

not up to the value placed upon it. To help them, this Paterson scheme has been devised. In my opinion it can have no material result. What is wanted in the Eastern States is a revision of land values. People are asked to pay too much for the land, and so they have to resort to a scheme like the Paterson scheme, in order that they may make a bare livelihood. I hope that in this State there will be no necessity to resort to those practices, but that we shall be able to carry on under natural conditions and that our land values will never become so high as to condemn people, as Mr. Paterson once expressed it, to perpetual servitude. I have heard people express the wish that land values would increase. As a landholder I hope values will never go too high.

Mr. Lindsay: That is right.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If values do go to a high figure the original settlers will leave the land, new settlers will take their places, and we shall have in Western Australia a repetition of the conditions prevailing in the Eastern States. Our settlers are prosperous and happy because their land values are low, but when land becomes dear and the people purchasing it have heavy interest bills to meet, they have either to produce more or be content with less, and they cannot be so happy as they are under existing conditions. I was going to say a word or two about the Mureak College of Agriculture, which was opened the other day. Members, however, know the place that this college will fill. I heard some remark made about the salaries being paid to the college staff as compared with those being paid to lecturers at the School of Mines. That is not a fair comparison because the college is only just in the process of being established. Within a year or two the salaries paid will probably be very much higher, and the staff will doubtless also be numerically greater.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is to be hoped that the college will be a success. At present there seems to be nothing to militate against its success.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I agree with the hon. member. If the experience of other institutions is adopted, as it will be, if the practice of agriculture is carried on as in similar institutions that have been in existence for many years, and if we apply the most approved methods of

science to the soil, the college must fill a very important place in the community.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.25 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 4th November, 1926.

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

QUESTION—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Which road board districts have an annual revenue below £500, derived from general rates? 2, What is the approximate area in square miles in each case? 3, Which of these will be affected by the clauses of the Bill to amend the Road Districts Act, 1919?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, The road boards, who for two consecutive financial years have collected general rates less than £500 in each of the two years are as follow:—Greenbushes, Black Range, Mt. Margaret, Coolgardie, Lawlers, Westonia, Wiluna, Nannine, Norseman, Denmark, Shark Bay, Tableland, Hall's Creek. 2, The area in square miles is set down opposite each district named—73, 9,765, 37,830, 11,753, 11,010, 1,040, 87,800, 4,300, 15,000, 718, 7,078, 16,050, 32,920. 3, Each case would be considered on its merits, as

the Act is not mandatory and the provision in the Bill does not amend the Act in that respect.

QUESTION—RAILWAY EXTENSION : NORSEMAN - SALMON GUMS.

Hon. J. CORNELL (for Hon. J. E. Dodd) asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Can the Government give an assurance to the Esperance residents that the Norseman-Salmon Gums railway line will be completed in time for them to cater for the Goldfields Christmas traffic? 2, What has been the daily average distance of platelaying on this line since the construction commenced?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, No. 2, Since platelaying was commenced with the loco. (2¼ miles out of Norseman) platelaying has proceeded at the rate of ½ mile per working day, with the exception that over the period 23rd August to the 20th September, no platelaying was done as the men ceased work when called upon to lay at the rate of three-quarters of a mile per day.

QUESTION—WATER SUPPLIES, GOLD-FIELDS CHARGES.

Hon. J. CORNELL (for Hon. J. E. Dodd) asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What is the price charged per 1,000 gallons for water for mining purposes in the respective mining districts of Leonora, Menzies, Kalgoorlie, and Norseman? 2, To rectify the anomaly at Norseman, will the Government alter the charges?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Leonora, State battery, 4s. per thousand gallons; Sons of Gwalia, 2s. 6d. per thousand gallons, with a guaranteed minimum consumption of 40,000 gallons per day. Menzies, 3s. 6d. per thousand gallons. Kalgoorlie, 3s. per thousand gallons. Norseman, 4s. per thousand; State battery, 5s. per thousand gallons. The State battery is also supplied with salt water at 2s. 6d. per thousand gallons. 2, The price of water for mining purposes at Norseman ranged from 8s. from one tank to 4s. from another. At the request of the Mararoa Company, the price was reduced last week, with retrospective effect from the 1st July, to a flat rate of 4s., and it is not considered that any further reduction is necessary.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. G. W. Miles, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. J. J. Holmes (North) on the ground of ill health.

BILL—JETTIES.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew) [4.36] in moving the second reading said: I wish to inform members that the desirability of closing up the board's operations has not been lost sight of; but it must be remembered that the majority of settlers now receiving assistance are returned soldiers, with whom the State has contracted an obligation which, I think it will be admitted, must be honoured. The board, in two important emergencies, has come to the assistance of land settlement and of the State. In 1914 it stood by a very large number of settlers who, as a result of crop failure in that year, found themselves unable to obtain commercial credit. By enabling these men to remain on their holdings it obviated what might, at that critical stage of land settlement, easily have proved a disaster. Again, at the conclusion of the war, it materially helped the State to carry out its obligations to returned soldiers; and the establishment of a large number of these men in our wheat areas was only made possible by the board's co-operation. It can be claimed that a large percentage of these settlers are now able to see an independence ahead, through the timely and generous measure of help extended to them by the board. It is not only the settlers who have benefited by the board's operations. Indirectly, it has been responsible for the employment of a large amount of labour in wealth production. The commercial community has benefited most of all during the past 12 years. Upwards of £8,000,000 has directly and indirectly been paid to merchants and traders for goods and commodities to the settlers. Losses amounting at the end of the year to £356,157 have been made, but the position of the board, both from the cash and security points of view,

is showing a steady improvement, and it is now in the satisfactory position that the majority of its overdrafts are no longer covered by paper security only; for they now have tangible land values to support them. If the present harvest prospects are realised, a record number of clearances will be made this year, and the board expects to be able to place a further considerable number of accounts on fixed mortgage. This I need hardly say, will enable a substantial reduction to be made in the cost of administration. The State is enjoying a period of unprecedented prosperity due, in a large measure, to the rapid progress of the agricultural industry. The board has played a very big part in bringing about that happy state of affairs. Its members are fully seized of the desire of the Government and of Parliament to see its operations closed at the earliest possible moment. I will now read some returns which have been supplied to me for the information of members:—

Industries Assistance Board—advances for the 12 months ended 31st March, 1926, £1,150,119; total advances, £10,509,120; advances repaid during the 12 months ended 31st March, 1926, £1,240,432.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Is that for the 12 months?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes.

Hon. V. Hamersley: That is not the total amount paid up to date.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No. I will give that now. The return continues—

The total repayments amounted to £8,788,458; bad debts written off during the 12 months ended 31st March, 1926, £84,477; total bad debts written off, £251,258; debts cancelled for the 12 months ended 31st March, 1926, £16,213, total £16,213.

Analysis of trading operations: Loss in trading for the 12 months, £51; total loss £25,319; excess cost of administration and interest on capital over interest earnings and discounts for the 12 months ended 31st March, 1926, £27,695; total £63,367; bad debts for the 12 months £84,477, and total bad debts £251,258.

The reason the total is so large for the last 12 months is that owing to the legislation of the past a large number of debts which should have been written off before could not be written off, and were written off during the year.

The number of fully and partially assisted settlers on the books is 1,345, inclusive of 917 ex soldiers. There are 928 other debtors, of whom 272 have their debts placed on fixed mortgage, and are not receiving further as-

sistance. For the ensuing year 21,025 tons of super. have been supplied in connection with the planting of 92,283 acres.

The number of settlers assisted is 3,865, and the total number released 1,663. The total number of settlers still on the Industries Assistance Board and their positions are shown in the following table:—

—	Ordinary.	Ex-Soldiers.	Totals.
Fully assisted ...	365	736	1,151
Partly assisted ...	73	121	194
Stopped assistance	520	136	656
Funded accounts ...	181	91	272
	1,139	1,134	2,273

I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [4.47]: There is not much to say regarding the Bill in view of the explanation furnished by the Minister. I welcome his assurances as to the prospect of carrying out the suggestion made on previous occasions when similar continuation Bills have come before the House. It is recognised, from what the Chief Secretary has said, that it is desirable, as soon as possible, to bring the Industries Assistance Board under the scope of the Agricultural Bank, so that the whole may be worked as one concern, thus avoiding the multiplicity of institutions. It is very gratifying to learn the number of repayments that have been made, and one can only express the hope that this year, in view of the bountiful rains that have fallen, there may be a prospect of achieving that which has been desired for so many years, namely, the amalgamation of the Industries Assistance Board and the Agricultural Bank. I hope that by next year, particularly in view of the harvest prospects, the Government will see their way clear to effect the amalgamation. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [4.48]: I support the second reading of the Bill. I was pleased to hear the satisfactory figures given by the Minister regarding the repayments made on the part of many settlers who have been assisted. Many of those settlers, without the assistance that was rendered to them, could not have made good on the land. I trust that the Government

have been able to assist many settlers who, in days gone by, were plunged into greater difficulties, perhaps because of some misunderstanding of their true position. That was caused through those settlers having to take secondhand machinery. I have come across some very hard cases in the back areas. Settlers were helped by the department and, instead of being advanced sufficient to purchase new machinery, they were told that they could secure an advance only sufficient to enable them to acquire obsolete machinery that had been scrapped by successful farmers elsewhere. I know of such instances, and will quote one. The man I have in mind was heavily indebted to the Industries Assistance Board. He had not been able to get clear of his difficulties. He had 300 acres under crop, and was endeavouring to take it off with his obsolete harvester. He was getting three bags to the acre and had been struggling along under those adverse conditions until he had taken off about half the crop. Then a neighbour, who possessed a good machine, gave him some assistance. The moment the new machine came into the field the farmer was able to take off seven bags of wheat to the acre. That will give hon. members some idea of the terrible losses that man had been making, because he had been forced to take a machine that was not capable of doing its work. The man's position was due to no fault of his own but to the inferior machine.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Was it all uniform country?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Yes, and the crop was uniform, too. The result of that policy was to plunge the farmer into further difficulties. In other instances the same thing applied to the plant the farmer had to use for putting in his crop. Had the farmer received sufficient money to enable him to purchase good machinery, he would have been able to progress far more satisfactorily, instead of having to struggle along in the face of gravest difficulties. I trust the Government will be able to give effect to what has been desired for so long, and show consideration to those men who have incurred such heavy liabilities. I hope the department has been able to write down the losses of such men, and to give them the opportunity that in earlier days was extended to someone else, who was placed in possession of the property after the earlier holder had been dispossessed of the farm. That has been one of the crying difficulties

of early settlers. When any further advances were refused, they had to walk off the farm and someone else was allowed to take it over, with the advantage of heavily written down liabilities. In many instances those liabilities were not due to failure on the part of the man, but arose from the difficulties I have mentioned. Again, the difficulties of farmers in the early days often arose because of the low prices paid for wheat. Those prices were such that they had no chance of making good on the land. The first advance was in the vicinity of half-a-crown a bushel, rising the next year to 3s. a bushel, and in the subsequent year to 3s. 6d. a bushel. It was only when the price of wheat rose to a much higher figure in 1917 and 1918 that those men had an opportunity to make good. I hope the phases I have mentioned will be seriously considered by the department.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central—in reply) [4.55]: I will take a note of Mr. Hamersley's remarks and report the matter to the board, with a view to having investigations made. Regarding the final point he mentioned, I would point out that formerly there was no legislative provision to enable the difficulty to be overcome. For many years there was no statutory authority to enable a client of the Industries Assistance Board, whose liability had reached such a stage that he was required to leave his farm, which had become hopelessly involved through no fault of his own, to receive the consideration Mr. Hamersley suggested. The farmer's position might have been occasioned by a succession of bad seasons, but the board had to dispossess him because they could not write down the indebtedness, even though they believed the man concerned would succeed in the end. Within recent years the necessary legislation was passed giving the Government power to deal with such positions, and I can assure Mr. Hamersley those powers are now being exercised generously. I do not think he need have any fear on that point. It took much time to make the preliminary investigations and conduct the necessary valuations. Rapid progress has been made and in due course the whole of the settlers who, for various reasons due to no fault of their own, have become heavily over-capitalised, will receive fair treatment from the board.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

BILL—STATE INSURANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [4.48]: I support the second reading of the Bill. I was astounded at the remarks of various members during the course of the debate. Had the Bill been a comprehensive measure, indicating that the Government intended to embark upon insurance business in all its phases, I could expect to hear members uttering their conscientious objections in such terms as have been used, seeing that they were opposed to that policy. The debate on the Bill has been characterised by a perfect tirade of abuse hurled against State trading in general.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Has not the State Insurance Department taken on insurance other than workers' compensation?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am dealing with the Bill at the second reading stage.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But is it not a fact that the department is doing so?

The Chief Secretary: No, it is not a fact.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Not hail insurance on crops?

The Chief Secretary: No.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: The department cannot do so under the Bill.

Hon. J. R. Brown: You give with one hand, and take away with the other!

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Sir William Lathlain, in the course of a vigorous speech against the Bill, said that he had opposed State trading strongly and religiously when he was before his electors. And he was returned, as we all know, with a substantial majority. I stood as a vigorous advocate of State trading, and supported the existing trading concerns and I, too, was returned with the biggest majority ever recorded in the West Province. I say further that were every man and woman in Sir William Lathlain's electorate given the opportunity to record a vote for this Chamber, it would be an impossibility for anyone holding the

opinion that hon. member holds, to be returned for the province he represents. One has to speak in defence of State trading because each was started on account of the demand that was created by the public for its establishment. Let us take, for instance, the remarks that have been made from time to time about the State Brickworks. They were commenced because there was a combine in existence and everyone in the building trade, and others interested, are able to declare now that the State-made bricks are the best on the market. At the time the works were started contractors and others requiring bricks were being imposed upon by a ring and were being sold rubbish. The State Brickworks turned out a first-class article and they soon justified their existence. At the present time they are doing valuable work in connection with the progress of the State. There is any amount of room for private enterprise to come in and make bricks, because the State concern is not able to meet the big demand. Next take the State Implement Works. They were purchased in order to meet the desires of the farmers who were being robbed by American and other importing companies. The State establishment was the means of saving the farming community a considerable sum in connection with the prices of the machinery required. The same thing may be said in respect of the shipping service. A demand for State vessels existed from Wyndham to Fremantle; the North-westerns wanted an alteration in the coastal service and they preferred to be served by a fleet which boasted a white crew rather than by a fleet employing black labour. When the State timber mills were started there was a hue and cry that the people were being robbed by the timber combine. If the State mills were not now in operation, the price of timber would be much higher than it is. Despite the mistakes of the past, one cannot embark on an industry and carry out experiments without expecting to make a loss. The Leader of the House a few minutes ago submitted the Industries Assistance Board Continuance Bill. That institution has rendered valuable assistance to the State inasmuch as it has established quite a number of people on the land, a fact that has benefited not only the State but the individuals as well. If we had listened to the cries of those who declared that the men it was intended to assist would undoubtedly fail, the State to-day would not be

in the fortunate position—to the extent of the help rendered by the Industries Assistance Board—that we find actually exists. A great number of people who undoubtedly would have failed but for the help given them are to-day in prosperous circumstances. It is not a fair thing at all to attempt to compare the trading concerns with the Bill relating to State insurance. The operations that have so far been carried on compare more than favourably with those of private enterprise. We have in the service of the State, expert officers who can put the Bill, if it becomes an Act, into operation and save the country thousands of pounds. How can it be said, therefore, that the Government are experimenting, and that if State insurance is put into practice, mistakes of a similar nature to those alleged to have been made, for instance, by the Implement Works, will again be experienced, mistakes that a private individual would not make? It is not true that anything of the kind is likely to happen because the Government have already shown by experience that it will be possible for them to carry out this legislation with profit to the State. The arguments that have been used in that direction, therefore, are valueless. I am convinced that if the Bill is put into operation it will benefit, not only the miners, but everyone concerned. I do not profess to know too much about mining, and the House should be guided by those who represent mining provinces and who are familiar with mining conditions. I have listened carefully to the addresses delivered by Dr. Saw, Mr. Dodd and Mr. Harris. The Minister's opening remarks were very convincing, and they have not been answered by opponents of the Bill. The Minister asked members to advance criticism of a solid character. His statements have not been replied to. All that has been done, as I said just now, has been a tirade of abuse against State trading. We should cut that out altogether. The Bill has nothing to do with State trading. Dr. Saw told us that it was in no way to be compared with some of the trading concerns in existence. The insurance companies are composed of men of keen business acumen and keen intellect, and they are fighters. The Minister for Works has been described as a Mussolini. I think there were two of them. The companies tried to put it over the Minister, but the Minister, who is a

man of strong character, proved that he was the right individual to stand up against the companies. Whether he was to blame or not, in my opinion he was the man for the job, and he put it well over the insurance companies who tried to put it over him.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: That is pretty candid, anyhow.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It has been noticeable that all the arguments used have been sympathetic towards the miners. That is noteworthy, but it is not a practical way of dealing with the question to suggest that we should throw out this Bill and trust to the introduction of another. That is not practical because it is late in the session and it would mean that the Bill would be jettisoned and the miners left high and dry. I appeal to members not to consider for one moment a proposal of that character. The whole argument has been thrashed out in both Houses. The companies were approached; they had an opportunity to tender for the business. There was a dispute, and a conference was held. Without notice the insurance companies played what they thought was a master stroke and gave notice to cut off the business with the mining companies. They thought they were dealing with a weak man, instead of which they found that in the Minister for Works they were up against a strong man. When the Government found that they were in that position, they anticipated the approval of Parliament. They were forced to take action to protect the miners and to carry out the provisions of the Compensation Act. The Bill we are now dealing with is quite plain; it is not a monopoly by any means.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I suppose the Government saw the mistake they made, and they altered the Bill.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am not a member of the Government. We have to take things as they are and the Bill as it is, and I say seriously that we should consider it in that light, and pass it.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: If the Government make a mess of it, they have the whole of the revenue of the country behind them.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: There is no fear of that; the Government since the inception of their insurance policy have built up a reserve fund of £50,000, and that fund has been built up from nothing. In addition, the Government have paid £12,000 into rev-

enue from that fund. Those figures have been given to members by the Leader of the House. Let us inquire into the costs. Take Queensland.

Hon. J. Cornell: All the arguments that are being advanced against this Bill were put up against the establishment of the Commonwealth Bank.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That is so. I would like to give members a few figures. The expenses of the Queensland State Insurance Department in 1924 were 27.2. The expenses of the Australian companies were 40.4, and those of American companies 40. The expenses of British and foreign companies were 41 and 42.3.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: The Queensland department pays no taxation.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: They can pay taxation and still show a handsome profit on their operations. As Victoria, New South Wales and New Zealand are now operating State insurance, I fail to see the reason for the opposition to the present Bill. For the sake of the miners I hope the measure will pass practically without amendment. It has been urged that the situation should be met by paying this compensation out of Consolidated Revenue. That, however, would mean giving the mining companies carte blanche to rob the public purse.

Hon. J. Nicholson: In what way would an opportunity be given to rob?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: There is an enormous drain on the public through the operation of the insurance companies, and by carrying the Bill we could save the public a good deal of money, which could be devoted to the compensation of disabled miners. I know that many members look with fear upon any business operations of the State; but in view of the fact that the Government have secured an expert staff, a staff probably more capable than that possessed by any insurance company, I see no reason to be afraid. This Bill should not be dropped in the hope of another Bill of somewhat similar character being introduced during the present session.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [5.18]: Whatever else may be said of the Bill, no fault can be found with this House in regard to giving it fair discussion. That should be so, because after all the Bill is one of the most important measures brought forward. It may be said that the subject falls naturally into three phases. First, there is the

question of the Government's action in introducing the function of State insurance during recess. Second, there is the question of State insurance itself. Third, there is the question how the measure will affect the miners. Dealing with the first aspect of the subject, it has to be admitted that the Government did ignore the provisions of the State Trading Concerns Act. It has already been pointed out that the Act distinctly prohibits the establishment of any new State trading concerns unless specially authorised by Parliament.

Hon. J. Cornell: Is insurance trading?

Hon. H. SEDDON: It is certainly a department of trade. It provides a service for the public. It is a matter of trading in so far as one insurance company competes against another. I may refer to the conditions under which the State Trading Concerns Act was passed. The measure was enacted in 1916 because for some time previously there had been a practice on the part of the Government of instituting State enterprises while Parliament was in recess, Parliament being subsequently asked to condone the actions of the Government. In order to prevent any repetition of that practice the State Trading Concerns Act was passed. There is no doubt that the present Government have ignored the Act, and in this they have shown bad judgment, because such a procedure naturally antagonises Parliament by flouting its first decision. To that extent the Government, by the procedure which they adopted, have endangered the adoption of this new institution of State insurance.

Hon. J. Cornell: If the Government had waited until Parliament had met, would that have had any effect on the ultimate result?

Hon. H. SEDDON: We have to recognise that if the Government had taken the opinion of the Legislature, Parliament would have assumed the full responsibility of deciding the question, and would have dealt with it more entirely on its merits than is likely under present conditions. The Government, of course, claim that they had no alternative but were compelled to take the action they did take. My reply to that contention is that in the circumstances the Government's wisest course would have been to consult Parliament. Another aspect of the case is that the Government realised the possibility of having to meet emergencies arising

in connection with workers' compensation insurance. That being so, there is a system of introducing motions to be debated by both Houses of Parliament for the purpose of ascertaining the opinion of the Legislature on important questions. Surely, then, the Government could have introduced during the 1925 session a motion dealing with the question of State insurance and so obtained the opinion of Parliament on the subject. In the circumstances the Government's best course would have been to call Parliament together earlier in order to deal with the question.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: The necessity only arose when the companies refused to cover the risk.

Hon. H. SEDDON: We must remember that the Minister gave a month's notice of his intention to bring the Act into operation. It was during that period the companies withdrew from the position they occupied in the insurance of miners. It has been stated that owing to the wording of their policies they considered they would have been liable to extra risk had they continued those policies. There is another aspect of the case which particularly concerns the present Government. By their action in ignoring the law, Ministers have stultified their position relatively to the community. We have had repeated examples of lawlessness in Western Australia, and when the Government set such an example they stultify their position. As a matter of expediency they broke the law, and thus find themselves prevented from enforcing the law as against the community at large.

Hon. J. R. Brown: That is not an argument.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The strength of the argument lies in the fact that we have a spirit of lawlessness in the community. That spirit has again and again rebelled against the existing law of the land. We here represent the people of the State, and our first duty is to see that the laws are obeyed. If we set a bad example, how can we expect the people to observe the laws? Dealing now with the question of State insurance, one cannot help wondering why, when the last Labour Government were in power and when the establishment of State enterprises was in fashion, the question of State insurance was not considered. It must be recognised that of all public activities this is the one in which the Government have the best chance of

succeeding. Insurance above everything else relies for its success on certain fundamental principles. It is based on scientific data, which the Government have better opportunities of compiling and investigating than private persons have. Indeed, a good many of the tables of insurance companies are based on information gathered by Government departments, and by countries acting as statisticians. From the fact of the Statistical Department being a very important branch of Government, the State is better equipped to carry out insurance successfully. Another strong factor in favour of national insurance is that the business of insurance is undoubtedly conservative and based on scientific principles. Being conservative, insurance business is especially adapted for being carried out by Government departments, which, whatever, else we may say of them, certainly exhibit a conservative spirit. Again, we must recognise that there is already established in the community an organisation for carrying out State insurance work. In practically every centre there is a Government office, and the man in charge of that office is quite competent to act as agent for a Government insurance department. Another point is that the funds which would be raised by State insurance could be well utilised in carrying out national undertakings. Thus there are so many advantages to be derived from the operation of State insurance that I am surprised to find that at a time when State enterprises were so fashionable the Government did not embark on this most promising activity. State insurance, moreover, could be combined with old age pensions and State relief. The question of old age pensions may well be allied with that of State insurance. In Germany, I understand, a man can take out a State insurance policy which will carry an increased benefit when he arrives at the age entitling him to an old age pension. Therefore, there are strong arguments to be urged in favour of State insurance. From the very nature of the business, the activity is one that could be better undertaken by the Commonwealth than by the State. One of the principles upon which insurance business is carried on is that it must be widely based. If its operation is limited in area, it is distinctly dangerous. Attention has been drawn to the splendid position occupied by British insurance companies after the Chicago and San Francisco fires by reason of the fact that they were operating in many

countries of the world, and thus were able to meet promptly all the claims, amounting to many millions, arising out of the two catastrophes. The British insurance companies had their funds distributed, and were able to draw on them. On the other hand, a local catastrophe of that magnitude would impose a very serious drain on the resources of local insurance companies, and might easily produce financial stringency. Another principle of successful insurance business is to base it widely as regards industries. If the workers' compensation rate is based on the averages obtained in various industries, the result is a better table than if consideration were restricted to one particular industry. Those industries which are more dangerous or more unhealthy are able to get insurance at a rate only slightly heavier than that quoted for healthy occupations, owing to the distribution of the risk. Thus the evils of one occupation are counteracted by the benefits of another. A mining or shipping disaster, or a railway smash, results in claims which the insurance companies, having widely distributed risks, are able to meet easily. On the other hand, an insurance company restricting its activities to a certain field might be seriously embarrassed by such an event. With regard to the refusal of the companies to quote a rate, there are certain aspects which have not previously been stressed. Apart from the data at their disposal being insufficient, the companies had an experience in rate fixing under pressure from the Government. It has been said that the information at the disposal of the committee which prepared a report fixing the rate at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. was communicated to the insurance companies. That may be so. But we must recognise that the committee had information available from other sources than those quoted, which information was of considerable assistance to them. For instance, the Government Actuary had the benefit of many years of tabulations dealing with the activities of friendly societies. The statistics and data in connection with these societies must have been a great help in framing the report. The figure of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., therefore, must have been arrived at by taking many factors into consideration. I am inclined to think that the figure is more than adequate to meet any claims that may arise under the new conditions established in the mining industry. The Government have introduced certain conditions which tend to reduce the number

of claims anticipated. There is also the fact that the insurance companies hesitated to give a quotation because they had already had a striking experience with regard to the quotation they gave when compensation for accidents was increased. There was a conference between the companies and the Minister, as the result of which the companies were allowed to increase their rates by some 25 per cent.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Had the Minister any right to dictate what rate the companies should quote?

Hon. H. SEDDON: The Minister adopted that attitude, and I am inclined to think that as a public officer he was entitled to adopt it. Insurance having been made compulsory, the Minister was justified in seeing that the companies did not exceed reasonable limits in fixing their charges. The important thing is that the medical clause had considerable effect on the claims, and the insurance company sustained serious losses from that standpoint. One other factor in respect of insurance is that the declarations handed in to the companies, upon which the premium is based, are frequently incorrect, and the companies have no means of investigating or checking them. The result is that many employers are securing insurance and the companies are incurring risks far greater than are allowed for. It was those factors that led the companies to hesitate when asked to consider miners' insurance. Also they had no data enabling them to see the effects of preventive measures such as obtain in South Africa, and which I hope Mr. Cornell will touch upon. When these facts are taken into consideration it will be recognised that the companies were largely justified in hesitating to accept the rate suggested to them, namely $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. On the other hand, we have to recognise that the Government's action in opening the field once more to competition and allowing the companies to compete alongside them for mining business, was a wise one. It was wise not only because it gave the companies an opportunity to enter into free competition with the State office, but wise also in that while the Government are protecting themselves against undue claims by insisting upon proper preventive measures being taken in the mines they are also thereby improving the risk for the companies. The insurance companies might be well advised to reconsider their attitude, and to realise

that while the Government are trying to obtain business, they themselves should be able to compete with the State Insurance Department. By first of all taking out the T.B. men, and secondly, providing for the men seriously affected with silicosis and advising those slightly affected to leave the industry, the Government have considerably decreased the possibility of claims under this insurance scheme. In those circumstances I am inclined to think that the 4½ per cent. will be more than adequate to meet the claims that may arise in future, seeing that the mines may now be regarded as clean. I want to draw attention to figures made available last Tuesday night by the Minister for Mines. Prior to that date the figures were incomplete.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Apparently they were not available when the Chief Secretary moved the second reading of the Bill.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The Minister for Mines last Tuesday night pointed out that 4,017 men had been examined in the laboratory and that of that number 140 were found to be suffering from tuberculosis, whilst 459 were in the early stages of silicosis. Those men are the men advised by the Government to leave the industry, the men for whom the Government propose to provide employment and for whom the farming scheme at Salmon Gums has been devised. Then there were 186 men in the advanced stages of silicosis. They are the men being taken out of the industry and compensated out of the insurance fund. That is the position disclosed by the Minister for Mines on Tuesday last. The Government are taking the men out of the mines and I think they should be commended for the generous scheme at Salmon Gums they have outlined. This will enable a man to leave the industry and go on his block practically without a penny notwithstanding which he should ultimately be able to work out an independent position. However, there are objections to that scheme, which I will outline later on. For one thing not every man is cut out to be a farmer and consequently some men are not fitted for participation in that scheme. There are one or two others factors that will tend to make our mines healthy in future. The first is the oil flotation process which will enable the mines to undertake the breaking and treatment of ore with a minimum of floating dust. Not only that, but the preventive measures instituted in other parts of the

world and which have proved so effective in reducing silicosis, can now be put into operation thus tending to still further reduce the number of claims in future. The greatest causes of silicosis in Western Australia have been the Pingall Mine and the Cosmopolitan mine and the South African mines. A large number of men who came over here were prohibited from working in the mines in South Africa but were able to get work in our mines because the examination here was not nearly so severe as in South Africa. In future those men will not be able to come here and obtain benefits from the scheme, and so the position will be much better from a claims standpoint. Therefore I think the Government have shown wisdom in adopting the reasonable figure of 4½ per cent., which should meet all claims in respect of silicosis. The third aspect is as to how it affects the miners. We were told by the Minister that the measure had been introduced because it was essential that the miners should be protected. May I point out that there was an alternative to be found in the Workers' Compensation Act, but so far as I have heard it was not considered by the Minister. Section 10 of that Act has a proviso as follows:—

If an employer proves to the satisfaction of the Minister that such employer has established a fund for insurance against such liability and has deposited at the Treasury securities charged with all payments to become due under such liability, the Governor may by order in Council exempt such employer from the operation of this section.

This alternative, so far as I can gather, was not discussed. We should have liked to hear it referred to by the Minister and I trust that in his reply he will deal with this aspect of the question, for, after all, 4½ per cent. is a heavy charge to impose on the mines in their present position, and if some scheme could have been agreed upon for guaranteeing a fund to ensure that any claims arising would be met, the mines could perhaps have been induced to combine to raise funds to establish a reserve with the Government to cover possible claims from interest derived. At any rate, that alternative might well have been considered before the proclamation of the State Insurance Department. The position of the mines under the Workers' Compensation Act, has already been stressed. It is idle to talk of providing for the miner if we are going to close the mine by so doing. To-day tributers have to pay no less than 8s. 10d. per week

per man to cover insurance premiums, and the mining companies are paying in insurance over £20 per man per annum. They have to pay the £7 7s. per cent. fixed by the Government as covering the insurance premium for both accident and the Third Schedule. And in addition they are contributing to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund 39s., which brings up their annual charge per man for insurance to over £20 per annum. The Gwalia mine will have to pay a total of £4,000 per annum. That mine has not yet been brought under the operations of the Workers' Compensation Act, but when it is, it will be paying in insurance £4,000 per annum. So this is a very heavy burden on the mines, especially those on a narrow margin between success and failure. When making provision for the insurance of the men, we ought not to discount that effort by jeopardising their employment. By the peculiar wording of the Workers' Compensation Act and of the Miners' Phthisis Act, those men will be in a very unfortunate position if the mine closes down. The Mine Workers' Relief Fund, which was instituted in 1912, carries the accumulated load from the industry prior to the proclamation of the Workers' Compensation Act and the Miners' Phthisis Act. The objects of the Mine Workers' Relief Fund as set out in the memorial of the fund comprise the following:—

To grant benefits or assistance to contributing workers who may be incapacitated or whose earning power may be materially prejudiced by any disease or malady which may be legitimately attributed to the nature of their employment in the mining industry in Western Australia, and the wives, widows, children and any other person or persons who may, in the opinion of the board of control, be dependent on such contributing workers.

That fund has been contributed to by the men, by the companies and by the Government in equal shares. Unfortunately the drain on the fund has so steadily increased and the number of contributors has so steadily decreased, that the Government's share in supporting the fund has had to be increased from year to year. Only the other day Mr. Dodd asked a question in which he pointed out the amounts contributed by the three parties. As I say, the fund has to carry the accumulated load of the industry up to the time the Workers' Compensation Act and the Miners' Phthisis Act were proclaimed. This has still to be carried on. The position for the future, as I have said, is much improved by the Government's proposals, and it has been

suggested that the mines should get the full load in future. But we have to remember that while they are asked to take that future load, they are still carrying under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund the accumulated load which has steadily increased until quite recently. Contributions to its fund also have been raised from its inception. One unfortunate aspect is that when in 1921 it was pointed out that it would be necessary to raise the contributions to the fund, the men on the Murchison withdrew. The result was that the burden fell all the heavier upon the men of the Eastern Goldfields district who still contribute to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. This scheme has now 368 beneficiaries, among them being 230 widows, and there are 389 children, so that is a responsibility which cannot lightly be set aside. The Minister appealed to the men working in the industry to continue to shoulder their responsibility in this respect. I am glad to say that the men readily consented to do so. I ask members to consider the effect on the Mine Workers' Relief Fund of the closing down of the Horseshoe mine. That mine employed 450 men who, having lost their employment, will not be able any longer to contribute to the fund. Thus an increasing burden will be laid upon the community, as well as on the men who still continue their payments. The position undoubtedly calls for revision. The whole question is so involved owing to the various methods that have been devised in the attempt to meet the needs of the men that the time is ripe, as Mr. Dodd suggested, for consolidating the whole position. This Bill simply provides insurance for the miners. It will not meet the disabilities under which they are labouring, nor will it remedy the many anomalies existing owing to the various methods adopted to deal with injured miners. The Government have three different avenues of expenditure through which they meet the claims that arise out of injuries to miners. First there is the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, more than one-third of which is being contributed by the Government annually; then there is the liability they have incurred under the Miners' Phthisis Act, and there is also the liability they are endeavouring to meet under the Workers' Compensation Act by the establishment of a State Insurance Office. The scale of relief paid under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund is 25s. per head for a married man and 25s. for a married

couple, with the addition of 5s. per head for each child under the age of 15. The scale of relief provided under the T.B. provisions of the Miners' Phthisis Act is half wages with £1 for a man with a wife and 8s. 6d. for each child. Mr. Harris yesterday pointed out the anomaly that exists there. Men who have been working in the mines for 20 years and have been taken out under the provisions of the Mine Workers' Relief Fund would receive the former scale, perhaps less but certainly not more. On the other hand, if a man started in the industry only 12 months ago, and was found in September to be suffering from tuberculosis, he would be able to claim the higher scale. The other man, who had worked in the industry so much longer, would thus have the mortification of seeing the man with 12 months' service in a mine receiving a higher rate of compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act, though he had contributed much less to the voluntary scheme. A man who contracted tuberculosis and was not a contributor to the fund but was temporarily out of the industry before the proclamation of the Act, would not be able to claim the benefits of either; he would be left outside entirely. There are men in that position. Section 7 of the Workers' Compensation Act states that where a worker is suffering from any of the diseases mentioned in the first column of the First Schedule to the Act, and is thereby disabled from earning full wages at the work at which he was employed, he shall be entitled to compensation. I should like to direct the attention of members to the position of the men who were working on the Horseshoe mine. Before the Workers' Compensation Act was proclaimed, the Horseshoe mine closed down. The proclamation came into force on the 15th June and the mine closed down on the 14th June. Some of the men employed on the mine had received a notification from the laboratory, and those found to be suffering from advanced stages of the disease were able to claim payment. Other men thrown out of employment at the same time might become worse during the next 12 months, but they will not be able to claim payment under the provisions of the Act, because they would not have been working in a mine during the 12 months. Such men would find it difficult to obtain employment on other mines because the companies, in self-defence, will insist upon a man showing a

clean certificate of health before they will allow him to start work. His certificate would show that he was slightly affected and so, through no fault of the Government, he would be unable to make a claim for compensation if his health broke down during the next 12 months. Now consider the position of a man who takes the advice of the Government and leaves the mine in the interests of his health. Casual work is found for him. After 12 months he will be unable to make a claim and should he in 18 months break down through dust on the lungs, he will be outside the scope of the Act, and unable to claim compensation.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The 450 men were included in the calculation of the £500,000.

Hon. H. SEDDON: That is so. I am raising these aspects because I think they should be brought before members so that they may realise the position existing in the industry. They are certainly matters that require attention and remedy. I wish members would put themselves in the position of a man who has received a certificate from the department stating that he is slightly affected by dust. He is in a job that he knows he is able to carry out, and the affection does not interfere with his capacity to do that particular work. If he leaves the job, in all probability he will be unable to get another in the mining industry, because of his inability to show a clean bill of health. If he leaves, he cannot claim payment after 12 months has elapsed should he then suffer a breakdown. If he accepts the Government's offer to take casual labour—the Government are confronted with a serious problem to find employment for these men—he breaks up his home and undertakes work that possibly he is not adapted for. To give an illustration. A man might be working on a mine as a solution hand, handling the filter presses; that is comparatively light work. Such a man might well hesitate before transferring himself from the job that he knows to another job that he may not be capable of carrying out. Consequently we cannot wonder that many of the men have definitely and deliberately determined that they will remain in their jobs on the mines. Although they are thereby imperilling their health, they elect to remain in order to be able to claim for their dependants the compensation provided under the Act. That is a state of affairs which demands attention, for, after all, we

are here to endeavour to make the conditions for the men better and not worse. The Minister pointed out that on the introduction of compulsory insurance and examination in New Zealand, a good many men refused to leave the mines, because they felt that adequate provision was not being made for them. We cannot accuse the Collier Government of neglect in that respect. They have done their best to provide for the men taken out of the mines. Still, the men who have been advised to leave the mines feel that they are being asked to take a serious risk, and prefer to carry on their present work. Many of such men are advanced in years, and there is that aspect to consider as well as the fact that casual work might mean inability to obtain adequate attention or the comforts they need. These are questions with which the present Bill does not deal. The Bill simply provides for the insurance of the men in the mines. Surely I have given sufficient evidence to prove that a far more important and pressing question is that of revising the whole of the conditions of the mining industry. Under existing conditions the Government are contributing through three channels, namely, through the payment of insurance premiums, their contributions to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, and the provisions of the Miners' Phthisis Act. Some of the men also are contributing to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, while other men have withdrawn from it. The companies contribute to the insurance and to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. Thus we have a state of affairs that can be remedied only by the introduction of a consolidating measure, such as was suggested by Mr. Nicholson, to revise the Miners' Phthisis Act. I should again like to refer to the excellent report placed before the House in 1922 by Mr. Cornell, who explained the experience gained in South Africa. We should be able to introduce into our mines conditions that will make them very much healthier than they are at present, if not as healthy as are the conditions in other occupations. Mr. Cornell pointed out that the scheme of compensation operating in South Africa was such that if a man was slightly affected he received a certain amount of compensation, and he had an opportunity to look around for some other avenue of employment that might suit him better than any-

thing the Government could offer. I intend to support the Bill, because I feel it is necessary to safeguard the interests of the miners and there has been no indication by the insurance companies that they are prepared to quote for this business. As a mining representative, I have no alternative to supporting the Bill, but I have instanced many of the anomalies now existing and have shown the very unsatisfactory position prevailing in the industry. I feel that the Government should bring down a measure to consolidate all the activities in which they are engaged and place the whole matter on a more satisfactory basis. I trust that an opportunity will be given to investigate the questions I have brought up and that a report will be prepared setting out clearly and distinctly the comparative value of the various matters I have brought under notice. I support the second reading.

HON. W. T. GLASHEEN (South-East [5.58]): I candidly admit that I do not know a great deal about the subject, and that little purpose would be served by traversing the many details upon which other members have touched. I intend to confine my remarks to a few generalities. When speaking on the Address-in-reply I mentioned what a great pity it was that we did not realise in the days when the mines were fabulously wealthy and the men were making big money on contract, that this day of reckoning would come. It is peculiar, too, that while the miners were making that big money they contracted these diseases for which we are now legislating. They made big money by rushing back too quickly into the filth and smoke in order to earn a little more, and thus they laid the foundations of their troubles of to-day.

Hon. J. Cornell: With a few exceptions all the miners of your day are dead.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I know that some of them are not dead.

Hon. E. H. Harris: A few of them who went on the land are living.

Hon. J. Cornell: Those men saved their lives by going on the land.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I believe if we were to obtain an accurate summary of the cost of winning gold in Western Australia from our once fabulously wealthy mines, it would be found that every ounce cost more to win than it was worth. Even in 1901 and 1902 when the industry was at its peak I stood in Kalgoorlie, and counted 80

poppet heads within sight that were not working. Practically every one of these averaged a cost of about £20,000, including material and labour. Although sometimes complaints are made about the great profits that went to London and elsewhere, part of which should have been used to create a fund such as we are now discussing, it must not be forgotten that there was a huge investment of capital that returned nothing to the people to whom it had belonged. I hardly think that at any stage of its history, if we take the value of the gold won and the cost of getting it, the industry generally would have been able to stand the burden that it is now sought to impose upon it. We are in a dilemma as to which side of the argument to believe. The Minister told us that he put up a definite proposal to the companies, providing them with certain data. He has told us that over and over again, but just as regularly the companies have told us he did nothing of the kind. Prior to the election campaign the Premier said that if a Labour Government were returned to power they would immediately put a State insurance office into operation. The same gentleman, when dealing with the Bill in another place, said that the Government had no intention whatever of entering upon State insurance, but through the set of conditions which the Minister for Works said had been forced upon them, they had no alternative. The Minister deliberately set out to effect a given purpose. He deliberately framed a certain proposal and put it before the companies, knowing that it would be most unwelcome to them and would be turned down. Once the companies had turned down the proposal, their action immediately allowed the Minister for Works to get on with his job. He said the miners had been left without any protection whatever. We know that the Miners' Phthisis Act was only proclaimed in June, and that the negotiations which followed lasted for another month. From the end of June to the opening of Parliament there were only a few weeks. I will leave members to imagine whether this short interval constituted a period of urgency or of great crisis. I am of opinion that it did not constitute a period of crisis. Something was said about a trap being set. That is my conception of what led up to the present position. If there was no other aspect of the matter than that of the illegality of the act of the Minister I think we in this

House should raise a voice in protest against the Bill. For a Minister of the Crown to set the law at naught is an example to other people also to break the law on some convenient occasion. It is a bad precedent to establish, to say the least of it.

Hon. E. H. Harris: He said he would establish a State bank, but has not done so yet.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: There seems to be divergency of opinion as to what constitutes a State enterprise and what constitutes a public utility. I do not feel I can vote for the Bill; I would wish to do so but for certain conditions. Nevertheless I cannot subscribe to the view expressed by Sir William Lathlain when he said he was totally opposed to State enterprises. I listened with pleasure to his eloquent address when he was expressing approval of the State Savings Bank. I contend that is a State enterprise, just as the Railways are a State enterprise.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: It is a utility.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I should be pleased to know the difference between a public utility and a public trading concern. Money is put into the State Savings Bank so that the State may use it at a profit. Sir William Lathlain urged that we should spend thousands of pounds upon the savings bank, just as is done with the savings banks in Victoria. He wanted people who entered the institution to feel that they owned it and could be proud of their possession.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You have a good memory.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: He will have the same feelings when he walks into the State Insurance Office, when it is established.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: I am never likely to enter one.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: Sir William Lathlain said if he had his way he would sell the State Hotels, the State Implement Works, the State Sawmills, and everything, and build railways, which are State enterprises also.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Railways are a public utility.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: We will boil the matter down in this way. When the State embarks upon the construction of railways for public needs, they have to face the capital cost, on the one hand, and

the administrative costs on the other. Between the two it is expected that the undertaking will show a profit. That is precisely what is required in the case of a private business. I regard all these State activities, therefore, as State enterprises, and am opposed to any extension of that principle.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Are hotels State enterprises?

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I should say they all are. I agree with Mr. Dodd's view when he said there was a responsibility towards people outside the State which should not be lost sight of. If we marshal all the facts and study the sequence that has followed in the train of Protection—a Federal matter over which we have no control—we must arrive at the conclusion that our mines are not able to bear this responsibility, because of the effect of the Federal tariff. There is not only the question of the needs of the mines in the way of machinery, steel and fracture, but the cost of freight, the cost of labour, the cost of construction and the cost of everything appertaining to the working of a mine to be taken into consideration. I should say that the present fiscal policy represents at least 40 per cent. of the cost of conducting a mine. If that 40 per cent. had not been imposed, there would not be any need for State aid for afflicted miners, for the mines themselves would be in a position to carry the responsibility. This is a burden that has been inflicted upon the mines by the Federal Government, over which we have practically no control. I agree with Mr. Dodd that some obligation is cast upon the Commonwealth people to meet us in some way in this matter. I should like to read from a little book dealing with certain facts and figures that have been compiled by the insurance companies. This booklet says—

Queensland and New Zealand each have a State insurance office competing for all classes of business. Yet only one-seventh of the people of the former, and only one-twelfth of the people of the latter choose to do their business with the State office. In other words, 86 per cent. of those who insure in Queensland, and 92 per cent. of those in New Zealand, prefer to do their business with private insurance companies. Fire and accident insurance costs the people of New Zealand £2 1s. 11.7d. per head. Western Australians pay £1 18s. 1.7d. Queensland's cost for workers' compensation is 10s. 1d. per head of population; Western Australia's only 8s. 7½d. Queensland has had a State office for eight years.

Dr. Saw said something about the insurance companies being a close preserve. They got round a corner, he inferred, and regulated their rates and premiums. Sir Edward Wittenoom said he did not altogether disagree with that being done. He thought it was necessary to do it, and particularly emphasised that the working people themselves did it when they said what wages they were to get, and we proceeded immediately to give them those wages. There is a great difference between the two statements. Whilst I am of opinion that the Labour people are entitled to get wages to as high a standard as is possible, provided they work, and while wages are regulated on the basis of the cost of living, they are not themselves permitted to lay down the wage they shall receive. They have to put their case before the Arbitration Court, and the other side puts up its case against theirs. The president then marshals the facts, the court delivers judgment, and the wage earners have to abide by the decision.

Hon. J. Cornell: Sir Edward Wittenoom conveniently forgot that.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I am glad I did not forget it. Dr. Saw also said that State insurance was very desirable, because it was impossible to get any variation in the quotations that are obtained from any insurance company. We know that is so. Mr. Stewart referred to the State Sawmills. I buy timber from them occasionally. Prior to doing so I obtained quotations from the other timber companies that are supposed to constitute a combine, and to be fleecing the public. When I had received quotations from seven or eight private companies I found they absolutely agreed to the farthing with the quotations from the State Sawmills.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Prices might have been higher but for the State Sawmills.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: They could not possibly be any higher. There is a limit to the buying capacity of the public.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Do you suggest that the State Sawmills joined the great band of robbers?

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: Yes. I mention this case to show that there is nothing to indicate that if we establish a State insurance office an honourable understanding will not be arrived at with the private companies, with a consequent increase in the premiums. I do not profess to know much about the immediate difficulty that confronts

us. Seeing that there is such a division of opinion, and that every member who has spoken recognises our obligations towards the afflicted miners, that we are all agreed upon this being both a moral and a legal obligation and upon giving redress in these cases, it would be wise for us to hasten slowly. A commission should be appointed to inquire into all the facts and figures, the contradictory statements that have been made, and every phase of the situation. It would not need to take very long for this inquiry to be made. When the report was presented, the insurance companies, the Government, and the miners would know exactly what the position was, and we in turn would be better able to frame legislation to meet the case than we can do at present. I do not look upon this as a matter of extreme urgency. As Mr. Stewart pointed out, if there are miners who fall by the way, it will be possible to give retrospective consideration to their dependants. That being so, I see no need for violent hurry in passing this Bill.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I have not much more to add. With regard to Dr. Saw's fear as to the effect of such a close preserve, combine or monopoly as is suggested, I would point out that in the pamphlet issued by the insurance companies, they state that over a long term of years their profits from the insurance business has amounted to only seven per cent. They state they are prepared to prove that assertion, and I presume they would not include in such a pamphlet a statement they could not substantiate.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: But their profit includes what they have made from their investments!

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: That is so, but it purports to show what profits have been made. If that is all the return the companies can show, even allowing for a proportion of the profits coming from investments, it goes to prove that the companies have been conducting the business as cheaply as possible.

Hon. J. Cornell: You must remember that 60 companies have been doing the business.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I did not know there were quite so many companies as that. If what the companies say is cor-

rect, and seven per cent. represents the total profits on their business, we can hardly complain. Prior to the tea adjournment, I referred to some statements made by Sir William Lathlain and I was going to leave it at that. During the adjournment, however, something occurred and I am sure he will pardon me if I refer still further to his remarks. Sir William Lathlain is a very keen and competent business man and I have rarely heard such logical reasoning against any proposal as that advanced by him in his references to the State Implement Works and the Geelong Woollen Mills. He told us he had evidence to show that the Geelong Woollen Mills, a State enterprise, had bought the most out-of-date plant it was possible to buy in order to start that concern. He said that the State Implement Works had done much the same thing. I have a point of difference with Sir William Lathlain. In speaking in this vein I do not wish it to be concluded that I am in favour of State enterprise. When opposition is expressed to the State undertaking such activities, I trust more logical reasoning will be advanced than some I have mentioned. If the most obsolete plant that could possibly be purchased was procured for the State Implement Works and for the Geelong Woollen Mills—

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: I referred to the State Brickworks.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: You mentioned the woollen mills.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Not in that respect.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: Then I apologise. I would not take those references as an argument against State enterprise, but rather against the administration.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: And as evidence of lack of business acumen.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: Yes. There are two things we must consider respecting any legislation that is brought forward. They are cause and effect. Most of us can see the cause for any legislation that is placed before us, but I say without hesitation that very few of us can ever trace the effect. In their pamphlet the insurance companies have submitted some information calculated to have the effect of throwing some light upon the future darkness enshrouding this legislation. It gives some idea as to what the effect may be. If this is what we may expect, we should certainly

hesitate. The first paragraph referred to reads as follows:—

Queensland, with one-ninth of the number of gold miners employed in Western Australia, has lost nearly £100,000 in eight years, by covering this risk. Employers in other industrial fields have paid higher premiums to make good the deficiency.

Then the pamphlet contains this second statement:—

Benefits to gold miners under the Western Australian Workers' Compensation Act are double those under the Queensland Act. We have nine times the number of miners. Hence our losses would be at least 18 times as great.

That indicates something of the possible effect of this legislation and the responsibilities the State may have to shoulder.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Those statements are an argument against the Workers' Compensation Act; not an argument against covering the risk.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I think the hon. member is wrong. At any rate there are the statements of the insurance companies. I have listened to the debate carefully and sincerely, and I am convinced, with all due respect to the mentality, judgment and analytical powers of those who have spoken, that not one of those hon. members can trace the possible effect of this legislation. I will conclude by saying that in view of the great uncertainty regarding the effect of the legislation, I will request hon. members to seriously consider the advisability of a further inquiry being made. I would be sorry to think we would be asked to rush the legislation through, and would be still more sorry to have to vote against the second reading of the Bill. As the Minister for Labour has informed the country that there is a crisis regarding this question, we should make haste slowly. I think a Royal Commission should be appointed to peer into the future. That Commission should comprise representatives of the Chamber of Mines, of the miners who will be affected, of the insurance companies, and of the Government. I appreciate the fact that the Royal Commission could not conclude their inquiries before the end of the session. The Minister for Labour has referred to a national crisis and if there is anything in his statement, Parliament could be called together to deal with the matter immediately the report of the Royal Commission was received. We could then take whatever course was considered necessary. With the knowledge we would then be in

possession of, we could legislate along sound and logical lines.

On motion by Hon. V. Hamersley debate adjourned.

BILL—WIRE AND WIRE NETTING

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—SPECIAL LEASE (ESPERANCE PINE PLANTATION).

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [7.42] in moving the second reading said: Some time ago a Mr. Martin E. Maddern, representing a number of prominent Western Australian business men, approached the Government for an area of 45,000 acres of land in the vicinity of the Esperance railway for the purpose of the afforestation of soft woods. After giving the matter consideration, the Government decided to enter into an agreement with the applicant, provided Parliament approved of the scheme. The area applied for is as described in the schedule of the Bill and surrounds the Gibson town-site. If the Bill is passed, we are assured that a company will be formed on similar lines to companies in New Zealand and South Australia with a similar objective. Considerable importations of soft woods, dressed and undressed, take place annually to Western Australia. The value of these woods for 1924-25 was £162,000. Apart from the timber, the by-products, such as turpentine and resin, are of great value, the imports for the Commonwealth for the year 1923-24 representing £336,159. The Bill provides for the planting of 500 acres for the first year and 1,000 acres per annum thereafter, and Crown grants will issue for areas of 1,500 acres as 1,000 acres are planted and established to the satisfaction of the Minister for Lands, at the expiration of one year from the time that planting is completed. It is estimated that the timber reaches maturity in about 30 years, and the object is to have areas of 1,000 acres coming into maturity and ready for the market annually thereafter. It is considered that one-third of the area will be necessary for roads and fire-breaks, and to allow for rocky rises and salt lakes, or flats that

are unsuitable for cultivation. The price of the land will be fixed by the Surveyor General under the usual system, and survey fees must be paid by the lessees. The Land Act does not give the power to lease such a large area to any one person or company, and therefore a Bill is necessary. The land is described by the Surveyor General as unsuitable for wheat production, although he considers it would probably grow oats, barley and rye to some extent. The classification of the land is, generally speaking, sandy soil over ironstone and gravel, with a little paper bark, blackboy, wattle and mallee scrub, and has not therefore been regarded as suitable for subdivision. There are large areas of similar country on our hands. It hangs fire, and is not sought after for ordinary farming. The proposed lessee considers the soil and climate suitable for pine-growing, and if this is so, the scheme would provide a valuable industry in the future. The pines must be maintained during the whole period of growing, which means the constant employment of labour and circulation of money in the State. It is estimated the cost of planting and maintenance during the whole period will be £16 an acre. When the timber is placed on the market our railways and ports will materially benefit without any increase in existing facilities. It is estimated that after the first crop matures, the yield will be at the rate of 200,000 tons per annum, which should be worth up to £250,000. The planting and establishment of the timber will take the place of the improvements as fixed by the Land Act. There are ample powers for regaining possession in the event of failure to comply with conditions; and the Bill provides for a deposit of £500, which may be forfeited to the Crown at the end of two years if necessary. The Government before agreeing to the proposal, called for a joint report from the Surveyor General, the Conservator of Forests, and the Under Secretary for Lands. This report will be found published in extenso on page 1565 of "Hansard."

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [7.50]: In connection with the introduction of this Bill you, Sir, Mr. Dodd and myself representing the province in which it is proposed that the pine plantation shall be established, will advocate the suitability of that part of the State for the growth of pines. On more than one occasion we have advocated the

suitability of that district for the use to which it is intended now to put it, and not only the locality described in the Bill, but also to the westward. As pointed out by the Minister the area of the lease will be roughly 40,000 acres, and the locality is more particularly adapted for the purpose sought than for anything else. The Minister has briefly touched upon the particulars, and a perusal of the schedule will supply all the information that members may require. The centre of the proposed lease is roughly about 15 miles from the port of Esperance; therefore it will be seen that it is close to the seaboard, and as the project develops it will have right at its back door, so to speak, one of the finest harbours in the Southern Hemisphere. The project will radiate from there, not only throughout the State, but the harbour facilities will be such that it will be possible to cope with the trade that may be expected to arise from the demand for the timber from other parts of Australia. As I have said, you, Sir, and Mr. Dodd and I, welcome this Bill because it demonstrates that private enterprise has visualised, as you and I have visualised, the possibility of opening up this area of country and pioneering the growth of pines in Western Australia. We cannot say that the granting of the concession means anything in the form of the exploitation of our virgin lands or that it is for the purpose of gain, because, before the people concerned can possibly hope to get any reward from their venture they have to spend a considerable amount of money, and they will be obliged to wait many years for a return. I welcome the advent of private enterprise in this direction, and I hope it will be the forerunner of other private concerns in the development of what we may consider to be our waste lands. Time, I hope, will prove that what we now regard as waste lands close to our seaboard will prove to be a valuable asset to the State. It may appear hardly necessary to go into details as to the suitability of the land, for the purpose for which the company require it, but I think that when private enterprise is prepared to provide capital to put into a concern where many years will have to pass before a return can be obtained, we, as members of Parliament should endeavour to the best of our ability to back up such an enterprise by disclosing the facts that we have at our disposal and in that manner help along the project and induce people

to perhaps take a different view regarding the investment of their capital. By doing this, we shall not be boosting private enterprise; we shall be merely endeavouring to put a good proposition fairly and squarely before likely investors and so advancing the interests of the State. The gentleman who has negotiated for this concern is well and favourably known to Sir William Lathlain and many others in Perth. He has not gone into the project with his eyes shut. He has made a comprehensive examination of different parts of the State as to their suitability for the growth of pines, and he has pegged out, so to speak, an area in this particular locality for many reasons. The chief reason is the adaptability of the soil and the moisture to be found at a low depth. That part of the State has three factors in its favour, factors that are essential for the growth of pines, the rainfall throughout the area, the equable temperature and the soil conditions. I may enlighten members as to the possibilities of the Esperance district by stating that at this particular locality and even some distance further inland and to the westward, there occurs what rarely happens in any other part of the State, at least south of Geraldton, and that is a summer rainfall. It may not be amiss to repeat some information that has been supplied to me, as well as other information that I have obtained for myself, information that may push this project along. Let me first ask whether there is a market for soft woods. In 1920-21 the value of soft woods imported into the Commonwealth was £4,733,436; in 1923-24 the value had increased to £5,394,449. In 1923 the total value of timber imports exceeded the total value of timber exports by £4,473,919. Western Australia imports each working day soft woods to a value of over £500. Such figures clearly postulate that there is a gigantic market in this State of ours and in the Commonwealth generally for soft woods, and especially for pine. Another phase which is interesting to touch upon is the sources of supply outside Australasia, and whether or not the present position will improve or will deteriorate. It is well known that both Europe and America are cutting their soft wood forests at a much more rapid rate than that of the annual growth. The original forest area of the United States was 822,000,000 acres. Only 30,000,000 acres remain, and that is

disappearing at the rate of 5,000,000 acres annually. The rate of cutting is four times greater than the new growth. Canada and European countries have similar stories to tell, with merely a variation of the ratio. Throughout the great softwood centres of the world the annual take-off far exceeds the annual growth or reforestation. It is bordering on suicide if we in this country do not take into consideration the wonderful opportunity for the exploitation of many of our waste lands by the growth of soft woods.

Hon. G. W. Miles: We want fifty or a hundred schemes like this.

Hon. J. CORNELL: As regards virgin pine, the only supply left is in Queensland; and it is confidently estimated that if the present rate of cutting continues virgin pine will soon cease to be a product of that State. Thus Australia has almost reached the end of her resources of virgin pine. Here is an extract on the subject from the "Australasian"—

European and American timber trees make better growth in Australian soil under Australian climatic conditions than in their native habitat. Australian trees do not grow more vigorously abroad.

From the same source I quote the potential value of pine planting as demonstrated in South Australia—

The South Australian Government sold recently certain stands of afforested pine timber, to be felled and removed by the buyer. One measured area of 19½ acres returned £6,638 16s. The South Australian Government are also dealing with an inquiry for the supply of 9,000,000 super. feet annually for 15 years from one plantation.

Many years ago South Australia embarked on the growth of pine. To-day we see the benefit South Australia has reaped and will continue to reap. The gentleman responsible for the promulgation of the Bill has also handed me an extract which, though lengthy to quote, may serve a useful purpose—

As regards the south-east of Western Australia, the area described in the Bill is in every way ideal for the growth of pine timber. An investigation of 100 square miles was made, and 20 holes were sunk through the subsoil, confirming this conclusion.

The conclusion referred to is that the country is ideal for the growth of pine—

The Conservator of Forests, Mr. S. L. Kessell, after having had a close examination of this area made by a forestry officer, has reported as follows:—"Both as regards climate

and soil the area to which you refer may be regarded as suitable for the growth of *Pinus Pinaster*. This opinion is supported by evidence of *Pinus Pinaster* planted by private individuals in the vicinity some 10 or 12 years ago, which are now developing very satisfactorily."

In successful pine growing the principal factors are:—(1) climate, (2) situation, (3) soil conditions. In the area explored, and of which a special reservation is being made, the necessary conditions are detailed, and for purposes of comparison meteorological data of other centres are also given.

—	Mean Max.	Mean Min.	Mean Temp.	No. Wet Days.
Perth	74.6	55.1	64.9	118
Esperance	69.0	52.4	60.7	128
Rotorua (in New Zealand, Pumice Country)	65.0	44.6	54.8 °C	141

REMARKS.—The winter temperature is 4 degrees better than Rotorua, N.Z. The difference in number of wet days per year is less than 10 per cent.

The undulating country east and west of Gibson's Soak has an average altitude of 500 feet. The soil is moist throughout the year and water of uniformly good quality occurs at an average depth of 6 to 12 feet. Rainfall is constant throughout the year, the 1925 figures for the 12 months being (total 33.52 inches):—

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May.	June.	July.
196	250	143	329	582	350	499
Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1928.	
180	363	350	58	72	Over 31 in. to date.	

For the 6 summer months (October-March) Esperance receives 25 per cent. and Gibson's Soak 30 per cent. of the total rain for the year. The Perth summer rainfall is only 13 per cent. of the annual total.

From these rainfall figures it will be seen that the lowest rainfall in the locality for any one month was 58 points.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Do those figures represent an average, or are they for one year?

Hon. J. CORNELL: They are for 1925, but the records prove that the fall is sustained. It may be said that the figures represent a fair average. For the six summer months, October to March, Esperance receives 25 per cent. of its fall, and Gibson's soak, 16 miles inland, receives 30 per cent. Thus there is 5 per cent. more rainfall 16 miles inland than at the port during the six months of summer. Here is another illustration showing the growth which has been accomplished in the district referred

to. A species of eucalyptus known as *Eucalyptus globulus* planted in June of 1915 has during the 11 intervening years made the remarkable growth of 22 inches in diameter. When you, Mr. President, and I recently visited the Esperance district, we were brought into contact with a resident, a Mr. Baker, who for many years has made a hobby of experimenting with the growth of various timbers. It is not generally known, but it is known to the Conservator of Forests, that the most remarkable growth obtained by Mr. Baker is in tuart. Mr. Kessell says that the growth of tuart there astounds him. About 15 varieties have been tried. Tuart, a most valuable timber, is in its native habitat of extremely slow growth; but in this locality its growth has been phenomenal. Another point to which I desire to draw attention is that at present there are four concerns of New Zealand or Eastern States origin canvassing residents of this State for the investment of money in Eastern and New Zealand pine-planting projects. That canvassing has proceeded for some time. I know a number of people in the metropolitan area who have been induced to invest in pine-planting concerns outside of Western Australia. This new project will give Western Australians an opportunity to invest in their own country, and I trust they will all give the project the push along that it deserves. I will support the second reading.

HON. SIR WILLIAM LATHLAIN (Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.16]: I also will support the Bill, but I do so from a motive different from that put forward by Mr. Cornell. I believe that in Western Australia within a very short time we shall make such progress in our dairying industry that the whole of this timber and more will be required for the making of butter boxes. In addition to that, although we may hold a very high opinion of our jarrah, it is not the most suitable timber for the packing of dried fruits and other fruits in order to give them that marketable appearance which is presented by other countries when placing such commodities on the markets of the world. So this pine planting should be encouraged. During the war period I had a striking illustration of the value of these pines. In the early days of Victoria around some of the large residences, pines had been planted as breakwinds. During the war period probably they reached an age of from 40

to 50 years. It was during the war that these soft timbers for the manufacture of butter boxes became so scarce, and the price advanced so rapidly that nearly the whole of those trees I had known so well were cut down because of their value. The packing of butter in Victoria uses up enormous quantities of this timber, for butter, to be exported must be placed in a pine box. So, apart altogether from the granting of this concession as an investment for private people, I will support the Bill because I think the industry will become of great value to the State. If, as we believe, our dried fruit industry and our dairying industry make rapid progress, we shall want all the pine we can get long before the trees to be planted on this concession come to maturity. I will support the second reading.

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

BILL—METROPOLITAN MARKET.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. SIR WILLIAM LATHLAIN (Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.20]: The Bill, like so many others we have had before us this session, is one that up to a certain point meets with the approval of the House. Probably there is no member who does not realise the necessity for markets, and the only difference of opinion we may have is as to who is to control those markets. I believe in decentralisation, and in the Government giving to the local authorities as much responsibility as can reasonably be placed upon their shoulders. For it must be remembered that those composing the local authorities have rendered great services to Western Australia and indeed to every country within the British Empire. One of the peculiarities of the British people as a colonising race is their first desire to get together. We see it exemplified in the group settlements to-day, where the first thing the settlers want is a hall wherein to meet and discuss their political views and hold their social gatherings. It is that particular factor in the life of a British community that has done so much towards making the British people pre-eminently the greatest colonisers the world has ever seen. In this respect local authorities have played a most important

part. There are to be found in every community men willing to accept without fee or reward their responsibilities and duties as citizens. In Perth there are many men who have given years of service in that direction. With a Bill like this to discuss, we are fortunate in having Mr. Macfarlane, who has given years of service to the subject matter of the Bill. Mr. Nicholson also, during his term as mayor of the city, gave it a great deal of consideration, and I myself have had six years of worry over the same subject. So there are in this Chamber at least three members who know something of the measure before us. The development of every country depends on its local authorities. We all realise the enormous work the Government have to do. They have quite sufficient on their hands, without accepting further responsibility in undertaking schemes such as the marketing scheme, that other people can carry out just as well as can the Government. The establishment and control of markets is one of the oldest functions in the world. In ancient times in Britain the municipalities controlled the whole of the markets, both wholesale and retail. There is not in Australia a single capital city where the markets, such as are proposed to be erected in Perth, are not controlled by the municipality. It is only in Western Australia, where the great desire of the Government seems to be to control everything, that it is proposed to take from the local authority the right that from time immemorial they have possessed. When one considers the legislation we have had before us this session, and the manifest desire of the Government to control everything, one wonders whether the day will not come when someone, pointing to a man wearing a distinctive badge, will ask who the gentleman may be, and will be told, "Oh, he is one of those citizens who is not working for the Government nor receiving recompense from the Government." I give place to no one in my support of the proposition that the Perth City Council should construct and control the market. Mr. Macfarlane last night recounted in detail the difficulties we, as city councillors, had to contend with. In the first place, we were told by the late Mr. E. E. Light, Engineer for Existing Lines, that it would be impossible to have a loop-line on the north side of the railway. Then the Scaddan Government resumed an enormous area of valuable land whereon to

erect markets. That, of course, threw the City Council out of court, for it would have been useless for them to enter into competition with the Government in the control of markets. Many years went by before we could get any definite statement from the Government as to whether or not the Government were going on with the markets, and whether the City Council would be allowed to carry out that work. In those days we were told that a railway siding was essential to the scheme, whereas to-day we are told it does not matter whether there is a railway siding or not, since the products sent in from the country will be removed by motor truck to the storage places in the market. Everybody is desirous of seeing a marketing area confined to one space. One important disability under which the City Council has laboured has not been mentioned. It is that there were and still are in existence a number of private markets in Perth. So, unless the City Council were given complete control, it would be futile for them to undertake the erection of central markets. I have never seen any other Bill come before Parliament and receive so little consideration as did the Bill that was thrown out last year. It is true that there were in that Bill several controversial clauses. However, many Acts are passed containing provisions that may never be put into operation. In last year's Bill was a clause compelling a man to sell his goods in the market area. But for that clause a man could have erected his own stands opposite the market, and so secured all the advantages pertaining to the market without paying any fees or dues for the upkeep of the market. Further, when the City Council realised that they could not get a branch line to the north, they tried to get one to the south and it was a long time before they succeeded. When they were told they could get an entrance on the south side, they immediately considered the whole question again. The position was altered somewhat by the fact that the new gas-works were being erected and the council were able to resume portion of the gas-works site in Wellington-street, which is now otherwise occupied. The City Council already have £30,000 worth of land, which fact I quote to show their intense desire that a metropolitan market should be created. Later on they opened the kerbstone market which has been a tremendous success. It gives a big opportunity to the producer to

sell his goods quickly, while the buyer is also well served, and this provision has been made at a minimum cost. There are other features of the Bill that have been moderated considerably. The first proposal was that the whole of the hay and chaff should be sold within the market area. Sir James Mitchell insisted upon that when the proposal was previously before the House. That has since been deleted. If the City Council are given the power to control the market, as I hope they will be, they are prepared to accept the provisions of the measure with only one amendment, namely that they be given the power to borrow the money without referring the question to the ratepayers. The money would be borrowed for a specific purpose, and the loan would be made redeemable in 25 or 30 years. It is only fair that the market should bear the interest and sinking fund charges during that period. The City Council have no particular site in view at present. They are prepared to relinquish what land they have and resume a site which, in the opinion of experts, may be more suitable. There are quite a number of men in the City Council who have expert knowledge of marketing work and have given much time to considering the question. There are other important phases that favour control by the City Council. Under the Bill the Government ask that the market shall be exempt from municipal rates. That is the most outrageous proposal I have ever heard. If a site is resumed for the market, are the people who live on the other side of the street to pay not only their own quota, but a proportion of the rates that the market should pay? It is a most unjust proposal. At present over 20 per cent. of the area under the City Council is exempt from rating. From Parliament House, the Observatory, the High School, the whole of the churches, the Government offices and charitable institutions such as hospitals, the council do not receive a penny of revenue, and yet they have to maintain, light and keep clean the whole of the streets, and carry out the necessary work about those buildings. In the vicinity of a general market there is a lot of traffic. Those who know the Victoria market in Melbourne are aware that owing to the heavy traffic, every yard of roadway around it has been set with stone cubes, a most expensive form of paving. If the Government are going to control the market, who will make and maintain the streets

around it? Along one side of Roe-street we have the railway property and on the other side the police court and from that street, where some of the heaviest traffic of Perth is concentrated, the City Council receive no revenue. Yet they have to maintain it. The same will apply to the streets around the market, wherever it is situated. I know the feeling amongst members of the City Council towards this project. No body of men could be more desirous of rendering faithful service not only to the producers, but also to the consumers and the rate-payers. All sorts of fears have been expressed as to what the council might or might not do. One thing they are prepared to do and that is to render their services, as they have always done, in an honorary capacity. There is no suggestion of the members of the trust acting in an honorary capacity. If the rumours one hears as to the amount of emoluments to be paid may be accepted, the market will be a much more expensive proposition under the trust than if controlled by members of the City Council.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Then it will make things all the dearer for the consumer as well as the producer.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: Of course it will. I can say with authority that all the City Council desire to get in the way of rentals from the market is sufficient to cover interest, sinking fund and rates. They have no desire to make one penny of profit. They realise that in establishing a market they will be rendering a service to the community they represent. I am sorry that Mr. Burvill is not present, because I should have had something to say to him. The whole question resolves itself down to this: Who is going to be the landlord and who will be the better landlord, the Perth City Council or the Government? We have to select one or the other.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is the only issue.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I shall support the proposal indicated by Mr. Nicholson that a select committee be appointed to consider the question. There are one or two other points I wish to emphasise. Mr. Cornell practically accused the City Council of being dilatory. I could say a good deal on that point, but I shall refrain from doing so; otherwise I might wax rather warm.

Hon. J. Cornell: I included the Government as well as the City Council.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: If I deal with cool stores, it might put us in a better humour. When the market proposal was first made, the idea was to have something of gigantic proportions. Cool stores on a large scale were part and parcel of the scheme. With the experience since gained, all that would be necessary would be limited cool storage accommodation. Mr. Burvill seems to think that everything the producer sent into the market would require cool storage space. I am assured by experts that Fremantle is the proper place to erect cool storage for commodities such as mutton, lamb, fruit and other lines for shipment.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Is there no other port in the State?

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I would have mentioned Albany had Mr. Burvill been present. I should not be keen on providing extensive cool storage accommodation at the market. When produce is brought into a market, no one desires that it should be put into cool storage, brought out for sale, put back again and then brought out again. To listen to some members, one would be apt to conclude that fruit was the only commodity that would be sold in the market. Every line of produce would be sold in the market—bacon, ham, eggs, poultry, cheese, rabbits, bullocks, sheep, fruit and vegetables and a hundred and one other things.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Would wheat and chaff be sold there?

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I suppose there would be retail stores, but wheat and chaff would be sold in the railway yard as at present. Another important factor is that every morning when markets are held, an enormous amount of scavenging has to be done, which is no light item in the upkeep of a market. Those who have been to the Victoria market in Melbourne realise the enormous amount of work involved. The desire of the City Council is to erect a market that will meet the requirements of the whole of the producers and consumers. The market building should not be on an elaborate scale, but should be erected with due regard to stability and at as reasonable a price as possible. No matter where the market is placed to-day, I believe that Perth will grow at such a rapid rate that within 15 or 20 years the market will have to be shifted, because the land occupied

by it will have become too valuable for it to be retained for that purpose. On the question of site I am sure the members of the City Council, considering the experience they have had, would be in a much better position to decide than anyone else would be. There is another important reason why the City Council should control the market. They are the health authorities for the city, and there is no more important work attaching to a market than that of exercising vigilance to ensure that food and perishable commodities are protected from flies, handled under cleanly conditions, and not permitted to come into contact with contaminating influences, so that the health of the community might be adequately protected. That is one of the most important functions connected with any markets. The City Council have their own health officers. They have shown in a very marked way their ability to control the health of the city in regard to all products admitted for sale. What they have done reflects the highest credit upon them.

The Honorary Minister: That is one of the chief reasons for giving them representation on the trust.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: What will one representative on the trust be able to do for them?

Hon. J. Cornell: He would not assist much in the administration of health matters.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: Mr. Burvill endeavoured to show how much the producer would benefit under trust control. We hope his words will be borne out. I believe the producer will benefit, because, instead of five or six private markets being conducted, all the buyers will be concentrated in one particular area. That will, however, not overcome the difficulties put forward by Mr. Burvill. There are many difficulties incidental to marketing which neither he nor anyone else can control. When I was in Melbourne recently I saw vegetables as good as any one could wish for being sold at 2d. each. What would Mr. Burvill do in glut times like that? The concentration of all the buyers and sellers in one particular area would be a step in the right direction. The buyer could see all the products that were available, and the seller would know what buyers there were for his products. Councillors are elected every three years.

They are not the nominees of any particular Government. They are elected by the representatives of the people, who will have to find the money for the erection of the markets. The financing of this undertaking will be no small item. I thought the Government were already sufficiently embarrassed. One Minister said he desired to build railways. Why not let the City Council build the markets, and save this amount of money for railway construction? Mr. Burvill read a number of letters from various organisations. I have already quoted from a communication sent by the Perth City Council strongly protesting, as they have every right to do, against trust control. I have received the following letter from the Subiaco Municipality—

Re Bill to establish public market in the metropolitan area, with regard to the above-mentioned Bill which is now before Parliament, I am directed to advise that my council is of opinion that the establishment of markets is a matter for the local governing bodies, and that the establishment of markets in the City of Perth should be the function of the City Council, and similarly with regard to Subiaco and any other local governing body. It is noted in Clause 2 of the Bill that the metropolitan area is taken to mean the municipal district of Perth, except Victoria Park. There is also a proviso that the Governor may by proclamation extend the boundaries of the metropolitan area to include other land within or beyond the boundaries of the said municipal district. My council strongly oppose this clause and feel that we have already been detrimentally affected by a similar clause in the Traffic Act whereby the metropolitan area in that Act was extended simply by proclamation to the detriment of those districts which comprised the metropolitan area under that Act in the first place.

It is very difficult to get men with the necessary calibre and ability to come forward and fill positions on these local governing bodies. These gentlemen devote an enormous amount of time to the consideration of the affairs of their district. If we are going to belittle the offices that they hold in this way by taking away from them responsible positions, local governing bodies will drift to a lower status than they now occupy. Instead of decreasing their status we should endeavour to raise it, in order to express our appreciation of the manner in which they carry out their duties, and the satisfactory and creditable way in which they watch the interests of their districts.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is proposed under the Road Districts Bill.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: In a very different way. For many years past the City Council has shown a marked desire to establish their own markets. If they are given the opportunity of controlling and governing this undertaking I am sure they will give satisfaction to the city, their tenants and the general public. I will now quote from a report written in the Manchester Municipal Journal showing the advantages of municipal control. The report says—

At the same time the system permits much economy and guarantees high standards in connection with the food supply. Each year the markets committee records a diminishing quantity of unwholesome food as having been offered for sale. Without comparative centralisation, the cost of inspection and the impediments that can be put in its way, are both alike considerable. On the other hand, higher standards of quality that are maintained in the public markets tend to raise the public demand for wholesome food over the whole field of trading operations. That shopkeepers in the most distant parts of Manchester are closely affected by the administration of the central markets is a fact greatly to the advantage of all consumers.

In all sincerity I trust members will give the City Council the chance to control the markets. The city councillors are responsible to the people who elect them, and not to any Minister or any particular Government. I do not say this in any antagonistic spirit towards the present Government. They are the nominees of the whole of the people, who will subscribe the money to put into this concern. This is the fairest and best way of managing an undertaking of this kind.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That would save the general taxpayers.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: Yes. Because of the many appliances possessed by the Perth City Council, the big way in which they are able to undertake not only the cleaning of the streets, but the making of roads and the provision of other facilities, they have a perfect right to control these markets. Beyond all things, they have an inherent right to the control of those things that are connected with local Government, and in no case have they greater right of control than in respect of these markets.

HON. W. T. GLASHEEN (South-East) [8.57]: Because this question has been brought forward earlier than I expected I have not prepared any remarks upon it. I

find myself at variance with Sir William Lathlain, when he says that the value of municipal control of markets is universally admitted. The best organised and biggest marketing enterprise in the world is that at Covent Garden, London. It has never been connected with municipal control and never will be, and yet it has given satisfaction at all times. I have received numerous communications from country people, whose produce will be sold at the markets, and who are most concerned about the Bill. These people are opposed to City Council control, and I, therefore, feel compelled to vote for the Bill as it stands. The measure emanated in the first place from the fruit growers' organisation. They have been much concerned about the question of municipal control. There is not much consistency between the Bill of 1924 and this one.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is a State trading concern administered by a trust.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: The previous Bill was couched in dictatorial terms, for its framers were opposed to the producers having any voice in the control of the markets. Lately the fruitgrowers, who were mainly responsible for the initiation of this legislation, circularised their members and I will read what was sent forth. A covering letter under the name of the Western Australian Fruitgrowers' Association was despatched as follows:—

I am enclosing herewith a copy of letter and report we have sent out to all the fruitgrowing associations in the State, which will explain our opinion on the Central Markets Bill, and I trust you will do your best for us when it comes before the House.

In the light of what has been said, we must at least be very careful when we deal with a measure introduced specially for the benefit of these people, and we should have regard for the views they may have upon it. The circular they sent out read as follows:—

It is well known that for many years the producers, principally fruit and vegetable growers, have been agitating for central markets to be erected in Perth, and have always claimed that the producers should have adequate representation. In 1924 a Bill was introduced by Mr. Mann on behalf of the City Council, which could not be accepted on account of some of the provisions claimed. At that time it was definitely stated, and it appeared in the Press, that the council would have nothing to do with any producers being on the control board—

They now say that they will allow us to have representatives on the board—

—It was also stated that the markets would have to be built in East Perth on a site acquired by the council, but an impossible position as far as the railway facilities were concerned. Since that time the Government have been requested on several occasions to introduce a Bill acceptable to all parties, and we were notified it was their intention to do so during the present session. At a large conference of fruitgrowers held on the 12th August, 1926, a sub-committee of 12 representatives were appointed to discuss the Bill as soon as it was presented to Parliament. This was done, and a deputation waited on Mr. Troy, Minister for Agriculture, to place before him some suggested alterations. These he agreed to with the exception of our request that the producers should have two representatives on the trust instead of one as provided in the Bill. This request could not be agreed to. We, however, decided to try and get the alteration made in the House, and asked several members to support the amendment. As you will have seen by the reports, our endeavours have been unsuccessful, but we still hope to get an amendment carried in the Upper House. The position is that we think the producers should have two representatives out of the five members of the trust—

Hon. J. Cornell: They want to cut out the consumer and the City of Perth.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: The circular continues—

—and if this is not agreed to, we are asking our members to move that the trust consist of three, one of whom shall be a producer, and we shall be glad if your association will support us in this.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: And they will ignore the rights of the local authorities.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: They are prepared to have two producers elected to the board, and the markets erected on the most suitable site. When it is stated that they ignore the local authorities, I would like to ask hon. members what was proposed in 1924, when the rights of the people most concerned were absolutely ignored.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: The people who have to buy are the most important.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: Pardon me, the people who have to sell are the most concerned.

Hon. J. Cornell: They would go to the wall if there were no people to buy.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I hope Sir William Lathlain in the conduct of his business gives effect to what he suggests. The circular continues—

It was, however, decided by the sub-committee referred to that we must not wreck the Bill on this point, and if we cannot get either of the amendments passed as suggested,

then we should allow the Bill to go through as it is. This, we are sure you will agree, is most important in view of the strenuous efforts being made by the City Council to get control of the markets. In spite of what was said in 1924, they now say they are agreeable to the present Bill if the word "council" is substituted for the word "trust." They are willing for two producers to be elected to the board and to have the markets erected in the most suitable site. We know that a great effort is to be made when the Bill is before the Upper House to have the control transferred to the City Council, but in spite of this we consider that we are pledged to support the Bill that has been introduced by the Government at our request, and also agreed to by the sub-committee of the 55 delegates representing 23 associations that met in Perth.

Hon. J. Cornell: They are not the only people interested.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: There are 100,000 ratepayers in Perth who are interested.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: But what of those who are primarily responsible for this legislation?

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: They are not.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What views were put before those associations?

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: The circular concludes with the following sentence:—

We trust that you will use every effort to bring about the passing of the Bill, if possible, with the amendments proposed, but if not, without them.

Sir William Lathlain suggested that the Government, instead of spending £150,000 or £200,000 upon the provision of these markets, would be better advised to build a railway with the money. I would be inclined to vote for the proposal regarding the City Council, if I could be assured that the Government would spend the £200,000 upon a railway.

Hon. J. Nicholson: At any rate, the money would be available.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: But that would not mean that it would be spent upon a railway. There is another aspect. The ratepayers of Perth, possibly, would view the position with more satisfaction if the City Council, instead of spending £200,000 as they desire to do upon the provision of these markets, were to spend the money in providing better roads.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: You will not find better roads in any other city in Australia!

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: What applies to the Government and railways, applies

equally to the City Council and roads. If there are no better roads than those to be found in and around Perth and in the State generally, then there must be some horribly bad roads. There are some rotten roads, such as that between Arnadale and Narrogin.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: That has nothing to do with the City of Perth.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I do not suggest that. The reference was that there were bad roads throughout Australia. Anyhow, I intend to oppose the City Council getting control of these markets, and I will support the Bill as it has been presented to us.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 2nd November.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [9.9]: The Bill is essentially one for consideration in Committee.

Hon. E. H. Harris: And it will be well trimmed up in Committee!

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is generally accepted that a debate upon the second reading of a Bill revolves around the principles dealt with. As the principle has been established for so long, in this instance there can be very little argument from that standpoint. All the argument that may be indulged in will relate to the introduction of innovations or the desirability of proposals affecting the principle. I wish to refer briefly to some new phases. The first is that of the change of the name of a road board to a district council and the alteration of the designation of chairman to the more distinguished title of president.

Hon. E. H. Harris: A rose by any name smells as sweet.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I heard that quotation uttered before Mr. Justice Burnside in the Arbitration Court by a prominent union representative. His Honour replied to the advocate by saying, "Mr. So and So, you have inferred that the immortal bard said there was nothing in a name. Speaking as a judge of the Supreme Court, I say that if you go outside and call a man by a certain name, you will find that there is a lot

in it." That, however, is by the way. It strikes me that the changes in these designations amount to the difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. I do not think that a road board will function any better because it will be known as a district council, nor do I think a chairman will carry out his duties better because he is called the president. That part of the Bill can be dismissed without much consideration. Another new phase has been introduced with some justification. As the law stands today, provided a person holds property, or occupies rateable land within the boundaries of an existing road board area, he is eligible, if elected, to sit on the board. The Bill provides that if his name does not appear on the list of registered voters, he shall not be eligible to sit on the board. I intend to support that amendment. If a man has not sufficient energy to make sure that he is enrolled, I do not think he should be permitted to rise to the dignity of a member of a road board. If he does not take sufficient interest in the matter to see that his name is on the roll, I do not think such a person will prove a desirable adjunct as a member of a road board. There is another important change proposed, however. At present a road board is what may be termed a continuous institution. That is to say, once a board is constituted, so long as it functions it does not go out of existence. It resembles this Chamber in that one-third of its members retire for election periodically. Thus there is a partial continuity of the existing personnel, and that I regard as a valuable asset. Road Boards and municipal councils perform functions that should be free from party bias or machinations and should stand for the public welfare and general good. The existing system has worked very well in the past, and I have heard no argument in favour of discontinuing it. No sufficient reason has been advanced to convince me that it is wise that all the members should go out together and should be returned together. We should ask ourselves this pertinent question: whether or not this House would be a useful institution if we were to throw overboard the existing arrangement by which a third of the members retire every two years, and institute a system by which all the members would retire together and would all come in together. I am convinced that all members of this House are in favour of the perpetuation of the system that pre-

vails to-day, and therefore they must also be in favour of the continuance of a similar arrangement in respect of road boards. There has been no mandate for a change. The present law provides that a ratepayer may be entitled to a minimum of one or a maximum of four votes. The proposal in the Bill is to abolish that and to provide for one vote only, irrespective of the amount for which a man may be rated. I claim that with a local governing body there are fundamental differences as between the qualifications of an elector for that body and the qualifications of an elector for the Legislature. All reform right through the ages has been in the direction of representation according to taxation. So far as the Legislature is concerned, let us take the Federal Parliament as a pattern, in respect of which universal franchise applies to both Houses. There are hundreds of ways in which the taxpayer of the Commonwealth is made to pay for the upkeep of the State and for the cost of administration. The taxes are levied in such a way that it would be almost impossible to impose a franchise on the basis of taxation. Consequently the vote for the Commonwealth Legislature is cut down to one only. There is this fundamental difference too between the Government and the local governing body. The State, as a State, is sovereign; it makes its own laws and can administer those laws. In the case of the local body, it functions under an instrument given to it by the Legislature, and its powers, duties, and emoluments are circumscribed by that instrument. The local body levies a rate for a specific purpose. If you are going to levy a rate under such an instrument and say that one man shall pay four times as much as another man, and that he shall not have an equivalent say in the expenditure of the funds of the local body, you are treading on dangerous ground. By introducing such an innovation you are liable to destroy an institution that has been built up. I have yet to learn that there has been any public demand for a mandate for this innovation from the people mostly concerned, namely the boards themselves. I think you, Sir, and I and our colleague, Mr. Dodd, have the honour to represent seven or eight road boards that are doing excellent work throughout the South Province. We are given to understand that all those boards are unanimous against the innovation that proposes to do away with

the present system of voting. We are prone to create such an instrument by electoral machinery and by franchise that may, willy nilly, in and out of season, give this or that party a chance of having a majority in this or that institution, with the result that the main issue, the well being of the community, very often disappears in party smoke and party warfare. If I want a pattern from which to mould my procedure, I turn to these humble bodies who do so much throughout the State. Therefore it is not my desire to see such a set of circumstances occur that may, through an innovation, bring about an undesirable result. There is another innovation which I resent, and it is with reference to gratuities. Amongst other things the Act provides that the road board may, without limit as to service, allow gratuities to employees in connection with length of service, the amount not to exceed 12 months' salary. The Bill proposes to curtail that privilege which has existed since the inception of local government. The curtailment will be to a period of 10 years' service except in the case of physical or mental incapacity or death. Surely the proposed district councils can be trusted to use discretion in this regard, in a like manner to the Parliament of the State. The suggested alteration should not be agreed to. Here is an attempt to say that while the boards may enter upon all kinds of activities which are part of the life of local bodies, in respect of the disposition of gratuities, they are to be hamstrung—that they are not qualified to decide what should or should not be done. There is an innovation which I support and which, I hope, the House in Committee, will not interfere with, or attempt to throw out. I refer to the opening of new roads or the diversion of existing roads. Under the existing law, a road board has power by resolution to open a new road or divert an existing road. The Minister or a majority of the ratepayers cannot force the hand of a board on this matter. That power begins and ends with the road board. The Minister has no say in that matter. In the Lake Brown district there is a soldier settlement, in connection with which the following position has presented itself: For some years past the residents of part of the district have agitated for the opening of a road which will bring them within three or four miles of the railway siding. The road board have

steadily refused to open or proclaim the road in question, with the result that the settlers suffer great inconvenience through having to travel a round-about route. Again, at Ravensthorpe the people thought it necessary that a new road should be opened. I have this information on the best of authority. At a meeting of the Ravensthorpe Road Board it was moved and seconded that the road be opened. On being put to the vote, the motion was defeated, the mover and the seconder voting against the proposal. Another place has inserted in the Bill a provision for the taking of a referendum in such circumstances. I believe this excellent idea originated with the Minister for Lands. If a majority present at a meeting of the ratepayers of the district or ward affected pass a resolution in favour of the opening of a road or the diversion of an existing road, and if the district council should refuse to act in accordance with such a resolution, the Governor in Council may proclaim or divert the road accordingly. That is an extension of the principle of referendum. Road board members sometimes assume an arrogant attitude and say, "We will not open this road." Therefore this referendum provision is wise and necessary. I shall not weary the House by enumerating the proposals of the Bill for extension of the existing powers of road boards. If hon. members will compare the Bill with the existing Act, they will find that though the proposed new powers look formidable, many of them in fact only square, tighten up, and complete the existing powers of road boards. I will give one or two examples. The Bill provides that a district council may open or develop a gravel pit or a quarry and erect or acquire an electric lighting plant or a cooling chamber. Under the existing law a road board can only acquire gravel pits and quarries and obtain machinery for such works. The power given by the Act seems to imply the additional power proposed by the Bill. Therefore I say that the Bill merely tightens up and completes existing powers. Again, the measure proposes that district councils may control saleyards, run picture shows—

Hon. J. Nicholson: That was tried before.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is also proposed that there shall be power to control markets and other public utilities. Katanning

affords an excellent example of what can be achieved by a local authority through running a picture show. Mr. Glasheen has a fair idea of the results secured and of the services rendered in the direction of soldiers' welfare by reason of the running of municipal picture shows at Katanning.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: And also at Kon-dinin.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes; and I have never heard an accusation of lack of accommodation or conveniences in connection with those picture shows. I endorse all the new powers proposed to be conferred on the local authorities. Argument upon argument has been heard here with regard to municipal marketing. I venture to say that if similar powers to these had in the first instance been conferred on our municipalities, there would be no occasion to argue about central markets to-day. Those markets would have been established long ago, and in such a form as we could all take off our hats to. Therefore no harm can result from the granting of extended powers as proposed. After all, those powers are to be granted to people managing their own local affairs.

Hon. J. Nicholson: On the same lines as the Perth City Council ask leave to control their own markets.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes; but we must not adopt a dog-in-the-manger policy and refuse a right to other people because it has not been granted in one instance. The City of Perth has never had powers so untrammelled as those which the Bill proposes to confer on the district councils. Another phase I may refer to is that under the existing law C.P. land is not liable for rating until the expiration of two years either from the date of approval by the land board or from the date of occupation.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Five years.

Hon. J. CORNELL: As the law is now administered, the successor of the original selector is granted the same privilege for any unexpired part of the term. The Bill, however, seeks to abolish that privilege unless the Under Secretary for Lands otherwise directs. It occurs to me that the irritation likely to be caused by this amendment would more than counterbalance the practical results. Throughout the Esperance district and our far-flung areas in general, there have been many surrenders of blocks. It is highly questionable whether the exist-

ing law on this point should be altered. The present system is that of a flat rate, and it has worked for many years. The alteration would bring about sticky-beaks rather than practical results. The Bill proposes to increase the rating power of the local authorities. I am not sure whether the local governing bodies in conference assembled have asked for an increase.

Member: They have not.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If they have asked for it, I will hold my peace. However, I am not sure that they have made the request. The present law provides a minimum rate of 1d. and a maximum rate of 3d. in the pound on the unimproved value, but with the consent of the Minister the maximum rate may be as much as 6d. in the pound. The Bill proposes to raise the first maximum to 4d., and then, subject to the Minister's consent, it may go to 6d. in rural districts and to 9d. in agricultural districts. If the increase is warranted, it should be granted. We ought not to be hidebound as regards rating powers. Rather should we be liberal in the rating instrument we hand to local authorities. A reference to the minutes of the Road Board Conference should demonstrate whether those bodies have asked for this innovation. I have carefully read the whole of the Bill, and have compared it clause by clause with the sections of the parent Act. Subject to the few exceptions I have mentioned, I consider that this House can safely pass the Bill, and that the measure will be a material improvement on the existing law. That is what the Legislature should be desirous of achieving when it sets out to amend the instrument handed to the local authorities. I hope that the Bill will pass except as regards the two or three innovations to which I have drawn attention. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

On motion by Hon. W. T. Glasheen, debate adjourned.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [9.45] in moving the second reading said: The Act passed last year provided that when a building line was declared by the City Council, if any

building projecting outside of that line was removed for reconstruction the Council then had power to resume the piece of land between the old alignment and the new for the purpose of widening the street. But it appears there is a doubt whether this would apply to any vacant land on which no building had previously been erected, although the intention is obviously clear. The Bill is for the purpose of removing that doubt, so that vacant lands will come under the provisions for the new alignment when a building is erected thereon, in the same manner as applies to land on which a building was previously erected and taken down for the purpose of erecting a new building. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

House adjourned at 9.48 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 4th November, 1926.

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

QUESTION—VERMIN RATE, REVENUE.

Mr. LATHAM asked the Minister for Agriculture: What is the estimated amount of revenue from the vermin rate fixed under the regulations published in the "Govern-