated that the area to be excised from Gov-

ernment House Domain would be just over two acres. This session the Minister for Lands told us that the area now proposed to excise was not quite so extensive. On the other hand, I notice that the committee appointed to investigate the matter on behalf of the Government reported that approximately four acres would be excised from the Domain.

The Minister for Lands: The area is over four acres.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: In its report, the Committee states—

In all of the schemes mentioned here, the total excision of land from Government House Domain would not exceed, approximately, four acres.

If we consider the plans that have been submitted to the House, and have been displayed on the walls of the Chamber, we find that about six acres are to be excised. To my mind, the first thing a Minister should do when dealing with such a matter, is to make sure that the House has a full knowledge of what is proposed. The surveyors have their measurements and they have no difficulty whatever in determining to the fraction of a square inch, what is the total area to be excised. The Bill is important inasmuch as it affects a piece of land which, I claim, belongs definitely, more or less, to the Imperial Government for the purposes of a home for the King's representative in this State. We ought to be very careful what we do in such a matter, and we should have a thorough knowledge of the exact area proposed to be excised. I shall say something about the significance of the land affected by the Bill. The Minister gave us what I suppose would be described as a very interesting historical review of the Domain and its associations, but neither am I nor is any member of this House particularly interested in that phase. If I were to make a search at the Public Library I could also probably present an interesting review of the history of the foreshore. The present Government House Domain may have been the site where King Billy held his corroborees in the dark, distant ages.

The Minister for Mines: He did so.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That fact has no influence upon me nor yet upon the House. The point that is of vital interest is that that particular piece of land was set aside as the site for the residence of His Majesty's

representative in this State. Members are aware that the word "domain" means "land surrounding a home." The present area is about 14 acres in extent. That is comparatively a small area when we consider the domains in the other States. Western Australia has not reached the limit of its greatness; of that I am certain. One day Western Australia may have a population of between 3,000,000 and 4,000,000 people. To expect that is not too much, and when this State has progressed to that extent, the City of Perth will be immense. When Western Australia has attained a population of that dimension, and we visualise the residence necessary for the accommodation of His Majesty's representative in this State, an area of 14 acres will, in all probability, be hardly sufficient.

Mr. Fox: York may be the capital of Western Australia by that time.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It may be but I have my doubts about that. When we consider the position in Sydney, which is a little over 150 years old, and appreciate the fact that Government House there is on practically the same site as that selected for the first Governor who made his home in that city, we must realise what will probably happen in Perth. The present Government House, which is about 80 years old, is certainly a substantial building that may serve its purpose for a good many years to come. Should the population of the State increase to the extent I fervently hope, the position will have to be reviewed. For my part, I hope that some day Western Australia will be independent. I believe the State will become still greater once it gains its independence and severs its connection from the Federation. In those days we will require a reasonably large piece of land for the Governor's residence. I appreciate the fact that the proposal embodied in the Bill is in keeping with the policy of the Labour Government, the members of which do not believe in State Governors. That statement is no reflection upon members sitting opposite, because provision is made in their political platform for the abolition of State Governors.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is in the constitution.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, and as it is in the Labour Party's constitution, the proposal in the Bill merely seeks to carry

out that policy. If the Government can make use of the portion of Government House Domain that is covered by the Bill, the Domain will be correspondingly diminished, and so in time the contention may be raised that the remainder of the Domain does not warrant the existence of Government House for the accommodation of a Governor. Then in a little while we may find the building turned into a museum, or it may be used for some other purpose. While I am in this House, I shall not allow, by means of my vote, one inch of the Government House Domain to be taken for other purposes.

Mr. Withers: What will happen under unification?

Mr. Sampson: We may lose the lot.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Unification cannot be achieved without the consent of the people, and knowing the feeling in this State, I predict that the people will put up a substantial fight before unification becomes an accomplished fact.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the hon. member is in order in referring to unification.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Unification would mean the abolition of the office of State Governor, and that would not be advantageous to the interests of the State. I do not propose to allow the Government to take any of this land. The excision of this area carries with it a substantial additional liability. What that liability is the Minister has not informed us, nor has he told us what the area will be. He has left us to judge that from the report of the committees appointed by the Government. Those committees were no doubt told, "There are two places we want you to have a look at—Parliament House grounds and the Government House Domain." The probability is that, having a knowledge of their own association and work, the members of those committees would say, "Let us keep the new Government buildings as closely as possible to the centre now occupied by Government buildings." The additional liability to which I have referred is the acquiring of that block of land on the east side. That is where the Christian Brothers College stands. What the value of that land is I have not the faintest idea. I have not interested myself in the matter. It came as a shock to me—for that was the

first I had heard of the matter—when the Minister informed us that there was a proposal to acquire that block of land and use it for Government buildings in addition to the area being excised.

Mr. Patrick: It is very valuable.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Of course it is. If I were the owner, the Government would pay a substantial amount. Not only is the land itself valuable but it contains an exceedingly valuable building which is too good to destroy or pull down haphazardly. Whether it could be made serviceable for departmental work remains to be seen. I do not know, not having inspected it. I advise members, however, that we shall have to carry the responsibility of the acquisition of that land and building if the Bill is passed. To have that block seems essential if the buildings indicated on the plan are to be erected in that locality. These are times of financial difficulty. There is no doubt that this State, with its handful of population, is feeling the strain tremendously and will feel it increasingly in the future. There are many other pieces of land which could be acquired much more cheaply and which would be just as serviceable for the purpose the Government has in view. I am sick and tired of the statement that we must have Government buildings in the centre of the metropolis. I defy any hon. member to tell me of any city where Government buildings are so situated. If we go to Sydney we find that the Government buildings are right away from the city and down near the wharves. In Brisbane they are outside the city, and in Canberra they are similarly isolated. The public buildings in Melbourne are out of the city square. They are around Parliament House, which is situated away from the metropolis.

Mr. Withers: There is hardly anybody living around them.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I agree with the hon. member. They are set out in big open spaces. In Adelaide the public buildings are well out of the city area, and in Canada and North Ireland they are similarly placed. In the hub of the universe—the city of London—the Government buildings are in what is known as Westminster and not in London itself. The statement that our public buildings should be in the middle of the city is advanced to justify what the Gov-

ernment proposes to do, and is not based on the practice elsewhere. How many of the public frequent the Government buildings, other than the Crown Law and Titles offices? Very few. I have read the reports submitted by the two committees appointed by the Government—what is described as the building committee, with the Public Service Commissioner as the head, and the Town Planning Board. I never read such weak excuses for not erecting Government buildings on Parliament House grounds as are contained in those reports. Reference is made to the suitability of a site from the town-planning point of view. I could suggest some lands that might be utilised for this purpose. Consider Observatory Hill. What a wonderful site that would be for the Government Architect to exercise his skill upon. I know of no better place. All that land is lying idle. It has a frontage to Harvest-terrace and to King's Park Road, and would be a wonderful site, despite the fact that the committee has stated that if the proposed pretentious buildings were erected there, they would dwarf Parliament House into insignificance. Parliament House is not a great credit to the city of Perth or to the people of Western Australia. That aspect of the building facing the city is nothing but a tumble-down tin shanty. There is nothing magnificent in the architecture of Parliament House. Certainly it is nicely constructed, but there is nothing elaborate about it. I have seen far better buildings elsewhere in places with a population even smaller than that of Western Australia. I should like to take the gentleman who framed this report to Winnipeg, to see the wonderful building there.

Mr. Wilson: Why not take me?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I think the hon. member would be a good companion to take. I should like to take to Edmonton the person who framed this report and show him the magnificent building in that city, and to Ottawa, where Parliament House is surrounded by Government buildings. I do not know that we need worry very much about dwarfing this building.

Mr. Needham: Did you go to Halifax?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not think we need worry about this building being hidden because it is not a magnificent structure. I am only a layman, but I have a certain amount of commonsense, and I

suggest that there is sufficient room from here to Malcolm-street to erect the buildings necessary to house all the civil servants likely to be required in this State for a long time to come. There would be no difficulties in respect of foundations because I suppose that in that region is the most solid foundation that could be obtained anywhere in the city. There would not be any necessity to erect the wonderful nine-storey building suggested in the report, because we have a fair amount of available land in the locality I have mentioned. A good deal of discussion took place about the utilisation of Parliament House grounds when a similar Bill was before the House last year. If the utilisation of Parliament House grounds for public buildings is not desired, the Observatory ground opposite is available. That is all Crown land. Apart from that, if we felt that we must encroach on the people's lands, there is a very nice site in King's Park overlooking the city and right away from here. I know the Minister for Lands would say, "Hands off King's Park."

Mr. Withers: Everyone says it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Because it has not upon it a Governor's residence.

The Minister for Lands: Would you agree to excise a portion of that land?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If the Minister needs land, I would not refuse him a strip of land along Bellevue-terrace. That is a magnificent site.

The Minister for Lands: You would support a proposal to excise that?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister is not likely to make such a proposal.

The Minister for Lands: I should like to know whether you would support it if I did submit it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am renowned for my lack of guile, so I suppose the Minister is proposing to "put one over me," in my simplicity.

The Minister for Lands: You are too full of guile to answer that question.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That question is not before the House and I am sure the Speaker would not allow me to discuss it. I have to seek shelter in some way when the Minister makes interjections like that. Not so long ago an encroachment was made on

Parliament House grounds without permission of Parliament being sought. I refer to the erection of the Water Supply buildings, only a short time ago. Apparently that was regarded as an eminently satisfactory site for those buildings. I could indicate many sites for public buildings much better than that suggested by the Government. The Minister said that it was a beautiful piece of land. I challenge any hon. member to visit it and then endorse the Minister's remarks. There is a level of between 30ft. and 40ft., followed by a very steep incline on to swampy land.

I should like to quote from the remarks of the former Minister for Lands (Hon. M. F. Troy) on this subject for there is a difference of opinion between him and the present Minister. On page 2977 of "Hansard" of the 30th December, 1938, appears the following statement from Mr. Troy:—

The Government House land comprises 14½ acres, and the Bill proposes to excise a little over two acres. I sympathise with the Leader of the Opposition, and did not feel very happy about this clause myself. The proposal is to take a little more than two acres.

That was the remark of a Minister for Lands who had had experience and had some love for this country; who knew this country and owed it something. He had a very different outlook from the present Minister. He loved this country and did not want taken away from the people any of the land belonging to them. He appreciated his responsibility to the Imperial Government. Reference was made by the Minister to despatches between the Lieutenant-Governor and the Imperial authorities. The Imperial authorities would be likely to answer in the manner expected, but they warned the Minister to take legal advice. Has the Minister done so? I venture to say he has not. He told me by way of interjection that even if this Bill was not passed he intended to take power upon himself to erect the buildings without Parliamentary sanction. If the Minister does that I shall make an attempt to stop him. I will apply for an injunction to prevent his doing so.

The Minister for Mines: Is that a threat or a promise?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That is a promise. At page 986 of the "Government Gazette"

of the 23rd March, 1900, appears the following:—

Classification of Reserves.

(63rd Vict., No. 24.)

Department of Lands and Surveys,
Perth, 15th March, 1900.

It is hereby notified, for general information, that under the powers conferred upon him by "The Permanent Reserves Act, 1899" (63rd Vict. No. 24) His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to classify the undermentioned reserves as Class A.

R. Cecil Clifton,
Under Secretary for Lands.

Class A.

Recorded No.	Locality.	Purpose.
1149	Perth	Government Domain.
1150	do.	Government Gardens.
1162	do.	Parliamentary Buildings.

I do not propose to read the rest of them. That is the first indication we have that this is a Class A reserve. I had a difficult job to find this reference. I know the Minister would not deliberately mislead me, though he may sometimes inadvertently make a mistake.

The Minister for Lands: That is dated Lands and Surveys Department, 15th March.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am working almost single-handed at the moment and I like authoritative information. I took the Minister's word, and as we have had a long week-end, I could not get in touch with him. I could not be expected to worry him at his home; one would expect him to hang up the receiver if I did so. It is well for the Minister to realise his obligation under the Act he administers. He should realise just what his powers are for interfering with a Class A reserve.

The Minister for Lands: An up-to-date Act?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, really up-to-date. Section 31 of the Land Act states—

(1) Whenever the Governor has reserved or may hereafter reserve to His Majesty any lands of the Crown for the purpose of parks, squares, or otherwise for the embellishment of towns, or for the recreation or amusement of the inhabitants, or for cemeteries, or for any other public purpose, the Governor may, by notice of reservation published in the "Gazette," or by any subsequent notice so published, and subject to such conditions as may be expressed therein, classify such lands as of Class A; and if so classified, such lands shall for ever remain dedicated to the pur-

pose declared in such notice, until by an Act of Parliament in which such lands are specified it is otherwise enacted.

We are frittering away our authority.

The Minister for Lands: We do it every year.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Not to my knowledge. True, measures are introduced each session seeking Parliamentary authority to deal with certain reserves, but the Minister led me to believe the other night that, regardless of whether this Bill is passed, the Government buildings are to be erected there. As an individual I shall certainly seek an injunction against the Government to prevent its proceeding, because the time has arrived when we should stop this sort of thing. Class A reserves are being used for purposes other than those for which they were gazetted. That is quite wrong.

Mr. Lambert: Why did not you raise an objection when the plans were exhibited?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I did not want to object. I like to see the walls of the Chamber beautified. We ought to have some beauty inside, because the exterior of the building is a shocking disgrace. So, let us have a little beauty about the place somewhere. The various tints of green and the red stripes here and there do lend a little colour.

Mr. Lambert: What about the Council Chamber?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No doubt the Council in due course will be brightened by the display of the same plans. I have pointed out the Minister's powers in regard to Class A reserves. He has no more authority than I have to use reserves for purposes other than those for which they were set aside. In this instance the land surrounding the Governor's residence was set aside for a Government Domain. That fact is clearly set forth. Even if there was no objection to the excision of this area, I still maintain that the block is not suitable for a large building. I dare to pit my knowledge as a layman against that of professional men. I warn the House that professional men have at times caused a great deal of expense. They make mistakes just as does anyone else. If members look at the low-lying land associated with the section proposed to be excised, they must agree that the suitability for foundations is doubtful, unless borings are made. There are swamps, and much of the land is made land. Not

many years ago the river foreshore extended right up to the block. As a matter of fact, the lower part of Government Domain was portion of the river in the early days and has since been reclaimed.

Mr. Cross: What about the G.P.O.?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The G.P.O. and the Commonwealth Bank Buildings were erected by a very wealthy institution—the Commonwealth Government—which can afford to spend large sums to secure suitable foundations. We cannot. At the same time we could erect a serviceable class of building in a position perhaps a little more isolated, but very much more convenient than would be a building on the proposed site.

Mr. Cross: Where could you get it?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hon. member apparently has just woke up. I have been pointing out two or three available sites, and now he asks where they are. I am not responsible if the hon. member will not remain awake. Reference has been made to the means of communication. Where are the great means of communication with the proposed site in comparison with the means of communication with the Parliament House site? Here we have a tramway running along Hay-st. and the distance from Hay-st. to Parliament House is very short. We have buses running along St. George's-terrace. If the necessity arose, trolley buses could be installed there. One has only to ask the Minister for Works and he will fix that up. I think he was responsible for the installation of the last lot of buses. I am not complaining about that.

The Minister for Works interjected.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I would not answer for that, because it is not long since a tram line was put down—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is getting away from the Bill now.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am speaking of means of communication.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member may not refer to lines that have been put down.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Whatever site is chosen, we must have means of communication, and I am looking for the means of communication that would be available for the new public buildings. We have a tram line in Hay-st. and there would be nothing to prevent the Government, if the necessity arose—it does not arise—from installing a trolley bus service in Malcolm-st. and providing all the communication necessary.

When one considers the means of communication serving Government House grounds, one must admit that they are not very conveniently situated. There is no tram line nearer than that in Hay-st. No inconvenience at all would be suffered if the building were erected on the Parliament House block. To placate the Minister the statement has been made that members of Parliament only would be using the building. The probability is that members use public buildings less than does anyone else. For Ministers, however, it would be very convenient to have the public offices close to Parliament House. I am sure the Minister for Works realises how advantageous it is to have his office so near to Parliament House. Certainly it is better than having an office away down the Terrace. If the Minister for Works requires any information urgently, he can obtain it in a few minutes, whereas if his office was located at the other end of the city, a motor car would have to be sent for it.

The Minister has not made out a case in favour of the Bill. Parliament last session definitely decided against a similar measure. At that time only two acres of land were asked for. This year the Government is asking for four acres, and next year it will be eight acres and eventually, as I said before, Government House will be turned into a museum of some kind, a more historic block. The time has arrived when we should declare that not one acre of it shall be touched. The present block is of extremely small area. When compared with the blocks carrying Governors' residences in other States, ours is very small.

Mr. Withers: It is not a beauty spot today.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Trees are growing there that are without their equal in the State. Some of the varieties are not found elsewhere in the State and they have taken years to grow. To touch them would be a pity because they form a very close link between this country and the Old Land.

Mr. Cross: A very close preserve, too.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: A point was raised by the Minister that the land proposed to be excised is merely a refuse tip. The Minister has completed that description by having so much sand dumped there. If I wanted to deface St. George's-terrace, I could not do it more effectively than by having a lot of sand tipped there.

The Minister for Mines: It was a dirty spot.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Then why did not the Government have it cleaned up? If Ministers are going to charge themselves with neglect of duty, I shall feel surprised. The stone wall surrounding Government House was quite suitable at one time, but has become obsolete. If a nicely constructed open fence was provided probably less refuse would be accumulating there. I should say that very few men have been employed; probably nobody has been sent to clean the place. Even at Parliament House, we sometimes see filth that has been thrown over the fence. I do not blame the Government for that. At the same time, I do not say that because filth accumulates on Government Domain, we should excise this area. That would be a very poor excuse.

Mr. Patrick: What about handing it to the State Gardens Board?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The chairman might have it cleaned up and then charge 1s. admission.

The Minister for Mines: There is about 4ft. of buffalo grass on it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I forget for the moment who comprised the House Committee, but there is 4ft. of grass in Parliament House grounds.

The Minister for Mines: No.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Of course there is. The Minister for Mines: Where?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Near the pines. If a match were thrown into it at any time during the summer, it would burn freely. I suppose the House Committee is doing its best. Still, that is not a reasonable excuse for the Government's proposal. There is no justification for taking the area in question, and I warn the House that we cannot afford the outlay that will be needed if we have to use that block. I do not know what the Government would have to pay in order to purchase the adjacent block. The people owning it are entitled to ask a substantial sum for it.

Mr. Doney: I do not think they want to get rid of it, either.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I doubt whether it could be compulsorily resumed even for public buildings. The Christian Brothers are entitled to ask a big price for it, and there is a substantial structure on it that might or might not be used under the Government's scheme.

Mr. Withers: Are the foundations of that building good?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The building stands on high ground. The proposal is to erect a nine-storey building on one part, a six-storey building on another part; the width of the blocks is to be 55ft. and the length 250ft., and a few gardens are proposed here and there. I do not like the design; it reminds me of a military barracks. I hope we shall be shown a ground plan and that it will be very much more attractive than the designs displayed in the Chamber. The estimated cost of the proposed designs A and B is £280,000 and of designs C and D £270,000. Those are estimates of the cost of the buildings only, so I can see half a million going west in no time. Further, those are only approximate estimates. What foundations will be required for the back portion of the buildings is hard to say. I think I have made all the points I can make at this stage, but I shall never satisfy the Minister. He is not always right, either. I warn the House that while we have been asked to give authority for the excision of four acres, a glance at the plan shows that the requirement is closer to six acres. There has not been any great change in the personnel of the House since the Bill was last before us. We know what happened previously. The Minister got so annoyed that he threw out all the other reserves as well as this one. Let the Minister on this occasion exercise common sense and permit of a fair and full discussion. I can picture the member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier), when sitting in the seat I now occupy, repelling a suggestion that a piece of land should be excised from a reserve for the purpose of a hospital. I shall never forget the exclamation of the member for Boulder that the reserve in question was one of the lungs for the people of the city. If the land here in question is not wanted, let it be added to the gardens already on the adjoining site. When speaking on the last Bill I pointed out that unfortunately around the city we could not get much good land suitable for gardens. It is only the low-lying portions that really respond to horticulture—small pieces of flat land. We want people to see what this State can do in the production of flowers. If this land is not wanted at the moment let it be excluded from Government House grounds and turned into a flower garden. I know that the Minister for Mines

has put in a great deal of work on his garden and spent a good deal of money on it.

The Minister for Mines: Not much money.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yet that allotment covers only half-an-acre.

The Minister for Mines: Only a quarter of an acre.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Including the building?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I cannot help being interested in the Minister, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister is not in the Bill.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If the land is an annoyance, as the Minister for Lands has said, and a mere garbage spot, let us clean it up and turn it into a garden. I trust the House will not agree to the resumption of one foot of the area. The great historical review of the Minister for Lands told us that His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor had agreed to the proposed excision. But His Excellency cannot agree to such a thing.

Mr. SPEAKER: I know the Minister for Lands mentioned that, but the Leader of the Opposition is not in order in discussing that aspect.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Lieut.-Governor has to take the advice of his Ministers. Really he has no opinion of his own. Similarly you, Mr. Speaker, have no ears or eyes to hear or see except as the House may direct. His Majesty's representative is in exactly the same position.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I cannot allow the Leader of the Opposition to proceed on those lines.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I shall not do so, Sir. The Lieut.-Governor's duty is not simply to take advice, but to see that the advice given him is right. When Ministers are in the wrong, the Opposition sets them right. When Ministers are right, the Opposition gives them due credit. I hope that the Bill does not get any better reception than its predecessor of last session. I shall do my best against it, except to the point of breaking my word. I have no intention of doing so, though on this occasion I should like to do it. I warn Ministers that they cannot use this land without authority from Parliament. There has been too much setting-aside of Acts of Parliament by some people in the past. It shall not be done in future with my consent. I shall oppose the Bill on the second reading and in Committee and on the

third reading; and if I have any influence elsewhere, it will be opposed there as well.

MR. BOYLE (Avon) [8.21]: I also see a resemblance between this Bill and the Government's measure of last session. In the latter the Government asked permission to sell or lease certain properties held by the Western Australian people. One of the most flagrant delinquencies, or perhaps I should say defects, of this Bill is the proposal to buy, at presumably a very high price, a property on the east of Government House Domain. The necessity for accommodation of the public service is admittedly urgent; every member of this Chamber whose business takes him into public departments is appalled by the want of even reasonably decent accommodation for many civil servants of Western Australia. The Minister for Lands, in whose care the Agricultural Department is, has as Minister for Lands what I suppose may be described as the worst accommodation for a Government department to be found in Australia.

Mr. Doney: It is a rabbit burrow.

Mr. BOYLE: The premises would disgrace a rabbit burrow. A rabbit burrow has fresh air at least on the surface. The Agricultural Department, however, is housed in an old building in which, I believe, the original Legislative Council of Western Australia met. Possibly one of the reasons why the Government wishes to get rid of the building is that formerly it accommodated the Legislative Council. I notice from the reports submitted by the gentlemen who composed the committee of advice to the Government—and I use that phrase in an entirely facetious sense, because the committee in the very first paragraph of its report, dated the 4th August, 1939, says—

In accordance with your instructions, this committee has given consideration to a site for public buildings at the eastern end of Government House Domain, on the basis that the nearest boundary to any access from Government House Domain for this purpose should coincide with the rear of the lodge of Government House.

This committee of six high public officials was not given a free hand to select a site for Government buildings in the metropolitan area, but was definitely instructed by the Government to proceed to St. George's-terrace and report on the Government House Domain. That is definitely expressed in the very first paragraph

of the committee's report, which is addressed to the Premier. Clearly, the committee members were not given an opportunity to report on any other site whatever. Further on in the report—mention has been made of this already—there is reference to a property adjacent to Government House grounds in St. George's-terrace. That particular section was, of course, mentioned merely by the way. It was mentioned only by way of comparing two sites. I find no fault with the work of the officials who constituted the committee. Their work was set out for them. They were told to report on one particular site, and they did so. Now, I am utterly opposed to the Government using the St. George's-terrace site at all. There is no need to do so. I am equally opposed to the use of these Parliament House grounds, for I advocated the use of the present public buildings site in the Terrace when a similar Bill to this was before the Chamber. In the whole of the metropolitan area there is not a better site for the proposed buildings than the site of the old General Post Office, the present Treasury buildings.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Can it not be remodelled?

Mr. BOYLE: It is simply a question of demolition, because the building is not one that lends itself to remodelling. It is a miserable two-storey building, with no beauty, no architecture, no real work in it. The Government there has a site that would house the public servants of Western Australia for many years to come, situated in a central position, and well within the cost of £280,000 that the Government proposes to spend. In addition to that £280,000, under the Government's scheme, must be found money for the resumption of the Christian Brothers' College. If the Government gets the college for less than £50,000, it will not be paying a fair price for the property.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Government would be lucky to get it at that price.

Mr. BOYLE: The purchase of that college would mean saddling the people of this State with an interest charge of £2,500 a year for all time, and quite needlessly. I agree with the Government that it is necessary to have the public service in better accommodation, but I do not agree with the Government that it should go outside the lands it now has, that it should pay anybody any money for land when it has such an area

available. Only last year the Government was prepared to sell, or lease, some or the property it holds in the metropolitan area. Indeed, the Bill provided for the auctioning of some of that land. Now, from the very first paragraph of its report, the committee appears to have been instructed—"In accordance with your instructions." That is clear, I think. The committee had to approve of that site. I freely acknowledge that the committee has done a very good job.

The Minister for Works: Does the report read—"instructed to approve"?

Mr. BOYLE: No.

The Minister for Works: One would think so.

Mr. BOYLE: Even if I had said so, I would not be wrong. The Government's instructions to the committee were to report on a site at the east end of St. George's-terrace. The Acting Premier may find it now rather embarrassing for the Government that the committee has said so. The committee says, "In accordance with your instructions."

The Minister for Works: That sort of thing is all right over at the rabbit-proof fence, but it is no good here.

Mr. BOYLE: There has been some talk about the erection of public buildings on Parliament House grounds. I doubt whether any Government in Australia has been better endowed than has this Government by the foresight of its past public men; because there are few more magnificent sites for public buildings than the sites at present held by the Government. No occasion exists to encroach on Government House Domain. When the Leader of the Opposition comes into his own and when this State is separated from the rest of Australia and becomes a Dominion—the people's will has already been expressed on that matter—we shall find that that land will be of great use to us, but not for the purpose of erecting public buildings upon it. That site faces the Swan River. Are we to shut the river off from the city by an eight or nine-storey building? There is room for such a building on the present site of the Treasury. The General Post Office consists of seven floors, including a main floor. It is not an unduly high building, yet it affords accommodation for hundreds of employees. The proximity of present Government offices to the General Post Office and the railway is all to our advantage. Much work is done between Government offices and the

Post Office, so centralisation in that respect is a thing to be desired. Many people in the city share my view regarding the encroachment upon Class A reserves. The Government will find a very hostile feeling on the part of the citizens of Perth if it attempts to encroach further on our river front.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Government is talking of erecting a bus barn on the Esplanade.

Mr. BOYLE: A bus barn on the river front! Our whole waterfront is associated with nothing but tragedy so far as buildings are concerned. Now we have a parking area there.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And tin sheds.

The Minister for Works: We reclaimed hundreds of acres and members on your side did not agree with what we did.

Mr. BOYLE: From Mount's Bay-road, right along to the Christian Brothers' College, thousands of pounds have been spent on reclamation work.

Mr. Raphael: £95,000!

Mr. BOYLE: The City Council has spent £95,000 on reclamation works.

Mr. Patrick: I do not think so.

Mr. Raphael: The City Council spent £95,000 on those works.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BOYLE: The member for Victoria Park (Mr. Raphael) is an authority on that point. The Christian Brothers' College is erected upon a magnificent site. I suppose the building itself cost over £30,000. Does the Government seriously intend to put a pickaxe into that building; does the Government intend to demolish it? According to the plans, it is to be demolished. The plans which the Minister has so kindly displayed for the information of members disclose that Victoria Avenue will be occupied by a block of buildings right up to the street alignment. Therefore this fine school building, which has been erected not more than 40 years and which is designed to stand the stress of centuries, if necessary, is to be demolished. In addition, the Government will probably have to pay a sum of £50,000 for the land. I oppose the Bill. I oppose it just as emphatically as did the Leader of the Country Party. I hope the House will reject it.

MR. LAMBERT (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [S.35]: I candidly agree with many of the remarks made with respect to the provision of public buildings in the centre suggested by the Bill. I shall not traverse all the ground that has been covered by previous speakers, nor the arguments advanced against the site in question. In my opinion, the site is distinctly unsuitable. It certainly is not central. Of the sites which have been indicated, that occupied by the old Post Office is the most suitable and most central. It would prove to be cheaper, and we would avoid sacrificing portion of a Class A reserve. If that site is not decided upon, another site, fairly close to Parliament House, has been indicated. I refer to the site occupied by the Observatory. In days gone by, I made reference to this institution. I do not think it necessary for me to repeat what I said.

The Minister for Mines: What did you say about it?

MR. LAMBERT: I did not say anything very kind. The Observatory is all right in its place, but it should not be the State's responsibility to spend a large sum of money upon what I consider to be essentially a Commonwealth service. If I pursue this line of argument, however, you, Mr. Speaker, will quite rightly call me to order. It is to be regretted that a past Premier of this State alienated that portion of the Observatory site which today is occupied by the Hale School. Whether the site was a Class A reserve at the time I do not know, nor shall I mention the name of the Premier. The site acquired by Hale School is definitely unsuitable for such a school, which has not a proper playground. It has to make use of a large part—some acres—of King's Park as a playground. I understand that Hale School desires to remove—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is getting away from the Bill.

MR. LAMBERT: I am merely pointing out the suitability of the site, if you will permit me, Sir. After all is said and done, the Observatory and the reserve belong to the State. It has been mentioned that in order effectively to use the proposed site in St. George's-terrace, the acquisition of the Christian Brothers' College property is necessary. If the Government sought to utilise the site upon which the Observatory is erected, it would be equally necessary to

acquire the site now occupied by Hale School.

MR. SPEAKER: Order! The only difference is that it is proposed if this Bill passes to acquire the land occupied by the Christian Brothers' College. There is nothing in the Bill, nor is there likely to be, about Hale School. The hon. member is definitely not in order in discussing Hale School under this Bill.

MR. LAMBERT: Then I shall not do so. I point out, however, that the unnecessary Observatory costs the State £3,000 or £4,000 a year, which represents the interest on a capital of £100,000. We could obtain that site for the purpose of centralising public business. It would be in close proximity to Parliament House, and would provide for all requirements for the next half century. In the meantime, if the Government has any regard for the efficiency of its public servants or for the public service, it could well dispense with much unnecessary expenditure upon activities that are foreign to our jurisdiction. I have no more to say on that score. Probably the site of the old Post Office could be put to better use if it were made a shopping centre. The rents would provide more revenue than the amount of the interest we would require for the erection of up-to-date public buildings.

I compliment the Minister for Lands upon presenting plans showing the portions of the Class A reserve it is proposed to excise. I spoke upon this matter some little time ago, and the Minister for Lands then most facetiously said, "Oh, well, the plans are on the Table." They were there before the Minister for Lands became a member or ever dreamt of becoming one. I am aware that plans showing the excision of a portion of a Class A reserve must be laid upon the Table of the House; but in such important matters members should not be treated facetiously. They should have plans placed before them in the same way as are plans for railway construction and other purposes. I am glad the suggestion I made has been taken up by the Minister for Lands. I will give an instance, Mr. Speaker, if you desire to be tolerant with me for a second. Just recently, in connection with a very important Class A reserve at Peppermint Grove, application was made for the excision—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I do not think the hon. member is in order now.

Mr. LAMBERT: It was desired to excise portion of that reserve for a tennis court. The area was three or four acres.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is nothing about a tennis court at Peppermint Grove in this Bill.

Mr. LAMBERT: If it is not instructive or illuminating that members should have some comparative knowledge of the excision of Class A reserves, I have no desire to persevere with the subject, except to say that I hope the good example set by the Minister for Lands will be followed by his successors.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LAMBERT: I have yet to learn that more suitable sites are not available in Perth.

Mr. J. Hegney: That is a splendid peroration.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LAMBERT: The hon. member will never be guilty of starting, let alone making a peroration. I understand that some years ago a departmental committee was appointed to go into the question of a central administrative block of buildings. I also believe at that time—I heard it unofficially and indirectly—the land then considered to be most suitable was in close proximity to Parliament House. I have no desire to indicate the situation. It is known, I believe, to the ex-Minister for Lands, who no doubt will be ex-Minister for Lands for many years; probably he has some inside knowledge of those recommendations. At all events, the sooner we rid ourselves of some of this unnecessary expenditure and spend our capital in such a way that it will return interest, the sooner shall we get additional efficiency. This applies to our Public Service and to everybody generally.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [8.46]: I have given a fair amount of consideration to this matter, because I feel that members generally regard it as one of no small importance. It is not merely a matter of convenient situation for a block of public buildings but it is a matter that affects to some extent the future development of the city. There is no doubt that to spend as the first instalment nearly £300,000 and carry out the ultimate scheme involving perhaps half a million or the best part of a million, is going to have no

small influence on the trend of the development of our city. For that reason I am sure members consider they will need to have some fairly definite assurance that they are agreeing to a course which in the end will turn out to be the right course. The members of the committee that made a report to the Government are all members of the Civil Service and all possess very high qualifications, and their report, therefore, must be treated with respect. But in a matter of this kind I would wish that the Government would take the opportunity of widening the field of its advisers because this is a matter that concerns not only the Public Service but also, as I said just now, the trend of the city's growth, and that is of deep interest to all. So that before the question is decided I hope the Government will take the opportunity to make further inquiries and obtain from people additional expert information on the subject. I consider that the advice that will thus be tendered will be of value not only to the Government and Parliament but to the public as well. I do not dismiss from my mind the possibility, as suggested by the Minister for Lands, that this may not in the end be the most suitable site. I am not one of those who are not agreeable in any circumstances to any part of Government House grounds being used for the purpose of Government buildings; I have not been able to assure myself that the site proposed is the best site on which to spend some hundreds of thousands of pounds and on which to erect buildings that are going to have an influence on the general features of the city. The reports that have been made are of considerable interest, but they are limited in the field they cover. There has been no analysis of the other parts of the city that might be available for the block of Government buildings. We all know that the city must go west and north; I think its future lies in a northerly direction. We are aware that the area north of the railway station is going to be extremely valuable, and the time will come when a site immediately north of the railway station may have strong claims as being much more central for the people in general and convenient to the chief terminus of our transport system, and also in the vicinity of some of the public buildings that are already in

that area, for instance, the Police Courts, the headquarters of the Police Department the Art Gallery, Museum and Public Library. It may also be that in the future a considerable number of people will have their businesses and their offices much more in the vicinity of the central railway station than is the case today.

Mr. Cross: What would it cost to resume four acres of land over there?

Mr. McDONALD: The cost of the resumption of four acres would be comparatively small today, if the hon. member knows anything about values there. Values in that part of the city are remarkably low in comparison with the values elsewhere, but I am not arguing that point; I am merely suggesting that there is the opportunity to resume land on the northern side of the railway station, land that is today stagnant, it might be said, and there is the opportunity of acquiring it at a very low figure. The cost of resumption there need not frighten any Government.

The Minister for Works: Generally when the price is low there is a good reason for it.

Mr. McDONALD: Low-priced land may become high-priced land in no time. I have recollections of a man with a great deal of money who, a few years ago, bought land in that part of the city. He acquired it at a low price because he believed that that was the part of the city that showed more prospect of increasing prices than any other.

The Minister for Works: That is why he developed Victoria Park.

Mr. McDONALD: The member for Avon referred to the structure known as the Treasury Buildings. That is a magnificent site. There are parts of that building which are now waste space. The old General Post Office has a tremendous area that is nothing but a great gallery, and I have been assured by architects that there are no difficulties in the way of modernising structures of that type, and in that way increasing their utility by from 50 to 100 per cent. I have been assured that the old Post Office and Treasury buildings, which occupy the finest site at present in Perth, could carry a number of extra storeys, that the interior could be brought up to date. The situation would be central and alterations to those structures would not mean any encroachment

upon any of the reserves belonging to the public. The alterations could be carried out satisfactorily at a much smaller cost than is now proposed by the Government. As an hon. member has pointed out, there is need for better accommodation for some of our departments, and whatever scheme is undertaken, departments urgently requiring accommodation would be the first consideration wherever the site might happen to be, even if only the reconstruction of the present Treasury buildings were involved. With regard to some of the buildings such as the Land Titles Office, it would be possible without very much expenditure to improve the conditions in the building where the staff of that office is housed if it were thought that, for the time being, the matter required more consideration, before the far-reaching decision was arrived at.

The Minister for Works: We should have the Town Hall site.

Mr. Raphael: You can leave that out.

Mr. McDONALD: When a similar Bill was submitted last year, it was presented in very different circumstances. I should like to hear something from the Treasurer on that rather different aspect. We are proposing now by this Bill to spend something like £300,000 on a new structure of considerable size, and we have a scheme in hand which may mean hundreds of thousands of pounds more to be spent on the same building. I should like to know whether, in the opinion of the Treasurer, that is wise expenditure at the present time. It will be an undertaking that will not employ many of those men who are out of work; it will be almost entirely a job for the skilled artisan. Is there any country in the world, England, Germany or France, which at the present time is embarking on new public buildings to house its public officials, what we may call peace-time buildings?

Mr. Cross: They are doing so in England at the present time.

Mr. McDONALD: The hon. member is wrong.

Mr. Cross: I am not.

Mr. McDONALD: England is building temporary huts.

Mr. Cross: That is all you know about it.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Canning must keep order.

Mr. McDONALD: If that condition applied here, we also would be compelled by

force of circumstances to spend money. Fortunately, it does not apply in our case so far. I should like the Premier, who has been in touch with the Federal authorities, to tell the House whether he considers it is wise at the present time to spend money in the direction proposed, when every penny is required for defence purposes. Does he consider it wise to embark upon the expenditure of several hundreds of thousands of pounds for new buildings to house the Public Service when the present buildings could still be used for some time to come? Unless the war occupies a very long time, the existing buildings will last out the war. In any case it may be a sacrifice that the war entails, if the public officers are compelled to carry on in the existing premises. I have the gravest doubts whether, at a time when our resources may be of the utmost importance to us, we are justified in spending hundreds of thousands of pounds in putting up buildings when our present buildings will serve the purpose, even though we admit they are far from perfect. It may be said, if we have hundreds of thousands of pounds available, that this is not the best means of spending it. The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) may be thinking about schools, and there may be other works which constitute a greater demand upon the resources of the State. May I say to the Minister for Lands that there are members of the House who, like myself, are not prepared to discard entirely the possibility that the site he mentioned may in the end turn out to be the best one. I suggest that the matter should stand over—as we are nearing the end of the session—and be brought forward later when we may have the benefit of some assurance from the Treasurer that we are justified in spending money in this direction, and when we may also have the advantage of some advice not only from eminent and very reliable public servants, but the advice of qualified persons outside the Public Service who will be vitally affected, and whose opinions would be of great value and interest to the House, as well as to the general public.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [9.3]: I suggest that the Government should not persevere with this measure. The Minister made an interesting speech, and gave us an educational discourse on the historical associations of Government House

Domain. I felt the whole time that he was adopting the role of special pleader rather than arguing in favour of the measure. I subscribe to the opinion that we are not justified at present, on the information we have, in discarding the present Government buildings at the corner of Barrack-street and St. George's-terrace. It is no use people telling me that the whole of the internal arrangements of that building cannot be remodelled. That sort of thing is being done constantly by architects and builders in more difficult buildings. It becomes necessary as business changes for structural alterations to be made. There is no need for us to worry about the external appearance of the building, because that can be re-decorated in almost any way that is required. The internal arrangements are the working arrangements. The working arrangements inside the existing building can, I submit, be improved. I suggest, therefore, that we exhaust all the possibilities of the present building before we talk about discarding it and erecting new buildings. I am not prepared to say that the present building is unsuitable, for in any case it can be made suitable by altering the internal arrangements. Suppose we discarded the existing buildings, what should we do with them? They would be on our hands. It may be possible to dispose of them, but I would be sorry to see the Government dispose of buildings so centrally situated as those are.

Mr. Raphael: Further down the street a fine building has been lying idle for a long time.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes. It has been argued that we have two inconvenient and, in one case, unsightly structures in which we are accommodating our public servants. Reference is always made to those two outstanding instances, the Titles Office and the Agricultural Department. I submit that the Titles Office could readily be remodelled. We have only to go to the Commonwealth Bank and into the vaults to see what was done in a place where the foundations and the facilities for underground structures are not as good as are found in the Titles Office. Certain difficulties will present themselves, but they are not insuperable, nor will they be as costly to overcome. If we devote our attention to the matter we will find that the Agricultural Department can be accommodated in the existing Government buildings. It is not a very large

department, and it would be possible to re-model the existing buildings and accommodate it on that block. Let me take the old court house where the Electoral Department is accommodated. A big area there could be utilised. The structure is one that we might with advantage pull down. On the site we could erect the first portion of a modern building which, if extended into the existing buildings, would render it suitable for our requirements. It is suggested that we discard those buildings and go elsewhere. From my knowledge of the city, and having some knowledge of buildings, I hold that the site suggested is the worst that could be thought of. I do not think it possesses any virtues at all as a site for public buildings. In the first place it is not centrally situated, and the city is not expanding in that direction. Indeed, there is no room for expansion in that direction. We come up against the river, and we must appreciate that the city is moving in the other direction. We have to visualise North Perth and Nedlands to see where the city is going and where the people are located. We do not want to go to a locality that is not attractive, being low-lying, and in addition is in an area where the public would be inconvenienced for lack of transport. As Minister for Works I had something to do with Parliament House building. The Government with which I was associated did not begin it, but the Government in which I was Minister for Works completed it. When that was done no one thought it would take all this time to finish the structure. We had a complete plan, which members have seen. I do not think that plan is suitable today, because it is out of date, but it serves to show what was visualised at the time. It was intended to erect a good structure on that site. Had I thought it was going to take all these years to complete, I think I would have been anxious to keep going while we were able, rather than subscribe to what was known as the "mark time" policy of the then Government. The Premier of that day thought it unwise to go on expanding at the rate we were then going, and he decided to leave the building as we see it today with the tin structures in the centre. I would like to see the building finished. I think that could be done with credit to the State, and the building made suitable for the accommodation of many departments. I

was responsible for utilising the old Barracks for offices. I took them over while I was Minister for Works about the same time, because we had offices scattered all over the city. Branches of the Public Works Department were in different parts of the city, and people had to spend a good deal of time travelling from branch to branch. When we took over the old Barracks they were practically empty, except for a few pensioners who were given a pension to go elsewhere, and were liberally treated. We re-modelled the building. It is not an attractive looking structure, but the internal arrangements were re-modelled, not very effectively because there was no need for that, but to an extent the accommodation was enormously improved. What I contemplated at the time was that, in addition to bringing the Public Works offices together, we should start on the construction of offices on up-to-date lines. The old Barracks has served a purpose for some years, from 1904 or 1905 onwards and it is now about time we completed something. Even if we start on the buildings that are now proposed, we will only start them, and leave them half finished. Would it not be better to concentrate on the block we already have, when it is so suitable for building? I do not want the present Government offices to be vacated, but if they must be vacated, why not come up this way, and utilise the land that is available? People say, "Do not pull down the old Barracks". The time has arrived when we can pull them down without interfering with the old records of the history of the State. We do not want to see the building any longer; we can read about it. I am sorry the Water Supply Department is housed where it is, and I said so at the time. Here is a glorious site for one of the best blocks of offices in any part of Australia.

Mr. Sampson: And with plenty of room.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I have always visualised that ultimately we would have our Government offices there if there was need for expansion. It is no use the Chief Architect or anyone else saying it, is not a suitable site. It is suitable, and any amount of space is available there. The best foundations in the City of Perth are available there. Let us visualise how a block of offices would look if erected at the top of St. George's-terrace. The buildings could be fitted into a magnificent design.

There could be an entrance to all the various new buildings. They need not all be connected up, and there could be an area between, and in the design there could be a glorious passage way between Parliament House, which could be completed along economic lines, and the public offices. Thus we would have a splendid connecting link between this House and a magnificent structure at the bottom of the hill. I believe some such scheme warrants very serious consideration before being discarded. The Minister stated that the rising ground in Malcolm-st. made the site difficult for building purposes. From my point of view, such a contour would help appreciably in the effective designing of public buildings. If members consider the present Treasury buildings in Barrack-st., they will realise that there is a pronounced gradient, and yet no difficulty was experienced by the designers of that block of buildings. As a matter of fact, a slight gradient helps towards an effective design. I do not think this question has been properly thought out or investigated by the Government, and I am certainly not prepared to vote in favour of the Bill at this stage.

The member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) referred to the difficulties of the moment. I look further ahead. Unless there is a huge increase in the population, I do not think we can continue with the number of Parliaments we have in Australia. I am positive that the people will awaken to the expense of government; economies will be demanded, and a more centralised Administration set up. We do not know exactly what will be our requirements in Western Australia. We have reached the stage where it is very difficult to estimate exactly how we will be situated as regards population, departments and various other matters within the next ten years. The argument may be advanced that the proposition will provide work. Here again I suggest that other work is available that could be undertaken. From that point of view, I agree with the member for West Perth that today we have reason to believe that the skilled workers will have provision made for them for some little time to come. How long that will be is difficult to estimate. I have said enough to outline my ideas. I want to ensure that the buildings once started will

be finished. I do not want another building erected while we have unfinished structures around us. I desire the land that we already have to be used, if it is necessary to leave the present site of our existing Government offices, before the Government contemplates acquiring other land. I do not regard as necessary any encroachment upon the Government House Domain, and even if it were necessary, I do not regard the site as suitable. That is proved by the fact that the Government has been engaged in making it suitable, and is endeavouring to construct the site today. I do not believe the site is a natural one for Government buildings. In my opinion, it is not wise to make foundations for such a block of buildings, and that is evidently what is being attempted at present. There is no need to acquire more land; we have enough already. From every point of view, I submit it is not wise to attempt to decide exactly what will be required in the near future for Government offices. Even if the desire is to do something for the better housing of the Agricultural Department and the Titles Office, I have already indicated that those difficulties can be overcome without going in for an extensive building programme as suggested by the Government. The buildings occupied by those departments could be remodelled so as to provide all the accommodation required. I shall vote against the second reading of the Bill.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [9.21]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. SAMPSON: My sympathy is with the Minister in that he should even attempt to bring down such a Bill as that under discussion; certainly there is little if anything in the measure to commend it to the House. Much work of an essential nature requires to be done, and for the Government to give consideration to the construction of buildings, such as those indicated on the plans hanging on the walls of this Chamber, is a most preposterous proposition to contemplate. I have counted the storeys provided for in the different blocks of buildings and in one I find there are 37 storeys and three basements, and in another block 64 storeys—a positively amazing state of affairs. The point has

been urged that if the work were undertaken, we would extend consideration to the public and make for greater content and convenience with regard to our public buildings. I do not know that that would be the position. Already the Titles Office has been housed, although it is claimed the officers of that department are not provided for as they should be. It is possible, as the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) pointed out, to make internal structural alterations that would improve the position. Again we have heard references to the Registrar-General's Department, the State Government Insurance Office—I certainly hope the office accommodation for that department will not require to be enlarged—and the Mines Department. The latter is housed in an excellent building. I presume it is intended that all those departments shall be housed in new premises. I acknowledge that our public offices are scattered all over the city, but the proposition before the House will not mend that situation. When we consider the cost that will be involved, members will agree that Western Australia is in no condition to lend support to any such proposition. I make that statement quite apart from any question of the suitability or otherwise of the proposed site. Even if we took portion of a Class A reserve or part of Government House Domain, I would still regard the site as unsuitable. To my mind, to take from Government House Domain portion of the land indicated in the Bill would be an act of vandalism. Then again the fact that nine-storeyed buildings are to be erected on a foundation that is now being made up, places the proposition, I should say, out of question, and it should not receive consideration because of the enormous expense that would be involved in making sure that a firm foundation had been secured. All that would render the proposition impracticable.

There appears to be an epidemic in favour of the demolition of buildings used for Government purposes. I presume the leader of that movement is the Minister for Lands who introduced the legislation in favour of demolishing the existing Treasury buildings, the Electoral Department and other offices. As a matter of fact, if the Minister's proposition were accepted, Perth would resemble one of the French or Belgian towns after a bombardment. Why are all these buildings necessary? That is a question I

put to the Government. The first consideration of the present Government, or any other Government, should be the increasing of the population of the State. We have less than 500,000 people, yet the city is to be littered with further buildings in order to house those who are carrying on the public services of the State. And what will be the cost? No returns will be received by the Government from the buildings to be erected. Upwards of £280,000 is to be spent, and no one can say at this juncture what the ultimate cost will amount to. Despite that expenditure, it will not return one penny piece to the Government in respect of the buildings that will be erected. In the meantime we are managing reasonably well under existing conditions. We have been told that the Agricultural Department is housed in a structure, the interior walls and partitions of which are of brown paper and linoleum. To get over that position, could not the Government take over, purchase or rent some other building in order better to house the Agricultural Department? Let us scatter our Government offices still further. To speak seriously—

Mr. Cross: That would be a novelty!

The Minister for Mines: There has not been much of it about your speech so far.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SAMPSON: I thought the Minister for Mines had something to say, and I did not wish to miss it.

The SPEAKER: At any rate, the Minister was disorderly.

Mr. SAMPSON: We were told that the department was housed in a very poor building. It is not the only department that is in that position.

Mr. Doney: But it is about the worst of the lot.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, I suppose it is, but we have so much important work to be undertaken, work that would be helpful to the Government in securing returns for the money spent, that we should hesitate at this stage. I claim there is no justification for the proposition submitted by the Government, and certainly none for the erection of public buildings on Government House Domain. In his heart, no member, least of all the Minister for Lands, thinks there is. There are other places where public buildings could be erected, but there is no great need for that work to be undertaken at this juncture. We are faced with most diffi-

cult times. I returned from a visit to Mullewa today. While inspecting that area and also the country around Morowa, I learnt something of the difficulties of the farmers. The idea of the Government complaining about the housing of some public offices when so many of our producers are experiencing such difficult times, passes my comprehension and emphasises my contention that there is no justification for the proposition under discussion. Perhaps the Minister advanced it in a tentative fashion to ascertain how it would be regarded by members, because I cannot think there is any serious intention on the part of the Government to put the project in hand. I say that, in spite of the fact that much sand has been carted on to part of Government House gardens. I question whether that work is justified, and certainly no approval has been given for it to be done.

The Minister for Mines: Are not they top-dressing the lawns?

Mr. SAMPSON. Perhaps the Government had to find some place for depositing surplus sand, and thus the decision to dump it in the Domain was arrived at. I shall certainly vote against the Bill. In view of the difficulties which is experienced in obtaining a few loads of gravel for a school, or an additional room for a school, and at a time when the Government finds it impossible to meet ordinary and essential requirements, I am amazed that a big, costly and wholly unnecessary proposition such as this should receive consideration.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [9.32]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. THORN: I agree with other speakers that this large expenditure is not warranted at a time when the Government is so keen to balance its budget that it goes to the extent of dragging traffic fees from road boards.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is nothing about traffic fees in the Bill.

Mr. THORN: Another point is—

Mr. Cross: You have not made one point yet.

Mr. THORN: Is this a time for the Government to commit itself to an expenditure of £50,000 or £60,000 to acquire further land in order that it may have a sufficient area

on which to carry its plans to fruition? With other speakers, I do not agree that the site chosen is the best one. Several sites have been mentioned that would be far more suitable for Government buildings. In this respect I agree with the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson). Where could we get a better site than the old Barracks, extending from Malcolm-street to Hay-street? There we could erect a building of architectural beauty to face St. George's-terrace and to house our public servants. The present buildings are erected on a patchwork system. They may have some value for the Historical Society. I was born and bred in this State and am very proud of the fact, but I would not object to seeing those buildings pulled down to enable the Government to carry out a complete building scheme providing for proper accommodation for our public servants. The offices would be available to all who desired to do business with the State and to the Ministers who, in turn, would be more available to members of this House than they are at present. That is an excellent site.

The Minister for Mines: I think a lot of the Ministers are too accessible for many of you.

Mr. THORN: I do not think we worry the Ministers much. I gave that up a good while ago.

Mr. Styants: We are all in the same boat.

Mr. THORN: I see I have support from the other side of the House. The member for Guildford-Midland mentioned the old Treasury building. Without a doubt that is one of the finest sites in this city for public offices.

Mr. Withers: It is better than the one down here that you have just mentioned?

Mr. THORN: I am making suggestions. It is no use beating the air; one must have suggestions to offer.

Mr. Withers: You said that this site was the best one.

Mr. THORN: If the hon. member will excuse me, I will continue my speech.

Mr. Cross: A patchwork speech.

Mr. THORN: I am not committed to any particular site. I am endeavouring to advise the Government and to prevent it from making the mistake of spending money at a time like this in acquiring further land and buildings that will cost from £60,000 to £70,000. That should not be done at a time when the Government is trying to balance

the Budget, and talking about a shortage of money, and when we are faced with uncertainty as to the future. We are faced with many problems, and yet the Government proposes to expend this huge sum of money—roughly £300,000—on a building when there is no necessity to do so. True our Civil Service is badly in need of better accommodation. The Department of Agriculture has been mentioned. The building occupied by that department is only a hovel. The officers are crowded out and cannot do their work efficiently. The Treasury building is not as up-to-date as it should be, either. The civil servants housed there have not adequate working space or facilities. Nevertheless, that is one of the finest sites in this city and it should not be abandoned by the Government. If necessary it should be remodelled or pulled down and a new building erected. If the Government abandons that site and lets the buildings as a business proposition, they will become a white elephant. They are of no use for commercial projects. On the other hand, they are of great value as Government offices. The Government has only one or two decisions to make: either it can re-model those buildings, or sell them. One of the greatest mistakes the Government could make would be to sell the property.

Mr. Patrick: The Government has no power to do so.

Mr. THORN: It would ask for power and would desire to sell the property if it became a white elephant, as a wonderful warehouse further down Barrack-st. has become. That warehouse has been a white elephant for years; there has been no purchaser or tenant for it. I strongly recommend the Government to reconsider its decision and refrain from pressing for the acceptance of this Bill, and from proceeding with its intention to erect a building on the present Government House land.

Mr. Styants: Why are 16 acres required for Government House?

Mr. THORN: That is not the point. The site is not suitable. Yellow sand coming from the excavation of the site for the Perth Hospital is being dumped on the Government House land in an endeavour to build up that block, to grade it, in order that it might be suitable for the erection of a building. The hon. member will recall that a tremendous expenditure was necessary for the placing of the foundations of the General Post Office and the Commonwealth Sav-

ings Bank. They are the wealthy people of this country. They have command of most of our taxes, and can afford costly foundations of that description. A great deal of money will be required to establish suitable foundations on the marshy land on which it is proposed to erect Government buildings. I feel sure that on a matter like this we on this side of the House will have considerable support from those on the other side of the House, who will agree that this is not a suitable time to undertake a proposition of this kind or to expend such a large sum of money when we do not know what the future holds.

Mr. Cross: We never shall.

Mr. THORN: We should not pass this Bill, but let it stand over until there are better times ahead. On the other hand, realising that we should do something to improve the accommodation of our civil servants, we should reconstruct buildings already existing. I intend to oppose the Bill.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [9.41]: After listening to the various speakers, I cannot help feeling that this question somewhat resembles that of the much-discussed Perth Town Hall site. I, too, could express opinions as to possible sites for public buildings. But I agree that the Government was quite correct in seeking expert opinion on this matter. When this subject was discussed last session, mention was made of a possible use to which the Treasury and old G.P.O. buildings could be put, and it is unfortunate that the committee whose very fine report has been presented to the Government was not asked to comment on the advisability of either altering those buildings, or of demolishing them and erecting new ones. As it is so late in the session and we are living in a difficult period so far as the finances both of the State and the Commonwealth are concerned—

Mr. Cross: We shall always be in a difficult period in that respect.

Mr. SHEARN:—it would be advisable for the Government to withdraw the Bill and give consideration to the suggestions made by various speakers. With the fullest respect for those who formed the personnel of the committee that inquired into the suitability of sites for public buildings, I suggest the desirability of co-opting to the commit-

tee men with outside commercial and technical knowledge, especially in view of the fact that this matter will be of some concern to business interests. The enlarged committee could then submit a report for consideration during the next session of Parliament, and that report could include reference to the Treasury buildings. I do not wish to express any definite viewpoint on the matter because I agree that it would be difficult for members of this House to say whether the site proposed by the Minister is the most suitable or not. The member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) has pointed out that there is a tendency for the city to extend west and north. In view of the report submitted by the Town Planning Commission some years ago, there appear to be definite indications that the city will ultimately go northward. I presume the Minister is concerned about conserving the interests existing today, and I would not be dogmatic enough to suggest the site should be over the bridge or beyond the railway; but I do say that of those buildings that are available, such as the Treasury building, this House is entitled to expert information as to whether they are capable of being remodelled, or whether they should be demolished to make room for a building of five, or more storeys, and whether that would serve the purpose. At this juncture the Minister would be well advised to withdraw the Bill temporarily and seek this information to which members are entitled. By that time the general financial position might be clearer than it is at the moment. As was pointed out by the member for Toodyay (Mr. Thorn), neither the State Government nor the Federal Government has any idea of what we may soon have to face in the matter of finance. Further, at this stage of the session, there is surely no need to be stampeded into doing something in the absence of essential information. For these reasons I shall oppose the second reading.

On motion by Mr. Withers, debate adjourned.

BILL—SUNDAY OBSERVANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 9th November.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [9.46]: This is a Bill that I think we can support with some degree of confidence. There might be

many aspects of Sunday observance upon which we can support it. One advanced by the Minister was in regard to the undesirability of work being done in the building trade on Sunday. The Bill, however, is not confined to the building industry because the Governor by proclamation may extend its operation to any other trade, which will then become a prohibited trade. Certain provisions in two ancient statutes, one passed in the reign of Charles I. and the other in the reign of Charles II., are no longer to apply to Western Australia; they are not to apply to Western Australia only insofar as they extend to work in any trade that becomes a prohibited trade. I suggest to the Minister and to the House that in view of the antiquity of those statutes, we might well dispense with their application to the law of Western Australia altogether. I notice that in the statutes of 1677, the second one referred to in the Bill, if a traveller is robbed on the Lord's Day, he is deprived of any remedy against the robber. So far as I can ascertain, this statute—or that portion of it—would remain in force in Western Australia if this measure becomes law. In those circumstances we would be better advised to regulate the question of work on Sunday in some such manner as is proposed by this Bill and no longer permit the application to Western Australia of a piece of legislation that undoubtedly, excellent though it was at the time of its being passed, has to some extent—a considerable extent, I think—outlived its usefulness.

Some extraordinary penalties are provided in that old statute. For instance, if one is unable to pay the fines inflicted upon him, the party offending shall be set publicly in the stocks for a space of two hours. It appears to be an anachronism that a statute of the kind should be in force in Western Australia at present, and therefore I shall content myself with dealing with the question of prohibiting unnecessary labour on Sunday in a statute of our own such as has been suggested by the Minister. The Minister contended that work in the building trade was mostly carried on by foreigners. I regret to say I am convinced that Sunday work has extended also to those of our own countrymen engaged in the industry. I do not regard it as being less reprehensible on that account, but from inquiries I have made, I consider it unreasonable to indict the foreigners in our midst when to

a considerable extent our own people have been like offenders. I agree heartily with the prohibition against the carrying on of an industry of that nature in the circumstances that exist in this State, quite apart from the general undesirability of any further extension of lack of respect for the Sabbath. Taking those two counts into consideration, the Bill is much needed, and I propose to support the second reading.

Before concluding I should like to make one or two observations. First of all the proposal is to extend the operation of the measure to other trades by proclamation issued by the Governor-in-Council. That will effectually deprive the Legislature of any review, except by bringing down a Bill to repeal a proclamation. I suggest to the Minister that he content himself with having additional trades prohibited from time to time by regulation. A proclamation is also proposed to define the area of the State to which the measure shall apply. I am of opinion that if the Bill is to be passed, and proclaimed, the Act should apply to the whole of the State. However, there is one difficulty that I foresee. An attempt is made by the Minister—he made particular reference to it himself—to give opportunity to persons working, as it were, in their own interests, such as a man improving his own cottage, to carry on without being charged with an offence under the measure. This is being attempted in a proviso to the definition of the word “work.” I intend to suggest an amendment to that part of the Bill. At present it proposes exemption for such work provided that the person is not ordinarily or customarily engaged or interested in a prohibited trade. So long as the building trade is the only prohibited trade, that is quite clear, but if there are a number of prohibited trades—and the Bill contemplates a number in future—it would be easy to imagine a man whose ordinary occupation was that of a baker, which we will argue is a prohibited trade, wishing to make some repairs to his cottage, which is in the nature of building, and building is a prohibited trade. As the Bill stands, because of his being engaged in a prohibited trade, he could not repair his cottage because that work would also be a prohibited trade. I suggest that the clause be amended to provide that the first mentioned person is not ordinarily or customarily engaged or interested

in the same prohibited trade as that in which the operation or work is being performed. That, I think, will overcome the difficulty.

I believe it is very necessary for us to take some interest in the matter of having Sunday observed as a day of rest. With the advantage of modern conditions, we have gone a little too far along the road, forgetting altogether the necessity for Sunday as a day of rest. Quite aside from all religious questions, which must receive consideration also, I believe it highly desirable from the point of view of social benefit and public good that we should continue to pay some respect to Sunday as a day of rest. Because I believe the Bill seeks to do good in that way, and because I believe also from the point of view of industry and the regulation of trade that the measure is desirable, I support the second reading.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [9.56]: I have not been able to approach this Bill with quite the same assurance or confidence as has the member for Katanning (Mr. Watts). I agree with the Minister in his desire to maintain Sunday as a day of rest, and I say, quite frankly, as a day of religious observance for those who have religious inclinations. I am prepared to support him within reason in any measure that might limit any unreasonable encroachments upon Sunday as a day set apart for rest and religious observance. But I am compelled also to recollect that there are other considerations of which we should not lose sight. At the time the Acts that the Minister desires to repeal or make partially inapplicable were passed, in the reigns of Charles I and Charles II, we had no such thing as an Arbitration Court; we had no such thing as a Factories and Shops Act; in fact, it was go-as-you-please in those matters. Today we have the protection afforded to workers by very extensive laws and awards of the Arbitration Court, by the Factories and Shops Act, by the Early Closing Act and many other pieces of legislation of a social character, all of which I support.

We should not feel that because the Sunday Observance Act was very essential in the time of Charles II, an equal necessity exists for it today, knowing that in our legislation and in our awards extensive provision has been made, if not to prohibit entirely, at all events to discourage, some-

times under pain of heavy penalties or costs, any work beyond the usual hours and in particular any work on Sundays or holidays. The reason why I feel that the Minister should address his mind further to this Bill is that, unless it is given very careful consideration, it might occasion quite a fair amount of hardship. The member for Katanning properly pointed out that, as the Bill is worded, if, say, the clothing trade was made a prohibited trade, a carpenter in the building trade might incur penalties if he was mending his clothes, or permitted any mending or manufacturing of clothes for himself, even if it were done without any idea of gain. It is easy to imagine, under the Bill as now drawn, if the range of prohibited trade is extended, not only many hardships but also many ridiculous situations arising. Therefore I hope the amendment suggested by the member for Katanning will commend itself to the Minister.

In addition, however—after an analysis of the Bill which I acknowledge has been rather a hasty one, there being so many other measures to consider—I am not quite satisfied that the Bill as it stands may not have unexpected effects, and effects which the Minister himself does not desire. I assume that carpentering comes within the Bill as part of the building trade. A man may do some carpentering on his own property not for gain, provided he is not usually engaged in the carpentering or building trade. Take the case of an orchardist who on Sunday, on account of perishable commodities, may be doing a certain amount of carpentering. It may be the making of fruit cases, or some other form of carpentering such as the erection of containers, which may come under carpentering or the building trade, and which it may be essential for him to do at that particular time of the year. It may not be what the Bill calls a case of emergency or necessity. It may be simply something which the man does on Sunday because he is pressed by work in the ordinary course of the working week. Again, a farmer or a miner may be engaged in doing some building or some painting on his farm or his mine on a Sunday. In those circumstances he would not be liable to any penalty at all; but if he happens to be assisted by any employee, then he becomes liable to a penalty. Desirable as it is that

no work shall be done by employees on farms or mines on Sunday, possibly the man may be struggling and his position may be difficult, and therefore it may be a hardship that he should incur a penalty under the law—a fine of £50 for a second offence—merely because his employee gives him a bit of a hand on Sunday to improve the premises or to facilitate the carrying-on of the business. If I happen to be a carpenter, I incur a penalty if I do any carpentering on my own property on Sunday; but I would not incur any penalty if I did some carpentering on any other person's property on a Sunday, provided I did it free of charge. On the other hand, the man on whose property I was rendering gratuitous service would incur a penalty even although I came along with the best of intentions to do the work free of any charge.

I hope the Minister will re-consider the whole of the operative clause. The Bill consists of one clause, that which contains the prohibition of Sunday work and the exceptions under which such work can be carried on. The Minister is not in the Chamber, but he may read what I say. As the Bill stands, it does appear to me to go too far. In a country like Western Australia, which is undeveloped, where people are in the backblocks or in remote small towns, and where they have to do things on emergency and possibly have to call their employees to do something on a Sunday that cannot be done on a week day, to put them under the ban of the law seems a little severe. It may be that applies on mines or farms or orchards to something the miner or farmer or orchardist has not been able to do in the course of the week because he has been too busy. So he says to his son, or to somebody else, "We will fix that thing up today." "Today" happens to be a Sunday, and then he incurs penalties. Although I support the principle of the Bill, I do not want to see penalties imposed on men or women who are inclined to help themselves and show energy and enterprise. I think we may do that by the Bill unless we are most careful in regard to the operative clause, especially in the case of people living in the country. It does not matter so much in the town, where hours are regular; but out in the country, where Sunday is very much like any other day and is often looked upon as a time when things can be done for which

opportunities cannot be found on ordinary week days, I do not want to see too severe a restriction reach out from this House on the statute-book in order to affect those people.

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [10.7]: I wish to commend the Minister for Labour on having brought down this Bill. Living in a town where a good deal of building activity has taken place during the past few years, I have been compelled to realise that the trade has been most offensive in the direction of lack of Sunday observance. The Bunbury Municipal Council has been so concerned about this that it endeavoured to frame a municipal by-law to prevent such things occurring in its town. The council got its legal advisers to look up what had been done, and they made the same discovery as the member for Katanning (Mr. Watts) made, that the only available statute was a statute of King Charles the First. So the Bunbury Municipal Council decided to approach the Minister for Labour with a view to legislation of this kind being brought down. The member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) can rest assured that the Minister—as in introducing the Bill he remarked—is prepared to have the measure made such an Act of this House as will be acceptable to Parliament and the people. The Minister himself realised how difficult it was to frame such an Act. The people mentioned by the member for West Perth would not, I think, come under the provisions of any Act finally decided upon by Parliament. That is to say, a farmer living in a remote locality, for instance, and wishing to do something in connection with the building of a shed or pig-sty which might possibly create a certain amount of noise on the Sabbath, would not be disturbing the peace, as it were, of the citizens. But where we have a definite community of people, a Bill of this nature should apply. For the Government it would perhaps be difficult to proclaim an area in which such a measure ought to apply. With the member for Katanning I would like to see it apply throughout the State, subject of course to exemptions extending on the lines suggested by the member for West Perth. As regards the building trade, possibly just one other thing affected the Minister's mind, something that is definitely offensive in my town. I refer to tiling. The tiles of roofs in Bunbury are

mostly put on by two or three men who come down to Bunbury at the week-end and work from daybreak, which at present occurs at 5 o'clock, until it is dark in the evening. They do a week's work in Perth, and then go down to Bunbury. It is highly objectionable to see tradesmen in a populous town doing that class of work on Sunday. Further, we have had contractors from the metropolitan area—and not foreigners—working on Sundays on very big jobs, with mechanical appliances standing in the street making considerable noise, and oil engines, or whatever engines happen to be used, spraying the walls inside buildings. We have also had instances of men doing scaffolding. We have seen ladders raised from the footpaths while painting was being done. That, too, was most objectionable. Just as the Government found it highly difficult to draft this Bill, we found it most difficult to frame a by-law.

I hope that when the Bill has been thoroughly thrashed out in Committee, we shall have an Act that will afford means to overcome these distasteful operations. We acknowledge that a considerable amount of Sunday work cannot be avoided, as the member for West Perth rightly pointed out. I can go back over the period of years to 1901, when we on the railways were fighting for penalties on Sunday work because of the amount of Sunday work we were doing. On Sunday we might do 12 hours' work, for which we would get 12 hours' pay: and pay was low at that time. We did not wish to work on Sundays, but the department declared it was unavoidable. In 1902 we were fortunate enough to get an industrial award fixing time and a quarter for overtime and time and a half for Sunday work. Then the authorities found means to eliminate a considerable amount of Sunday work.

Mr. Styants: Fifty per cent. of it.

Mr. WITHERS: We did not seek penalty rates for the purpose of obtaining extra payment for Sunday work. Our wish was that Sunday work should be abolished as far as possible. We were content to work on six days a week, but wanted Sundays to ourselves. Now most of the workers in any industry want the same thing. The Bill deals with the particular trade of building. One sees truckloads of sleepers coming along the main thoroughfares of towns on Sundays, and that is an aspect which should

receive consideration and be included here as objectionable. The same remarks apply to firewood carting. One sees great lorry loads of firewood travelling the roads of the metropolitan area into the city on Sundays.

Member: All day Sunday.

Mr. WITHERS: Yes; those people are great offenders. I can understand a person who has been working all the week possibly going out on Sunday morning and cutting a load of wood, and then getting someone to cart it home for him. There is not much objection to that. The objection is to people in trade who are working Sunday after Sunday. Something should be done to stop that. As the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) pointed out in connection with the building trade, a start must be made. The fact that control has not been exercised in the past is the cause of some person doing a little extra on Sunday, then another person doing a little more, until ultimately we reach the stage where the Sabbath is absolutely ignored. The Sabbath is a day we all look upon as a day set apart for the whole community. I trust the Bill will receive the support of the House.

On motion by Mr. Sampson, debate adjourned.

BILLS (3)—RETURNED.

- 1, Noxious Weeds Act Amendment.
With an amendment.
- 2, Transfer of Land Act Amendment.
- 3, Dentists.
Without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.18 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 15th November, 1939.

Question :	Youth employment, training for skilled positions	Page
Bills :	Traffic Act Amendment (No. 1), recon.	1934
	Main Roads Act Amendment, 1R.	1942
	War Funds Regulation, returned	1942
	Firearms and Guns Act Amendment, 2R.	1942
	Dairy Industry Act Amendment, 2R., Com.	1943

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

QUESTION—YOUTH EMPLOYMENT.

Training for Skilled Positions.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:—1, Has the Government's attention been drawn to a statement appearing in the "West Australian" newspaper on the 11th November, which states that Mr. Holt, Federal Assistant Minister for Supply, has appointed Mr. E. P. Eltham, of Victoria, as a director of training youths for skilled positions? 2, Has the Government given consideration to co-operating with the Federal Government in its desire to train our unskilled youths for skilled positions? 3, Will the Government consider making the facilities in the Midland Railway Workshops available so that Western Australian youths may qualify for skilled positions?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. We are in communication with the Prime Minister on this matter. 3, The Midland Junction Workshops are now being utilised for this purpose.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Recommittal.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 9 and the consideration of a proposed new clause.

In Committee.

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

Clause 9—Insertion of new Part IVA:

The CHAIRMAN: Yesterday Mr. Parker moved an amendment to the definition of "uninsured motor vehicle" in the proposed