

bad to have statutes that create confusion in the minds of the public, but difficulties are also created. If certain returns made are not in accordance with the Dividend Duties Act or the Income Tax Act, the party making the return may be guilty of an offence under one or both Acts. A party might easily make a mistake quite innocently, and yet be penalised for an offence. The sooner the Government embody the two statutes in one Act, the better it will be for the community. I could refer to various sections in both Acts and show where improvements could be made. One wonders whether some of the provisions in the Dividend Duties Act would not be better in the Income Tax Act and vice versa. However, I shall not weary members with a recital of those matters. Under the Federal law, the whole of the tax is dealt with under the Income Tax Act, but here companies are dealt with under both Acts. I do not intend to oppose the second reading, but I hope the Minister will convey the sentiments I have expressed to the Government, and let them know it is wise that enactments that have got into such a tangled condition should be straightened out as soon as possible.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—NOXIOUS WEEDS.

Assembly's Further Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it no longer disagreed to the amendment insisted upon by the Council.

House adjourned at 10.5 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 27th November, 1924.

	PAGE
Questions: Jarnadup-Pemberton railway ...	2030
Customs, State Payments ...	2030
William Street repairs ...	2030
Bills: Norweman-Salmon Gums railway, 3r. ...	2031
Stamp Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report ...	2031
Waroona-Lake Clifton Railway, 2r., Com., report ...	2032
Forests Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report ...	2039
Bills of Sale Act Amendment, 1r. ...	2042
Mining Development Act Amendment, Message, 2r. ...	2042
Noxious Weeds, Council's further Message ...	2043
Main Roads, 2r. ...	2044

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

QUESTION—JARNADUP-PEMBERTON RAILWAY.

Mr. TAYLOR (for Mr. J. H. Smith) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Will he state a definite time for taking over the railway between Jarnadup and Pemberton? 2, Is it a fact that the State Sawmills have neglected this railway on account of a proposal for its taking over by the Working Railways, and that the road is in a bad state of maintenance? 3, Is he aware that settlers and others are suffering great inconvenience and loss from pilfered and damaged goods on account of no officer being in charge and no sheds or other conveniences being provided at Pemberton? 4, Will he honour the promise of the late Government, and also fulfil the promise to provide an officer and sheds, thus satisfying a long-felt want?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, A definite date cannot be fixed for the taking over of the railway from the State Sawmills by the Working Railways. 2, 3, and 4, The whole of the matters referred to in these questions are under the consideration of the two departments concerned, and an inspection of the line has been made, but the line does not conform to the required conditions at the present time.

QUESTION—CUSTOMS, STATE PAYMENTS.

Mr. LINDSAY (for Mr. Thomson) asked the Premier: Is it his intention to lay on the Table of the House a return showing the amount of duty paid under the Customs tariff by the State to the Commonwealth Government during the past five years?

The PREMIER replied: Inquiry is being made as to whether this information can be compiled. If so, it will be laid on the Table.

QUESTION—WILLIAM-STREET REPAIRS.

Mr. MANN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, How long is it intended to leave William-street in its present unfinished and dangerous condition? 2, Will he take the necessary action to have the work completed before the beginning of the busy traffic during the coming holidays?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, The work of laying the tramway line is proceeding as fast as is possible, but it is expected that six weeks will elapse before its completion. In the meantime all possible precautions are being taken to guard against accident. 2, Answered by No. 1.

BILL—NORSEMAN-SALMON GUMS RAILWAY.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.38] in moving the second reading said: This is another of those small annual continuance Bills which are found necessary. In 1918 the Stamp Act was amended to require double the amount of duty on conveyances and transfers. The duration of the amendment Act was limited to three years, and the increased duty was continued by a short Act passed in 1921, which has been renewed annually since then. Last session we had a similar Bill to this. As will be known to hon. members, stamp duty on transfers of property prior to 1918 was 2s. 6d. for every £25 of purchase money. That rate has been doubled. I had hoped that it might not be necessary to ask for the continuation of the increase for another year; but we are not yet out of the wood financially, and in all the circumstances the Government consider themselves justified in asking for a continuation of the double duty for at least another 12 months. Even if the measure which the Bill seeks to continue were made permanent, the provision would be more liberal than the Stamp Act of any other State of the Commonwealth in this respect, that whilst we advance in units of £25, each of the other States has a minimum of £50. Whilst here the minimum stamp duty on a document transferring property is 5s., in any one of the other States it is 10s., and we advance by £25 rises as against £50 rises in each of the other States. In New Zealand the rate is 10s. per £50, and it is the same in South Australia and Victoria, whilst in Queensland and New South Wales it is 7s. 6d.

Mr. Taylor: Our taxation is lighter.

The PREMIER: Yes, in the respects I have indicated. This Bill might be described as a slight war measure. The financial effects of the war are still with us, and will be with us for many years to come, for unfortunately our financial difficulty did not end with the war. I venture to say that some generations hence Western Australian citizens will be called upon to meet taxation arising out of the war, just as we have to do to-day. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [4.42]: I shall not object to the passing of the Bill, though there is not now, of course, the same necessity for

taxation as there was in 1918, when we had a deficit of some £700,000.

The Premier: But we have some deficit still.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We have reduced the deficit by over half a million in two years, and there is every prospect of doing as well this year.

The Premier: But, even so, this duty is not high compared with the duties in the other States; and their duties are not temporary, like ours is, but permanent.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: In some of the other States taxation is higher in some directions than ours, but ours is higher in other directions. However, this increase was made because of the financial stress due to the war. Now we are getting over that trouble, I hope the Premier next year will be able to allow that reduction in duty which automatically would come about if another continuance Bill was not passed. In this country activities in land matters are fairly great, having regard to the size of our population; and in the aggregate these duties mean a considerable sum.

The Minister for Lands: You might mention that we are lowest but one among the States in point of taxation.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister for Lands has mentioned that fact very often, and I have mentioned it very often.

The Minister for Lands: It cannot be mentioned too often.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No; but our higher rates of taxation are very high indeed. However, I am not going to oppose the Bill this year, although I am certain the Premier will not ask for its renewal next year, because in all probability it will not then be any longer necessary. Whilst our taxation per head of the population is the lowest of all the States except Victoria, we contribute more to sinking fund than do all the other States put together.

The Premier: And in some respects our taxation is lower than that of Victoria.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is so. One could afford to live in Victoria, but one could not afford to die there, because the probate duty is so high. I will not oppose the second reading.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [4.46]: I will not oppose the Bill. During the war, stringency of finance rendered the measure quite necessary, but it would be gratifying to the House and to the country if the Premier were in a position to say that after this year he would be able to release the people from some of these temporary taxation measures. While our finances are improving, the burden of taxation is not being decreased. I should be glad to hear from the Premier that next year we shall have

some relief from these war taxation measures.

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—WAROONA-LAKE CLIFTON RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: (Hon. J. C. Willecock—Geraldton) [4.50] in moving the second reading said: The Bill is virtually only a formal one. Most members know that owing to a series of circumstances, the line is no longer necessary.

Mr. Taylor: It never was necessary.

Mr. George: It is quite necessary now.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It has not been necessary to run trains over the line for the last six months, and from information I have it will not again be necessary; so it is hardly wise to allow this asset to remain where it is, earning no interest.

Mr. George: You will have to construct a bigger line there yet.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Well, when the time comes I suppose it will be done. The line was built between March and November of 1919 for the Portland Cement Company. Its object was the exploitation of the lime deposit at Lake Clifton. The product was to have been used for the manufacture of cement at Burswood. Unfortunately, after the line had been down for some time, other arrangements were made, and so there has been no traffic over the line during the past year; in fact, since March of this year it has not been necessary to run trains over it. On the 21st August, 1922, the line was taken over by the Working Railways. The actual financial results since then have been, working expenses, £843; interest £7,791, or a total of £8,634. The earnings were £1,118. Therefore the loss has been £7,516. There has been virtually no traffic on the line; a few hundred tons of lime has been carted, and about 500 tons of firewood, but there is no settlement anywhere in the vicinity of the line, and if the line were continued and trains run, the only traffic to be expected would consist of a few tons occasionally, for what settlers there are in the district would take delivery of their consignments at Waroona. Originally it was thought there would be a possibility of land settlement in the vicinity of the line. However, a thorough investigation has been made by the Lands Department, and it does not appear to be possible to utilise this railway for the purpose of land settlement for a

considerable time to come. At about 10 miles away from the line there is one area of fair land, about 160 acres in extent. However, even if that were used to the full, it would not warrant the continuance of the line. The value of the material in the line is as follows:—17 miles of rails and fastenings, £13,300; sleepers, £2,800; telephone line £400, or a total of £16,500. The cost of pulling up the line will be some £2,000 or £3,000. The cost of the line in the first instance was £62,000.

Mr. George: It will not cost that much to pull it up.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am informed it will.

Mr. George: Let it by contract and give me a chance to tender.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Bill provides that the cost of the railway may be taken off the railway capital. Obviously it would not be wise to debit the capital account with a line that no longer exists. The Bill gives authority for the omission from the accounts under the Government Railways Act of 1904 of the amount of capital cost originally debited to the line. Whatever of this material is utilised for the construction of lines in other parts of the State will be debited up to those particular lines.

Mr. Taylor: What has been the annual loss since the line was taken over by the Working Railways?

The Premier: Probably no other loss than the interest.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The loss to date has been £7,516, including interest on capital. While no definite arrangements have been made as to what is to be done with the material, obviously it will be used in the construction of other lines.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You must start the Yarramony railway or one of the other authorised lines.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: But it is proposed to lay the Yarramony line with 60lb. rails, whereas these rails are only 45lb.

The Premier: They will do for the Newdegate line.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The idea is that this material will save us the purchase of material for some other authorised line. It is of no use leaving valuable material there when it can be utilised elsewhere. I do not intend to go into the history of the line, for it is already well known to the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. WITHERS (Bunbury) [4.59]: I am sorry it should have been found necessary to remove this line. The Minister said he did not intend to go into the history of the line. I do not want to do so either. However, now that the line is there, al-

though at present there is no settlement, it serves an area of country that could be admirably settled in the near future.

The Minister for Railways: The Lands Department do not say that.

Mr. WITHERS: The Lands Department have supplied me with the information that the fact that the land close to the existing line is suitable only for grazing purposes is the one thing to be said against the line from the point of view of land settlement. I have figures from the different departments to prove it. If the railway were extended a few miles it would tap a belt of good country that could be opened up for general agriculture. Out from the head of the line there is land equal to any in Western Australia. Further on is a belt of jarrah country that has never been touched, and no jarrah in the State is equal to it. Yet, owing to lack of facilities, it is impossible to get that jarrah for sleepers. Although tuart is such an asset to Western Australia, the expense of carting the logs over long distances and bad roads does not warrant taking it out. If there was a railway within five or six miles of it, there would be an opportunity for people to make a good living. If the timber were cut the revenue derived would assist to pay off this small liability to the State. The fact of the railway not being utilised is the cause of the loss. Considering the capital involved and the cost of lifting the line, it may not be wise to shift it, remembering that it may be necessary in a few years' time to lay down another line over the same route. I shall oppose the Bill.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wollington) [5.2]: I am grieved that the Government should bring down a proposition of this kind. This railway was built primarily to permit of the lime deposits at Lake Clifton being utilised. At Lake Clifton there is an enormous deposit of lime suitable for agricultural purposes, and it was declared to be suitable for the manufacture of cement. After the cement company had worked it for some time, for reasons no doubt known to the company, it was decided to get their material elsewhere. I do not pose as an expert in cement, although I know something of its manufacture, but I took some dry lime from Lake Clifton, ground it up, mixed and set it as I would set plaster of Paris, and in 24 hours it was so hard that it could not be broken up with a cold chisel. That lime can be made into a product, and the process of manufacture would provide employment for large numbers of people. There were other reasons for building the railway. It was designed to open up a province of Western Australia which in course of time will maintain a population of 50,000 or 100,000 people. The line traverses country containing some of the finest bulrush swamps in the State, swamps that are simply waiting for the drainage scheme that has

been on the tapis for many years. If the drainage scheme to serve the country from Fremantle to Bunbury becomes an accomplished fact, as it must do, an enormous population will be settled in that district. It has been proved by the old settlers and some of the later comers that the land is capable of producing potatoes, maize and fodder equal to anything raised in the Harvey irrigation area. The Benger swamp, known favourably not only in this State, but in other parts of the Commonwealth, provides the means of livelihood for a large number of people settled on small areas, and those who know the country better than I pretend to know it—although I have had 35 years' experience of it—tell me the bulrush swamps extending north towards Pinjarra and south towards Bunbury are equal in quality and productiveness to the Benger swamps. When the survey of the line was made I, as Minister for Works, and member for the district, took into account the agitation extending over many years for a coastal railway to connect Pinjarra with Bunbury. Although efforts had been made to get the proposition agreed to, it was not possible to bring our wishes to fruition. When the survey was made I took the precaution to see that breaking-off points were provided north-west and south-west, because I knew that the coastal railway must be built. If I were Commissioner of Railways or a member of the Government to-day, I would advocate the building of that coastal railway for two reasons. It should be built for defence purposes. I hope it will be centuries before it is needed for defence purposes, but we should have a line nearer to the coast than the Perth-Bunbury railway, which in many places is 20 miles distant from the coast. I would advocate that rather than a duplication of the existing Bunbury line, for it would provide better facilities for the people of the district than they have to-day. It would be a matter of deep regret if the Lake Clifton line were cast aside. No Government would dare to do that. The Government may take up the rails and sleepers, and justify their action by providing a bigger service elsewhere than is at present required on the Lake Clifton line, but as sure as Western Australia is destined to become the best State of the Commonwealth, that railway will have to be built, and the drainage scheme from Fremantle to Bunbury provided. I believe the Lake Clifton railway is 16 miles long, and in it there would be 1,200 or 1,300 tons of rails. The price of rails to-day is very high. I sold some rails the other week at £15 per ton, and I could sell 20 tons more at a bigger price if they were obtainable. Rails are scarce throughout Australia. The Minister said there was no traffic on the line. There could not be very much traffic because the people have not been able to develop their holdings, but there are holdings right from Waroona to Lake Clifton.

The Minister for Lands: Along this line?

Mr. GEORGE: Yes.

The Minister for Lands: The land there has been forfeited. There is only 160 acres in the whole lot that is any good.

Mr. GEORGE: I am speaking of what I am informed and believe to be true.

The Premier: There are no settlers along the line, and I have been along it several times.

Mr. GEORGE: I believe my information is correct.

The Premier: You have been misinformed.

Mr. GEORGE: The settlers could not be expected to develop their lands much, because the roads leading to the railway were absolutely impassable.

The Premier: They would be impassable if there was nothing to pass over them.

Mr. GEORGE: There is any quantity of lime similar to that in the Fremantle-Mandurah districts, and there is a great demand for lime for building purposes. This demand could be supplied from Lake Clifton if the line were carried through. The mere loan of these rails to help people in other districts would not be a matter for great complaint, but the idea of abandoning the railway altogether could not be countenanced by the present or any other Government. The time will come when the line will have to be relaid, when the drainage scheme will be constructed, and the land will be utilised. I cannot let the Bill pass without voicing the opinions of the men who live in that district, men I know well and whose knowledge of the land I am prepared to accept against the opinion of any expert who may be sent there. The men who have pioneered the State and have had to surmount all the difficulties incidental to pioneering, without receiving any assistance in the shape of roads or railways, should not be cast aside like a squeezed-out orange. They have their rights. But for the pioneers there would have been damned little country of any good, and damned few people who talk about it would be here at all. These men have done their work and are entitled to have their views respected. It would be impossible to find a finer class of men anywhere. They have fought their battles, done their work, reared their families and starved rather than ask charity of the State. It is not a fitting or dignified thing for the House, even if these people are poor and even if some of them have not progressed as much as others have done, to deprive them of this railway. They have played their part in the battle for Western Australia, and are entitled to the respect of the House whoever may be in it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [5.16]: I could use the words of the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George), and say that the land that is not served by the present railway to Bunbury is not worth a damn.

Mr. Taylor: I do not know that all this language is necessary.

Mr. SPEAKER: Such language is unparliamentary.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I withdraw it. The land adjoining the main line is fair land. When you get out seven or ten miles from the railway the land is of an inferior, third-class character. Areas have been taken up and forfeited on account of its inferior quality. There is no land there, according to the information I have, that warrants a railway. It may be utilised generations hence.

The Premier: Millions of years hence.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It may be useful some day.

Mr. Sampson: What if it were drained?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It does not warrant the expense of draining. This line was built for a special object and land settlement was never considered.

Mr. George: Yes, it was.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was a lime company that built it for the transport of lime, and for no other purpose. I advertised the lime that comes from there and almost offered to give it away, but it was of such quality that no one would take it.

Mr. George: The quality is all right. I have used it myself.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We spent pounds in advertising it. Had the farmers wanted it, they could almost have taken it away, but we did not get one tender for it.

Mr. George: We could not get the lime unless we took out the water first. Three parts of it is water.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No one put in a price for it.

Mr. George: You could not pay freight on water.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: These rails are required for development purposes elsewhere. There is wheat to be carried, and it cannot be carried for lack of rails. Thousands of bags are waiting to be brought to market. It will be generations before the Lake Clifton line can be used for development purposes, or the land is made profitable. I have every confidence in the officers of the department, and do not believe they would lead me astray. They have gone over the classification of almost all the lots along this line. They have pointed out to me definitely that with the exception of a small area, less than 200 acres which is first-class, it is inferior or third-class land. That being so, I ask members if we are warranted in leaving money lying idle when other people are clamouring for a railway. Such people have put in their crops, and we have no money available for the construction of a line for them. We should deal with this matter reasonably and without the use of strong language.

Mr. Sampson: That sounds like Satan reproving sin.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This Government would be the last to ask for the removal of any railway if there was any prospect in the distant future—unless it were too far ahead—of its being successful in developing land or opening up the country, but in this case that is not so.

Mr. George: You and I will live to see it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We are justified in asking the House to allow this line to be used elsewhere so that it may be helpful to settlers who are at present far distant from a railway. Take Newdegate, for instance. There are 30,000 or 40,000 bags of wheat there waiting to be brought in. It would cost £20,000 or £30,000 to put the roads in good order if the railway were not constructed. Are we to leave that wheat to rot? This harvest must be brought in over the railway. We want this particular line to go there for one thing. It was never intended to use the rails on the Salmon Gums railway. They are wanted for places like Newdegate. If this Bill is passed, it is hoped that the rails will be used for carrying the present harvest from Newdegate to the main line. It is not the desire of the Government to pull up the line merely for the sake of doing so. The matter has had every consideration. The land is inferior, and that which adjoins the main line is already provided with all necessary requirements from the point of view of development. We should not have the capital represented in this Lake Clifton line lying idle. I hope the House will agree that this money, which at present is earning nothing must be made to earn something.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [5.2]: I am sorry the Minister for Lands waxed so warm.

The Minister for Lands: I was only repeating what had already been said.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is the country he comes from that is to blame for the manner in which he approaches matters brought before the House. I am glad to hear that one of the lines which were discussed yesterday is to be started at once. I am also glad that the Newdegate people are to get their railway soon. I do not know why we were not informed of this yesterday. It is a pity, when dealing with legislation, that we cannot be frank. It would save so much time.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot refer to matters that are passed.

The Premier: The construction of the Newdegate railway was decided upon only this morning. It is hoped to have it ready in time for this harvest. There is no want of frankness about the matter.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We have to be thankful for small mercies. It would have been well if the Bill had come down in the earlier stages of the session, for that line would be well under way now.

The Premier: You did not make any attempt to build it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course not. The Government, however, have been in office eight months and have not thought of it before.

The Premier: The settlers say you pledged yourself to give them a line for this harvest. A start should have been made upon it before you went out of office.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If you had not intended to build it this year, you had no right to settle people there.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We did not intend doing so, for we had not the opportunity. The Government are very keen about it now for they decided only this morning, after being in office eight months, to go on with the work. I am glad these people are to get their line, and I hope that other authorised lines will be constructed soon. It is a pity the Lake Clifton railway is to be taken up. The lines were laid down by a private company because of the establishment of cement works at Burswood. It was found, however, that the line contains some chemical properties which rendered it unsuitable for manufacture into cement. The line thus became useless. We now have the cement works established, and I do not suppose they would have been started but for the lime that was brought from Lake Clifton in the first instance. The line has, therefore, served its purpose. I was blamed for constructing the railway, not by the Premier, but by many newspapers. The Premier admitted I had had nothing to do with it.

Mr. Corboy: It was due to the company you had been keeping.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Some of the papers attributed the construction of the line to me, but I had nothing to do with it. In the cartoons I was blamed. No doubt if the planks of the bridge that carry the railway are of no further use, the cartoons themselves were of great use at the elections. It is a pity that such things do happen, but I suppose they are unavoidable.

The Premier: If the cartoons were unfair as applied to the Leader of the Opposition, they were justified as they applied to those responsible for the construction of this railway.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I had no more to do with it than the members opposite.

The Premier: The construction of the line was a scandalous thing.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It was a scandalous thing to attribute it to me.

The Premier: I said on every platform that you were not responsible.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But I must protest against this sort of thing. The line was built for the carriage of lime and

not to serve agricultural interests. It was too short for that. What ought to happen is that it should be extended to Bunbury, along the coast. There is a good area of fertile country there. I am surprised that the member for Bunbury (Mr. Withers) does not protest against the pulling up of this line because of the possibility later on of its being extended. If it were extended it would serve a large population in the future. I hope it will not be long before this part of the country is brought into use. Not only is there wonderfully rich land there, but a considerable quantity of very fine tuart, which will have to be used sooner or later. In the years to come two Governments will be blamed because of this railway: the Government that built it and the Government that pulled it up. These things are always happening. I am not opposing the use of the rails in the manner indicated. It is a proper thing to do in the circumstances, because railways are badly wanted in the country. I should like to see the Yarramony Eastward line constructed. No doubt the settlers at Newdegate are badly in need of railway transport. No one would have thought of settling the Newdegate people unless it was intended to connect them with the railway. People cannot cart their wheat over long distances, especially over roads of such a nature.

The PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [5.29]: I do not suppose the construction of the Newdegate railway has anything to do with the Bill before the House, except that the rails may be utilised for the construction of that particular line.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It will only go a portion of the way.

The PREMIER: The Leader of the Opposition is not justified in taunting the Government with not having commenced the construction of the Newdegate railway.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I did not do so.

The PREMIER: I think so.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I did not.

The PREMIER: I understood him to do so.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You are wrong.

The PREMIER: He said we ought to have gone on with the construction earlier.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I did not say that. You said I should have got on with it.

The PREMIER: I hope the Leader of the Opposition will not accuse the Government of any want of frankness in not stating last night, when the Norseman-Salmon Gums Railway Bill was under discussion, what our intentions were regarding the Newdegate line. I have never known an instance when a Government,

during the discussion on one railway measure, intimated to the House when they intended to construct that line or any other railway already authorised. That has not been the practice, and the Leader of the Opposition asked something entirely unusual when he suggested anything to the contrary.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It has been done many times.

The PREMIER: If the railway to Newdegate was necessary to lift the present harvest, then a commencement should have been made prior to the time the Mitchell Government left office. There is no sign to be discovered of any attempt in that direction. No thought had been given to it and therefore I do not think it is fair to hold the present Government responsible for not doing something after being in office for a few months. If it is suggested that we should have constructed the line because we have the money, it must be borne in mind that the Government had to raise money for works under construction when they came into office. During the year a considerable sum of money will have to be found for the Narembeen-Merredin railway and also for the Piawaning railway. The Government also have to find half a million of money for the metropolitan water supply, which is an entirely new work, and also a million pounds for the group settlements.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is all arranged for.

The PREMIER: That is not so. I wish it was as easy as the Leader of the Opposition suggests. It is all very well to say we should have commenced the construction of many railways. I remind the House that one of the principal charges against the Labour Party during the elections—the Leader of the Opposition was perfectly right in referring to propaganda used against him at that time—as a reason why we should not be returned to office was, it was alleged, that the great bulk of the loan expenditure when the Labour Government had been in office had been on account of railway construction and public works. It was asserted, on the other hand, that the loan expenditure on the part of our opponents was mainly in connection with land settlement and assistance to farmers. The newspapers, the chief protagonists on behalf of our opponents, spread that report from one end of the country to the other as proof of the fact that we were lacking in statesmanship. We were condemned for the expenditure of loan moneys on public works because, it was alleged, we provided high wages for the supporters of the Labour Party. That, it was stated, was our policy; now, after we have been in office for 25 minutes, we are accused of not having a public works policy.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Who accused you of that?

The PREMIER: Last night, when the Norseman-Salmon Gums Railway Bill was being discussed, the hon. member wanted to know when we intended to start the construction of that railway, as well as other railways in addition.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I am entitled to know now. I merely objected to the Norseman-Salmon Gums railway being built before the others.

The PREMIER: No one has said it will be constructed before the other lines. It is not for the Government to indicate here when the construction of the railway from Norseman to Salmon Gums will be commenced. Only this morning, in consultation with officers of the department, was it decided to construct the Newdegate railway in time to lift the present harvest.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Hear, hear! I applaud that decision.

The PREMIER: We have had officers out making inspections and they reported upon the difficulties confronting us. Engineers and others charged with the responsibility of building railways made the position clear and it was thought that it would not be possible to build the line in time for the harvest. An engineer returned yesterday, however, and presented a report in which he stated that many thousands of pounds would be required for the construction of a road, and that even if it were built the road would not carry the harvest. By adopting a policy of light railway construction, however, it will be possible to handle the harvest.

Mr. Teesdale: Then let us have it. Everyone will appreciate it.

The PREMIER: We will start the work at once and get the clearing done. There will be practically no earthworks required, and the light line can be laid on the natural surface of the ground.

Mr. Taylor: After the style of the wood lines?

The PREMIER: Yes. I anticipate the line will not cost half of what railways have cost in the past.

Mr. Teesdale: There is not a font rise throughout.

The PREMIER: It is practically level country. Standard railways cost up to £4,000 a mile to construct. Seeing that money is so dear it is not necessary to spend £4,000 a mile in constructing a railway to a new district that is in its pioneering stages. A light line such as I have indicated will meet all requirements for eight or ten years, and we will be able to provide that railway at half the usual cost.

Mr. Corboy: A £2,000 job will carry the wheat just the same.

The PREMIER: It is proposed to use the rails that will be available under the Bill for the Newdegate railway, together with rails released from the Peel estate.

As hon. members are aware, a light line has been lying there for the past two or three years. These rails will enable us to meet the requirements of the Newdegate settlers. There may be a need for a railway in the Lake Clifton area in the future, but certainly, so far as I have been able to ascertain, all the indications point to the fact that no railway will be required for some years to come. It would not be a sound business proposition to allow those rails to rust in the ground in a district that is almost entirely unsettled, while hundreds of people are clamouring for railway communication to enable them to convey their crops to market. I know the country affected by the Bill very well. I have driven over it and walked over it. With the exception of the area already served by the Bunbury line, the country is very poor. That is indicated by the classification made by the Lands Department some years ago and recently officers have endorsed that classification. Whatever may be the value of the land in years to come, when an extensive drainage scheme has been carried out, it will not be of use for many years. It may be of use for military or strategic purposes, although I understood that it was usual to keep such railways well away from the coast. The Government have no object except to utilise the rails for the purpose of serving settlers in districts that have been opened up.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [5.40]: I will not oppose the Bill but I would like to know if the legal advisers of the Government have assured them that there is no risk of heavy damages being incurred for breach of agreement with the company for whom the line was built.

Mr. Marshall: The fine has been inflicted already; it cost us £62,000.

Mr. ANGELO: We should receive an assurance on that point. I understand that the line was constructed not only for the purposes of the cement works, but for agricultural purposes as well. Have any experiments been carried out to ascertain the value of the land served for agricultural purposes? If the land is good for agricultural purposes, why has it not been used?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The country is not drained.

Mr. George: I told you all about it.

Mr. ANGELO: We should have some assurance from the Government on that point. If the aspects I have drawn attention to have received the consideration of the Government, and they are satisfied on the points, I am content to agree to the rails being used for the purposes suggested. Even if the rails be taken away, the earthworks and cuttings will remain there for use at some future date, when rails are less expensive and the development prophesied by the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) will warrant a line being constructed. I am glad that the rails are to be used for

the Newdegate railway, which was promised by the previous Government when a certain amount of development had taken place. The present Government are right in carrying out that promise made by their predecessors in office.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford) [5.43]: This Bill can be considered the final record of a very grave and sad political indiscretion.

Mr. Teesdale: Well, let it die.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not propose to be reminiscent, but I had the responsibility of negotiating the original agreement under which the company were called upon to build the railway. There was a good deal of agitation for the construction of the line, but, as far as my memory serves me, I do not remember it being urged on the ground that agricultural development would take place in the vicinity of Lake Clifton. The main argument was that there was a valuable deposit of lime of high percentage in agricultural manure values that could be easily obtained, and that it would be available for use in the agricultural districts. It was to exploit that deposit for the purpose of agricultural development in other portions of the South-West that the company were influenced to take the matter up and to negotiate with the Government for the right to operate. The mistake made was in allowing the company to evade their responsibility to build the line. I regret that, in their desire to justify the lifting of the line, some members have tried to depreciate the value of South-West land. As one who has had some opportunities of investigation for some years past, I know that if the land along the Bunbury line in the vicinity of Perth and Pinjarra is of no agricultural value, then we are spending many hundreds of thousands of pounds in connection with land that will never be of any value to this State. I am not talking of the Lake Clifton land, when I say that there is land to-day being settled, upon which many hundreds of thousands of pounds are being spent, that is not as good as the land in the vicinity of Pinjarra and the surrounding districts. I make this statement because it may be thought that the good land close to the railway that runs to Bunbury is only a narrow strip. As a matter of fact it penetrates a good way back from the railway, and I believe it would pay this country to devote special attention to it rather than spend so much money on areas that are no better but are removed some 200 miles from Perth. We should look closer to the metropolis instead of going so far afield. I am prepared to admit that we have Crown lands further afield, whereas the land adjacent to the Bunbury railway is privately held. It is for that reason that I am such an enthusiastic supporter of a tax upon unimproved land. As we are so hard up against it financially it would be

wrong and economically unsound to allow the rails in question to remain where they are, when we know that the development of other places is being retarded because of the absence of railway facilities. There is no doubt that these rails will be used for the extension of the line to Newdegate. I was one of those who thought that we could serve the Newdegate settlers by means of road transport. Experts, however, say that that is absolutely impossible, that wheat cannot be lifted from Newdegate and profitably taken to Lake Grace in the manner suggested. Satisfactory arrangements have been made by which the Government can with advantage to the State and with justice to the settlers, put a line out to Newdegate in time to allow the settlers there to market their fine crop under conditions that will ensure for them values that will be equal to those who are more favourably situated. The Government would be failing in their duty if they did not take immediate steps to do that. With regard to the removal of the Lake Clifton line, the member for Murray-Wellington may be right in his assumption of the land values there, but he must admit that extensive drainage operations will have to be carried out before settlement can take place. We are having a valuable experiment made at the Peel Estate which is country of a similar character. There are bullrush swamps in those parts that are supposed to be an indication of valuable soil. The swamps are being drained, and we shall be able to profit by the experience that is being gained. If we can increase production as a result of the drainage of these swamps, we can then proceed to extend the drainage operations in the area between Fremantle and Bunbury. If the Peel Estate is going to be a success, there will be an immense amount of work to be done all along the coastal lands. There is a similarity in the lands of the State and one can judge the value of a particular area by what is growing upon it. If we find it growing a certain class of timber, we know to what use to put it; if it is swamp land, again we know what it is capable of growing. There are swamps along the coast that will bear comparison with a good deal of the land at the Peel Estate. Some of the swamp land I have seen at the Peel Estate is as good as anything I have ever seen anywhere, not excepting New Zealand. Let us hope that the development at the Peel Estate will prove that that class of country, if drained, can be made to produce what we hope it will do. The member for Murray-Wellington must recognise that we cannot leave the rails lying there until we are in a position to drain that part of the State. We have a huge territory to develop and to settle before we can make any attempt to tackle that area. In the meantime there is more urgent work necessary in the shape of giving settlers the opportunity to cart the wheat they were encouraged to produce, on account of the

promise made by a previous Government. I am pleased to hear that the present Government are going to use these rails in the direction of running a line out, so that wheat grown by settlers a long way from a railway may be lifted. It will give those settlers the start that they require and will establish that area—I refer to Newdegate—on a sound basis. I support the Bill, but I want it understood from one who takes a great interest in land cultivation that there is a very big area within close proximity to Perth, which, if developed, will prove of greater value than a good deal of the land on which we are now spending so much money and which is removed some 200 miles from Perth.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (Arvon) [5.55]: At the time the Lake Clifton Railway Bill was before the House one of the principal arguments used in favour of the construction of the railway was that it would permit of the supplying of cheap lime which was easy to get at, and that the proposition would be of considerable benefit to fruit growers. Apparently what was then thought to be feasible has turned out a failure. I am surprised to hear that the rails to be removed from that district are to be used to provide communication for the settlers of Newdegate. I wish to raise a protest against that because the are settlers in other parts of the State who have been waiting as long as 17 years for railway communication, and who will have a million bushels of wheat this season to be earted.

The SPEAKER: I cannot permit the hon. member to enter into a discussion on that matter.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: As somebody stated just now the Lake Clifton railway has turned out to be something in the nature of a catastrophe. Anyhow, I intend to support the second reading of the Bill because the proposal is necessary and sound.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL.—FORESTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [6.1] in moving the second reading said: When the little Bill to amend the Stamp Act was under discussion, a wish was expressed by some hon. members that I might be able to forego various surcharges, as they might be termed, which were imposed during the war. I am hoping that if the present Bill should pass, it may help me along the way to meet the desire of

those hon. members. It will be remembered that the Forests Act of 1918 made provision for the establishment of a fund for reforestation work, into which three-fifths of the total revenue obtained under the Act should be paid. That provision applies to revenue from all forest products whatsoever, including of course sandalwood. Since the principal Act was passed, the revenue from sandalwood, which was then very small, has increased very materially, and has become of great importance, owing to the augmentation of the royalty. Under that head a revenue of £54,000 is anticipated for the current financial year. Consequently it becomes a question for consideration where the whole of that money should go. The expenditure on reforestation of sandalwood could be only of a very limited character. At present expenditure on that account is scarcely anything, because no regrowth of sandalwood is in hand. Even when a policy of regrowth is established and in full swing—which cannot be for some time to come—the expenditure in connection therewith would, it is estimated, be within £5,000 per annum. I will quote the figures of last year's revenue obtained under the Forests Act: Log royalty for permits granted under the Land Act, £39,958; log royalty for permits granted under the Forests Act, £15,525; miscellaneous royalty, £6,582; inspection fees, £9,976; rents, £8,118; sales, £1,985; miscellaneous revenue, £388; and sandalwood, £44,271. Those figures, it should be noted, are for only eight months of the last financial year. Existing conditions have operated only as from the 1st November, 1923. During that period the revenue from sandalwood has amounted to no less a sum than £44,271. During the past six years there has been paid into the reforestation fund a total of £211,194, and the expenditure has amounted to £139,649, leaving a balance in the fund of £71,545. At the end of the last financial year the balance to the credit of that fund, into which three-fifths of the total revenue received under the Forests Act was paid, stood at no less a sum than £71,545. This Bill proposes to exempt sandalwood from the section of the Forests Act which deals with the establishment of the fund; that is to say, if the Bill becomes law, none of the revenue from sandalwood will be paid into the fund, but the whole of it will be paid into Consolidated Revenue. For any expenditure necessary in connection with sandalwood, either for administrative purposes or for regrowth, an item can be placed on the Annual Estimates. There is no need for the three-fifths of the sandalwood revenue to be paid into a fund intended for reforestation work, which of course is mainly done in the South-West, where our forests exist. Therefore the income from sandalwood should be paid into Consolidated Revenue. Otherwise we should be merely building up an unrequired balance. The other sources

of income which I have read out will provide all the funds necessary for the reforestation policy embarked upon by the Forests Department in recent years.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I don't know why this revenue is not treated as all other revenue is treated.

The PREMIER: I venture to say that if a Forests Bill were brought before Parliament now, there would be no three-fifths of all revenue from forests products paid into a reforestation fund. Parliament would recognise that funds should be provided for all necessary steps to preserve the future of our forests, but nevertheless would not be quite so generous as the Parliament of 1918. The revenue is an increasing one. The amount paid into the fund in 1920-21 was £33,577; in the following year it was £41,545; the next year, 1922-23, it was £41,374; and for the financial year just closed it rose to £64,583, representing an increase of about £23,000 on the amount paid in for the preceding year. So that the fund is now in a very satisfactory position, notwithstanding that all expenditure necessary for the forests policy has been drawn from it. There is absolutely no need for our continuing to pay three-fifths of our sandalwood revenue into a fund of which the major portion will be expended, not on regrowth on the goldfields and elsewhere, but on the regrowth of karri and jarrah in the South-West.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Can't you make this Bill retrospective?

The PREMIER: I have considered that, in view of the surplus of £71,000. However, I do not propose to take any of that amount. The Bill, if passed, will operate as from the 1st July of this year. I ask members to pass the measure. The Treasury needs the money, and taxpayers want relief from taxation.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Wait a bit. Let us see first what you are going to get. Why not wipe out the land tax?

The PREMIER: There are so many ways in which the money to be derived from this Bill might be utilised in relieving the people of burdens, that I am puzzled to know where to apply the money first.

Mr. Sampson: After the criticism of the sandalwood regulations, can you take this money?

The PREMIER: Yes, take it without a blush. The taking of the revenue has nothing whatever to do with the regulations. We have received from sandalwood £44,000 during the period from the 1st November last to the 30th June last, and it is estimated that during the current financial year we shall receive £54,000.

Mr. Panton: Is that based on 6,000 tonnage?

The PREMIER: Perhaps slightly more. If we obtained royalty from all the sandalwood got, we should have nearly double that

amount, because during the past eight months over 1,000 tons of sandalwood has been credited as obtained from private lands. Very much of it, I suspect, was obtained from Crown lands.

Mr. Panton: You should put on another inspector or two.

The PREMIER: There is always Crown land in the vicinity of the private land from which sandalwood has been got. However, we have been able to collect about £2,000 by way of confiscation, in cases where it has been proved that sandalwood has been got from Crown lands although allegedly obtained from private lands. Lately we have increased the staff of foresters very considerably simply in order to police the sandalwood areas and see that Crown lands are not denuded of sandalwood without the State deriving any benefit therefrom. The money I refer to is not required in the fund and is required in the Treasury, and that is the purpose of this Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL (Norham) [7.30]: It is comforting to know that if we pass the Bill, taxation will be reduced in some other direction.

The Premier: At all events it will bring us nearer to the day.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, the Premier made a distinct offer, and I accepted it. He could, for instance, reduce the income tax by the amount of the sandalwood royalty he proposes to take into Consolidated Revenue, or, on the same reasoning, he could wipe out the land tax altogether.

The Premier: Not quite.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It would just about suffice. However, I agree that it is of no use hoarding up money in this special fund when the country is in want of money. It is only wise that this royalty should be taken into Consolidated Revenue. We have in the Conservator of Forests an excellent man and a good forester, one also who sees to it that he gets good value for his money. Of course this House has no control whatever over the expenditure under the Forests Act. I do not see why we should not take into revenue account the revenue of the department, and vote the expenditure of the department as we do in respect of all other departments. Of course there is a feeling outside that money received from the sale of our forests should be expended in reforestation. However, nothing can be done regarding the reforestation of karri country without a large expenditure of money. We are a thousand years late in the cutting of our karri forests. There can be no re-growth in such a forest until the

old trees are taken out and removed. In the karri forest the whole crop comes as does a wheat crop—altogether; the trees are all of one age and there is no young growth. In the jarrah forests it is quite different, and so some work can be done there in addition to the work of protecting the forest. But even the jarrah forest does not require a great deal of expenditure, for we cannot successfully plant jarrah. I do not know what can be done for sandalwood. When it comes to growing other important trees such as pine, the expenditure might well come out of loan funds, for it is a very safe investment that will some day return both capital and interest. When we are planting extensively, it is only fair that the money should come from loan funds, not from revenue. We discussed sandalwood here last session day by day for many days, almost for many weeks. It is quite agreeable now to see the crop the Premier is reaping. A few years ago the aggregate paid in sandalwood royalty was £1,500, whereas to-day it is £54,000. Also, whereas the cutter used to get £9 per ton, he now gets £16 for the same work; or, if we allow for his cost of transport, he probably gets £12 now where previously he got £5. However, I do not wish to discuss that. We are dealing with the royalty that comes to the State, and we can congratulate the Premier on having this money to draw upon. I agree with him that it is rightly revenue, because there can be but little expenditure on the reforestation of sandalwood. There will be some little expense in the leasing of the areas, and since it is the custom to pay moneys earned by the sale of wood into a special fund, I should like to see drawn from this source of revenue sufficient to recoup expenditure on reforestation. The department, we are told, had £71,000 in hand at the 30th June last. It may safely be assumed that additions have since been made to that amount, so probably there is no need to provide any more just yet.

The Premier: And I intend to put an item on the Estimates each year to cover any incidental costs.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the Premier will do that it will be a fair thing. It should come out of royalty, not be a charge against a fund for other purposes.

The Premier: That is what I propose to do.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And it is the right thing to do. The State can congratulate itself on the sandalwood royalty having risen from £1,500 to £54,000.

Mr. Teesdale: Do not talk about that; it is a very painful subject.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, we are all quite pleased about it. The member for Menzies is quite pleased.

Mr. Panton: I am always pleased.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, but you have a faculty of always looking pleased. Somehow, I usually find my-

self supporting Bills brought down by the Premier and opposing others that his Ministers bring down. I do not know whether I shall be able to continue to support the Premier, if he really has one or two other Bills coming down, such as I have heard of.

The Premier: You think there is a nigger in the wood pile.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, I am afraid there is. While I can support the hon. member now, I warn him that if he is to bring down more Bills with insufficient notice, there may be trouble. I am satisfied that the Premier will do a fair thing by the Forests Department and that he is doing the right thing in taking this sandalwood royalty into revenue; for in our wildest dreams we never imagined that such amount would be derived from sandalwood.

Mr. PANTON (Menzies) [7.41]: I want the Premier to appreciate the fact that he is receiving £54,000 per annum from sandalwood, and that unless some reforestation is successfully undertaken, he will not continue to receive that sum for much longer. The fact is that the sandalwood is fast being cut out. There are in my electorate very few pullers who have not to travel 50 miles or 60 miles or even 80 miles to get the wood. If the department or the Treasurer is simply going to take all the sandalwood royalty into Consolidated Revenue and do nothing to replace the sandalwood, the industry must soon come to an end. I am not very sanguine about the Treasurer putting much on the Estimates for sandalwood reforestation. Sandalwood takes a considerable time to mature, and the Treasurer admits that nothing has been done respecting reforestation. Sandalwood will grow if it is looked after, but in the districts where sandalwood has been pulled the young stuff is growing up without any care or attention.

The Premier: And wherever stock can get at it they are destroying it.

Mr. PANTON: That is so. We must realise that we have in sandalwood an asset that is returning to the State £54,000 per annum and that that return is being derived from sandalwood taken from Crown land. Allegedly quite a large quantity of sandalwood is coming from private property. It would pay the Treasurer to put on another inspector or two in order to make sure that it is coming from private property.

The Premier: I have appointed one recently, and I am now trying to provide him with a motor car.

Mr. PANTON: I hope the Treasurer will go into this question of the reforestation of sandalwood. We should realise that sandalwood is a big asset that is not being utilised by big companies for big profits. It has been a great asset to the prospectors and other men whom we can ill afford to lose from the back country. Three months' work in the sandalwood in-

dustry has enabled prospectors to provide themselves with foodstuffs, dynamite, and other necessities to carry on their prospecting during the other nine months of the year. If the sandalwood be cut out, prospectors will not have that opportunity, and thus the State will lose the advantages accruing from the work of the prospectors as well as the royalty from the sandalwood. I do not agree with the Leader of the Opposition that the Premier should apply the £54,000 to a reduction of the land tax, or any other tax.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I know you do not.

Mr. PANTON: If it is to be utilised, portion of it should be earmarked for the reforestation of sandalwood. Work in this direction has been too long delayed. I think if the Premier applied £5,000 per annum to reforestation, it would be sufficient. The country around Menzies where the sandalwood is growing is being taken up for sheep and other stock, and the young sandalwood trees are being eaten down. There are tens of thousands of acres that will grow sandalwood, and areas should be reserved for that purpose.

Mr. STUBBS (Wagin) [7.47]: I support the second reading of the Bill. Many years ago the sandalwood in the Great Southern districts was responsible for a considerable amount of business. Anyone who was in the Wagin district a few years ago could have found ample evidence that the soil in the Great Southern is admirably adapted for the growth of sandalwood. Often ploughs exposed roots that many people thought were waakee roots, but when they put them on the fire, they soon found they were sandalwood. Those roots had been in the ground probably 20 or 30 years. I suggest that the Government consider spending some of the money for reforestation of sandalwood on Crown lands in the Great Southern. If there are any number of young plants in the Menzies district that the young stock are eating down, it would be of advantage to experiment in growing them in other parts of the State. We do not want the sandalwood industry to come to an end.

Mr. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [7.49]: I support the second reading and agree that the amount of royalty should be paid into Consolidated Revenue. I wonder whether I shall be in order in discussing the royalty on other timber.

Mr. SPEAKER: No, there is only one question involved and that is whether the money shall be paid into Consolidated Revenue, or dealt with as at present.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I agree that the money should be paid into Consolidated Revenue.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

BILL—MINING DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read, recommending appropriation in connection with the Bill.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [7.55] in moving the second reading said: For a considerable time there has been an agitation on the goldfields for the appointment of mining boards to assist the Mines Department to more effectively develop the gold-mining industry, and this ended in a promise being given that legislation would be introduced. The Bill will give statutory authority for the appointment of mining boards. There will not be any authority for the boards to spend money. That will be the responsibility of the Minister. A central board of five members will be appointed, to be known as the central mining board, and district boards comprising three members, which will be called district mining boards, will be appointed by the Minister. Mining boards have been in operation in Victoria for a number of years, and the practical knowledge of people engaged in mining thus made available to the Government has been of great value in assisting the Minister to arrive at a conclusion as to the best means of helping the industry. It was also urged that prospectors and mining men in various districts possessed a better knowledge of local conditions than could be expected of the departmental officials. Naturally the department is glad to have the advice of such people. The boards have been of advantage in Victoria, but there the industry has declined until it has become almost negligible, and there is not the attention given to mining now that it received in its heyday in that State. The Bill introduces an entirely new principle, but in view of what is claimed will result from the application of the principle, the Government are prepared to give it a trial. The districts are not proclaimed under this measure. They will be proclaimed by the Minister. The members appointed will be men with local knowledge of their respective districts, who will be able to meet to

determine the various propositions brought to their notice. If members of the board are compelled to travel to hold meetings and investigate the claims of certain properties, fees must be paid them. Thus, this Bill is in the nature of a measure requiring appropriation. A considerable amount of money is expended by the Government for mining development, and the total has grown greatly in the last few years. In 1916-17 the vote was £8,000, of which £7,000 was expended. In 1917-18 the vote was £14,000, of which £6,700 was expended. In 1918-19 the vote was £50,000, of which only £8,000 was expended. In that year either the claims were few or the Minister did not see his way clear to grant the applications placed before him. In 1920-21 the sum of £46,000 was voted, and £35,000 was spent; in 1921-22 the sum of £45,000 was voted, and £38,000 was spent; in 1922-23 the sum of £75,000 was voted, and £62,457 was spent; and in 1923 the sum of £90,000 was voted, and £68,748 was spent. Of this expenditure £50,000 alone was allocated to the mining companies at Kalgoorlie as payment for their water supplies. By that means it has been stated considerable assistance has been rendered to the industry. That assistance was rendered by the previous administration in the hope and expectation that the gold output would be increased, and a larger number of men employed. When I was at Kalgoorlie earlier in the year I expressed disappointment that despite this great concession the number of men had not been increased, and that the gold production had not increased to any material extent. But the Chamber of Mines assured me that the number of men employed had increased, and subsequently sent me figures which, they urged, proved their statement. I am not in a position to check those figures, and I must accept the evidence put forward when nothing to the contrary has been offered to me. I regret to say that the expansion of the industry has not been so great as I should have liked. I hope, if the concession is to be enjoyed by the companies, the results achieved will be greater this year. In this country we have advisory boards in connection with prospecting. There is a State prospecting board, and an advisory board at Kalgoorlie and one on the Murchison. These boards meet and discuss the applications made to them, and make recommendations to the head office in Perth. Although there are some complaints regarding the administration of these bodies, I think they have justified the responsibilities imposed upon them. The complaints generally have not been as regards the board itself, but with respect to the men who have been assisted.

Mr. Taylor: Men have taken advantage of them.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Some men will take advantage of opportunities provided under a scheme of this kind. The board, however, have given their best attention to the work imposed upon them, and have accepted their responsibilities and carried them out in a manner that calls for my approval.

Mr. Teesdale: They are not paid, are they?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. The district board will represent the whole community and will be representative of certain localities in the district. Naturally the members cannot be expected to leave their occupations to meet at some common spot, or advise upon a property unless their expenses are paid.

Mr. Taylor: What will be the necessary qualifications of members of the board?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They should have local knowledge and considerable experience in practical mining operation. I want to see men appointed who know the game, and who have spent the greater portion of their lives at it. These are the qualifications that will influence me in making the appointments.

Mr. Teesdale: Will they be paid an annual salary?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. The present advisory board in Perth is comprised of the Assistant Under Secretary for Mines (Mr. Lang) who is also the principal Registrar; the State Mining Engineer (Mr. Montgomery); the Government Geologist (Mr. Gibb Maitland); one of the mining engineers (Mr. Harris); the member for Cue (Mr. Chesson), who has had considerable experience in mining; and Mr. Cornell, who represents the Eastern Goldfields. That board gives its services in purely an honorary capacity. I have every reason to be grateful to them for the responsibility they have taken off my shoulders, and for the practical support they have given to the administration. I do not know all the members of the Murchison Advisory Board, which is comprised of practical mining men who have given the greater part of their lives to the industry. In view of the necessity of securing the personal interest of the people of the goldfields, and giving them an opportunity of putting into practical operation their views regarding mining development, this measure ought to receive a trial. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Taylor, debate adjourned.

BILL—NOXIOUS WEEDS.

Council's Further Message.

Message from the Council notifying that it had agreed to the amendment made by the Assembly to amendment No. 4 of the

Council, but that it insisted on the amendment No. 1, now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 7.—Add the following subclause, to stand as subclause (5):—The amount of such costs and expenses shall be deemed to be rates imposed by the local authority on the said land for the financial year current when such costs and expenses were incurred, and shall be a charge on such land accordingly, and the provisions of the relative local Government Act dealing with the sale and leasing of land for rates shall apply to and in respect of such costs and expenses, and any charge arising thereunder may be enforced in the manner therein provided.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:
I move—

That the amendment insisted on by the Council be agreed to.

I opposed this amendment on a previous occasion. I have since referred the matter to the Crown Law Department, and find that I entirely misunderstood its intentions. I now think it will be of value in the Bill. I was of opinion that the amendment would make the Bill useless, inasmuch as it would provide that although the owner of land could be sued and judgment given against him, the cost of the rates could not be secured until five years had elapsed, and that the local authority would have no power to enter upon and lease or sell such property. I am now given to understand that my interpretation is not correct, and that judgment can be secured against the owner for rates. This also applies to a person who owns the land but is away.

Mr. Taylor: The land will be responsible.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:
Yes. After five years the local authority can enter upon the property and sell it or lease it, and so can secure the rates due to them.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—MAIN ROADS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 20th November.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [8.12]: We have dealt with a number of Bills imposing taxation. The principal source of income will be derived under the Traffic Bill, which is now being considered by a select committee. I do not know how far that committee intend to

go with their inquiries, or when they will report to the House. It is expected that they will report on Tuesday. I hope the Minister will not go into Committee on this measure until the Traffic Bill has been disposed of. The financial considerations involved are an important feature of the debate. I have often been asked by the Good Roads Association to introduce a Bill of this kind. The Minister said we had it under consideration for some time, but had done nothing. It was no use attempting to introduce a Main Roads Bill unless the House said where the money was to come from. I admit that nothing was done, but this was not the fault of the ex-Minister for Works, who was most anxious to bring it down. I could not, however, see where the money was to come from unless a good proportion of it was drawn from the farmers, who are already overtaxed. We now have the Bill before us, and it is the duty of the House to consider it. The Minister says it is to be a non-party measure. I hope it will be treated as such, for drastic amendments will have to be made if we pass the second reading. I hope the Minister will let us know that he is prepared to accept amendments, and in some respects drastic amendments. Every member is keenly and vitally interested in this measure. All will realise what will happen if the Minister gets through the Traffic Bill and the taxation proposals under this Bill. The main feature of the Bill relates to Government control. Road boards and municipalities are, to a great extent, to go by the board. The Government will take the fees under the Traffic Bill and they will have the land tax under the measure now before us. I presume the tax will be fixed in the Land Tax and Income Tax Bill year by year. While the Minister proposes to take a tax of 12d. in the pound on the unimproved value of the land without any exemptions, that may apply only during the coming year.

Mr. Panton: The remedy is to keep the present Minister in his position.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Lord forbid that we should leave him there for long. I am sure the Legislative Council would be sorry if he were to be kept there for any lengthy period.

The Minister for Works: I am only a stranger here; Heaven is my home.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Bill provides that the Public Works Department shall be in control, but the local authorities ought to be used, because in a scattered country such as we have, surely the local authorities will do much better work when there is so little money to spend. The new money that will be available as a result of the Bill will be comparatively limited. If the Minister proposes to construct the roads he will need a great deal of money, that is, if he wishes to construct perfect roads, and I feel sure that he will not be able to do that with the income he will derive for years to come. I hope it will be possible

to borrow money that can be made a charge against the collections under the two Bills dealing with these matters so that we may have a considerable sum to spend in the near future. I am told, however, that it will be difficult to spend a large sum of money in any one year. The title indicates that the Bill will not deal with main roads alone but with the construction of developmental roads as well. The main road board to be appointed will be merely advisory, and the Minister will still retain control. The board will consist of three Government officials.

The Minister for Works: No, two.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: According to my reading of the Bill provision is made for three Government representatives on the board.

The Minister for Works: The engineer will not be a Government official.

Mr. Taylor: He will be one of your Government engineers.

The Minister for Works: He will not.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am afraid there will be three Government officials, and two representatives of the local authorities. The Minister is to appoint the chairman, and even if I am wrong in my belief that there are to be three Government officials on the board, the fact remains that the Minister will have power to appoint the chairman. It is provided, moreover, that in the event of the Government officials not being able to attend, other Government officials may be appointed to represent them. Thus the Minister makes sure of having a majority at any meeting of the board.

The Minister for Lands: That is the trouble I experienced when I adopted your Closer Settlement Bill. I provided for Government officials sitting on the board.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is a different matter altogether. The Minister acted wisely in adopting our suggestions.

The Minister for Lands: I thought I was wise, but now you are objecting to it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There is no such provision for the representation of the members sitting on behalf of the local authorities. There will be no power exercised apart from the Minister, who will be all-powerful. The work, too, will be done by the Government department. Although the local authorities may be asked to carry out works, the Minister, with the approval of the board, will pay for the work from the local board's own funds. It is not intended that the board shall operate over the whole State, and probably in the early stages a limited area only will be included within its scope and consequently a limited amount of work will be done. We all admit that the main roads of the State should be kept in decent order, and we must also admit that that is a task beyond the powers of road boards. Their funds are collected from the ratepayers together with small advances from the Government.

The Minister for Works: They will be smaller in future.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is an interesting admission for the Minister to make. It must be borne in mind that road traffic is much heavier nowadays. Some years ago, when vehicles were hauled by means of horses, the loads were comparatively light. With the advent of motor lorries the roads are cut up very considerably. Apart from main roads we have to consider the position of developmental roads. I presume that developmental roads are those required to open up new territories. That work must be undertaken by the Government. Without such work no part of the South-West could be opened up and settled. Roads must be constructed there before settlement can take place. New settlers are not expected to pay road board rates for two years after coming into possession of their holdings. Hence the necessity for the Government undertaking the construction of these roads.

The Minister for Works: And it will be so under the Bill. The provision you refer to governs the spending of money from Commonwealth subsidy, together with State funds. The board will have control and spend that money.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am grateful to the Minister for that admission. He says that the Commonwealth grant plus the State contribution on the £ for £ basis will be spent by the board on developmental roads. The board will be charged with the work that is now done by the Public Works Department. I do not think that position is quite fair, because the cost of administration will have to be borne by the people here, for the Minister has already told us that he cannot charge administration costs against the Commonwealth grant. The roads that will come within this category are those required for the development of new territories or such other roads as may be from time to time declared by the Minister to be developmental roads. I do not think the House should agree to the inclusion of developmental roads under the Bill. Group settlement cannot proceed without developmental roads. The Government spent a large sum of money for the construction of developmental roads through the Peel Estate and when the land is opened up between Perth and Bunbury further expenditure will be required.

The Minister for Works: Those roads will not come within the scope of the Bill. It is clearly indicated that the Bill applies only to those roads that come within the scope of the Commonwealth grant.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But developmental roads must be those required for the development of new territory.

The Minister for Works: The roads to the groups do not comply with the conditions governing the Commonwealth grant. I know

that you spent Commonwealth funds on those roads.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and when I change places with the Minister I will spend more.

The Minister for Works: No, you will not. They found out all about it after you left office, and I have had to make it good.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am sure the Minister will spend Commonwealth funds on these roads. He may not be able to do so to-day, but next year he will probably get the consent of the Commonwealth Government to use funds in that direction.

The Minister for Works: I will try to do so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Many roads leading to mining areas and outer parts are really developmental roads.

The Minister for Works: Yes, if they come within the scope of the Commonwealth conditions.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Bill should deal with main roads throughout the State. I suppose the Minister can recover some of the money from the purchase price on the sale of land. There is a section in the Act which provides for the provision of developmental works from the proceeds of such sales, and the Minister should secure that money when it comes to a question of constructing roads to open up the country. I hope that when the Bill is dealt with in Committee we shall agree to the board being constituted in accordance with the Victorian legislation, and that there should be two engineers and a financial man on it. That board should have control. If the local authorities have not been consulted regarding the Bill, that omission should be rectified before we deal with it in Committee. The main road board should be made an independent body, and not merely advisory, as suggested by the Minister. If he insists upon the Bill being passed as it stands he will be wrong. I will not consent to the second reading of the measure unless the Minister agrees to amendments being made in Committee.

The Minister for Works: You always insist, but I must not do so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We insist, but that is as far as we can go. Members opposite had better be careful, because the eyes of the local authorities are upon them, and I assure them that some of those local authorities are very concerned. If we pass the Traffic Bill and the taxation clause in the Bill we are now considering, and if the Minister's estimates of the fees to be collected are correct, we shall have £100,000 of new money. The Federal and State grants total £217,000. That money is being spent now. The license fees collected now total probably £50,000, and added to the £217,000 we get a grand total of £267,000 that is being spent to-day. The Minister estimates that he will receive £75,000 from fees. I have told him that he

will get £250,000 under his proposal, but I intend to see that he does not collect that big sum. The Minister declared that the land tax would yield £60,000, whereas it will bring him in £83,000. Therefore he will have £140,000 of new money, all contributed by people in the country. If that £140,000 is sufficient, we can agree to this measure. It is not a bit of use taking into consideration the money now being spent. If we are to progress, we must provide for the traffic that exists, and consequently we must have good roads. Whilst I do not mind asking the people to pay, I do want them to get the services. The Minister will not mind my saying that they are hardly likely to get these services if the work is put under the control of a board that will be independent of a Government department. We know that it is impossible for men under such conditions to get similar results to those obtained by road boards.

The Minister for Works: The Bill provides for using the local authorities.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: As an example of what some road boards can do, let me instance the condition of the road through Belmont which is under the control of the Belmont Road Board. There is no road anywhere, maintained by the Government, that is in anything like a similarly good condition. I do not know where the Belmont board get their revenue from. If the Minister will agree that the Bill will not be taken into Committee until after the Traffic Bill has been disposed of, I shall not oppose the second reading. If we could connect our principal towns with the metropolitan area by means of good roads, it would be a decided advantage to the country districts. My only fear is that we shall not be able to get enough money under a reasonable tax. My friend from Menzies wants taxation. I am willing to face a fair thing, to face a tax that the people can pay, but I will not agree to a clause that will impose taxation such as is suggested in the Traffic Bill. I shall give the second reading my support only if the Minister behaves with some degree of reasonableness when the Bill gets into Committee. The Bill is a non-party measure, and therefore we can afford to be reasonable and endeavour to make it workable.

The Minister for Works: I hope you will.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Let us protect the people who are to foot the bill; and let us make the burden as reasonable and as light as possible. The Minister is very proud of his handiwork. If I were the member for Roebourne, I should probably ask the Minister if he won the Bill in a lottery.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The Legislative Council would not give him a chance to win anything in a lottery, let alone this Bill.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: At any rate I will support the second reading.

Mr. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [8.40]: I also desire to ask the Minister not to take the Bill into Committee until we have received the report of the select committee on the Traffic Bill. I am quite prepared to assist him to get the revenue he requires, but not the revenue which these measures will bring him. I wish to deal with the remarks the Minister made with reference to the road board's executive. He did not altogether give that body a fair deal. I have a lot of matter here relating to the executive of the road boards, and I have no doubt I could keep the House going for some hours. I have no wish to do that, but I do hope that the Minister will not press the Bill to the Committee stage too soon. This is a resolution that was carried by the road board conference, which the Minister said was of no assistance to him—

This conference is of opinion that a Bill similar to the Country Roads Act of Victoria should be introduced, with modifications suitable and adaptable to Western Australia, and that a board be established to take over control.

After that the conference carried several other resolutions. The reason for carrying the resolution I have read was that they wanted the Victorian Main Roads Act, because the conditions in Western Australia were not the same as those existing in Victoria. In Victoria the local authorities rate under the annual value and not on the unimproved value. The difference between the Bill we are now considering and the Acts of the other States is that the Minister here wishes to take the revenue from the people and employ it directly on the roads. In other countries the cost of the construction of a road is spread over a period of from 20 to 30 years.

The Minister for Works: Not in all cases.

Mr. LINDSAY: Here is one of the other resolutions that was carried—

Instead of road boards, in their inability for lack of money, having to deal with the total cost of construction and maintaining main roads, they would, under the proposed Bill, be liable only for half the cost of the loan raised for construction of main road permanent works in their own districts to the extent of 6 per cent. per annum, $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. being credited as interest on loan, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to a main roads sinking fund until the loss is paid off.

The difference between our proposal and that of Victoria is that in Victoria loans are raised by the Main Roads Board. The shires have the work performed in their particular districts, and are charged by the Main Roads Board up to six per cent. In our case, however, I take it that as in some parts of the State, and particularly in the South-West, there are developmental roads, the measure will be proclaimed all over those

districts. Thus some districts may be paying taxation for a considerable time before any of this money is spent in them. In my district the maintenance of roads is very cheap, but we in the wheat belt are much more prosperous than the rest of the State, and therefore owe a duty to the rest of the State to bear our proportion of the expense. To make roads in the South-West will require a huge sum of money. Both the mileage cost and the upkeep will be heavier.

The Minister for Lands: South-western landholders will pay more because their land is more valuable.

Mr. LINDSAY: It has cost £15,000 to make 11 miles of road between Northcliffe and Pemberton. Certainly that would not be the cost in drier areas. When introducing the Bill the Minister said that it was a non-party measure. I quite agree with that. Some of my remarks will not be endorsed by the party to which I belong, but I agree that we should support the measure. I know of no better means of taxation than that suggested by the Bill, always providing that not more than the Minister's estimate is collected. The hon. gentleman, however, has been most conservative. He has taken the revenue figures of the past, while this measure is for the future. Motor traffic is now so great that the Minister's figures are inadequate. Estimates should be made of future revenue. The Minister said he hoped to get £203,000 made up as follows: Traffic £73,000, land tax £60,000, discontinuance of road board subsidies £25,000, and tax on petrol £43,000. My idea of the Minister's explanation is that the Commonwealth Government will furnish £96,000 for developmental roads provided we furnish pound for pound, and that the Commonwealth Government will also find £96,000 for main roads on the same basis.

The Minister for Works: I said that that was hinted at, but not yet decided.

Mr. LINDSAY: To me it appeared that the Minister estimated he would receive £200,000 odd conditionally on this State finding pound for pound, and that therefore he had introduced this Bill.

The Minister for Works: Not at all. The amount for developmental roads will be entirely outside the other £96,000.

Mr. LINDSAY: Then I am not sure what the Minister wants this Bill for. Evidently my conclusions are wrong. As the Commonwealth raises its money by taxing us, I thought that this Bill represented an easy means of getting some of our money back and using it for road construction. Therefore I thought the amount might be raised by direct taxation. But if the Minister wants to raise a great deal of money to make main roads not only for us but also for those who will come after us, it is too much. Taxation would be unduly increased. However, I founded my figures on

the Minister's suggestion that he would get roughly £200,000 annually from the Commonwealth Government. This Bill has two important features. One of them is the raising of revenue. The Minister in that connection suggested two means: a petrol tax, and a tax on the unimproved value of land. The petrol tax I agree with. In many quarters it has been suggested that a tax on motor tyres would be more just. I do not share that view, because petrol would be generally used by vehicles travelling along the road. On the other hand, the man who continually uses his motor car would get a great many more miles' use of the road than the man who uses his car only now and again. Tyres do not always wear out with travelling. Therefore the petrol tax would be more just. I am not altogether in favour of taxing the unimproved value of land, but there are two things for which such taxation would be justifiable. One is the reduction of railway rates, and the other the construction of main roads in country districts. It is common for members of this House to compare the amount of revenue received from the metropolitan area with that received from the country districts. The Minister for Works drew such a comparison, stating that if a tax on the unimproved value of land was imposed, nearly two-thirds of the revenue under the Bill would be paid by the metropolitan area, and that half the land taxation would be so paid. A few weeks ago the Premier, in introducing another Bill, said in reply to an interjection that city values were half the land values of the State. In connection with the same Bill the Minister for Agriculture, also replying to an interjection, said—

Half the revenue under this measure will come from city properties, because it is in the city where the values are.

When I was speaking on another Bill, the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) interjected—

You said the value of land amounted to 40 millions, and yet the returns show 21 millions. How can you say they are so high when the Commissioner says they are only 21 millions?

The position is that even the land values of the city are increasing so rapidly that the Minister must make his estimates ahead, and not behind, as he evidently has done. Some time later I moved for a return of the figures. That return has been laid on the Table, and it states—

The estimated unimproved value of metropolitan lands is £15,500,000, and the estimated unimproved value of agricultural lands is £19,000,000. The estimated unimproved value of country and goldfields town lands is £3,000,000, and the estimated unimproved value of Crown leaseholds, as assessed under the

Land Tax and Income Tax Assessment Act of 1907 is £40,000,000.

The report of the Commissioner of Taxation for 1923-24 shows that the total value of our lands is £27,336,148, but he prefaces that valuation by saying that the analysis of land tax assessments for the year 1921-22 shows that the land values of the State in two short years have increased from £20,000,000 to £40,000,000. Further, the report of the Commissioner of Taxation states—

The revaluation of country lands is progressing, and during the year six road board districts have been completed, making a total of 13 revalued since the amalgamation. Twenty-seven others are nearing the stage of completion, leaving 39 outside the Crown leasehold and mining areas still to be commenced.

Then the Commissioner gives a table of six road board districts which have been revalued, showing the old valuations and the new. Four of those districts are in my electorate. The total area of the nine districts is 3,955,000 acres, and the estimated value on the old basis was £1,856,233, and the estimated value on the new basis is £3,313,811. I have mentioned the figure of £40,000,000 given by the Commissioner of Taxation. Now, the Minister estimates to get £60,000 from unimproved land values taxation. But if we take a halfpenny in the pound on £40,000,000, the result is over £83,000. In the cases of the road board districts I have quoted, the unimproved values have been considerably increased, and as there are, according to the Commissioner of Taxation, 66 road board districts still to be revalued, the further increase in estimated values must be very heavy. Taking the same basis of calculation, the valuation, when the other road boards have been revalued, will amount to £10,688,766, a halfpenny in the pound on which would yield £22,268. The revaluation should be completed before very long. Thus a tax of a halfpenny in the pound is likely to produce over £100,000. As regards the petrol tax, I do not know how the Minister has arrived at his figures.

The Minister for Works: On the importations for last year, approximately.

Mr. LINDSAY: The Minister could well increase his estimate by 20 per cent. for next year.

The Minister for Works: Not by 20 per cent.

Mr. LINDSAY: Certainly by a considerable percentage. I have figures on the subject from some of the road board areas in my electorate, and they show a high percentage of increase. I believe the probable increase could be closely estimated by the importers of petrol. Undoubtedly the increase in the consumption of petrol is rapid, and for that reason also

the Minister's figures should be largely inflated.

The Minister for Works: It is not a heavy tax.

Mr. LINDSAY: No. I do not object to it. Those who use the roads should pay for them. But the Minister will be collecting considerably over £100,000 in traffic, probably £150,000, and this petrol tax and land tax will give him a lot more than he expects. I doubt whether it will be necessary to impose the unimproved land tax, but I am awaiting the information the select committee will give us as a guide as to how much the Minister really will get. There is a limit to the amount of increased taxation the people can pay, and I believe that limit is very little beyond what will be collected under the Bill. If it is necessary to go in for a big scheme of road development it should be done by borrowing money and spreading the cost of the loan, not only over those here at present, but also over those to come to the State in, at all events, the near future. I have here two Victorian Acts, one dealing with existing country roads and the other making provision for their development. These Acts deal with the problem in the way I have suggested. They recognise that in order to improve the roads a very large sum of money is necessary, and that the people cannot furnish all that money at one time. So provision is made that the loan for existing roads be paid off in 21 years, while the loan for the development of roads is extended over 31 years. It is not fair to make those people already in this young State carry the whole burden in the interests of those who come along within the next few years. I hope the Minister will not take the Bill into Committee until we have dealt with the Traffic Bill.

Mr. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [9.3]: I support the Bill, and I commend the Minister on having brought it down. We have awaited it for many years. In the main I approve of the Bill as it stands, although when in Committee I shall have one or two amendments to move. I have sat on road boards, and I can say that at every conference we ever held the burning question was that of main roads. Everybody knows that the main roads of Western Australia are in a most deplorable condition. The time has arrived when something must be done. Anything that is at all reasonable will be approved by the people. The ex-Minister for Works was going to bring down a Main Roads Bill, but his proposal was to have taxation without representation. One feature of the Bill before us is that the road boards will have representation, while the taxation will be general, everybody having to pay. One thing I cannot quite agree with is the raising of so much money every year. In my view it

would be better to borrow the money and spread the loan over a long period. I am afraid revenue will not provide anything like sufficient for the purpose. Another thing is that we do not know what roads the Minister proposes to put in hand first. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading, and I hope the Minister will be reasonable when in Committee.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [9.8]: I will support the second reading, although I believe that in Committee some amendments will have to be made. I want to see the board, not the Minister, the administrative body in control. Further, the chief engineer should be, not a member of the board, but a servant of the board. If he be a member of the board it is conceivable that he might become the chairman of the board, and so the board would develop into an agent of the Public Works Department. The board should consist of five members, four of whom should be appointed by the Government. One member should be an eminent engineer in private practice who would give certain time to the affairs of the board; the second member should be an officer employed in the development of the lands of the State; two others should be nominees representative of the various local authorities, while the fifth should be temporary, the nominee of the local authority through whose district the road was being built.

Mr. Marshall: And if the one road were being built through three different road board districts at the one time, what then?

Mr. ANGELO: The board might be temporarily added to by the appointment of representatives of each of the three districts. Some opposition has been shown to the petrol levy, and we frequently hear it called a tax. In my opinion as a motorist, if we are going to get good roads, 3d. per gallon will represent, not an impost on, but a saving to, the motorist; for on good roads he will get a very much greater mileage. It is a very moderate levy indeed.

The Premier: I tried for more, but the characteristic modesty of my colleague would not permit it.

Mr. ANGELO: I compliment the Minister on the Bill, and I am quite certain it will have the approval of the House.

Mr. NORTH (Claremont) [9.13]: The Minister says it is a non-party Bill. Judging by the debate, it appears to have an all-party support. It might be better if provision were made for building the roads out of loan rather than revenue. I would go further and suggest to the Minister that the tax proposed on the unimproved value of the land should be used to provide interest on the capital fund, while the tax on petrol should be used as sinking fund and for the maintenance of the roads. Because, even after we build main roads we shall

have to provide for their subsequent maintenance, and the increased consumption of petrol that will follow the making of good roads will serve to provide that maintenance. If it be good enough for the State to build railways out of loan, obviously roads should be built on the same principle. We are not going to put down roads haphazardly. We cannot expect that a couple of hundred thousand pounds will do more than a little of what has to be done, but every year we delay the building of necessary roads we waste money in other ways. It will be said that the danger of building trunk roads on a capital system is that they may be worn out before the loan matures, and that no asset will remain. That has not been the experience of local bodies which have put down better roads. In practice they have obtained the benefit from them, and probably gained before the loan matured. There are other features to be considered. One is the limiting of the size and type of vehicles to a greater extent than is contemplated in the Traffic Bill. If it is necessary on railroads to limit the size of trucks and the weight of engines, it is equally necessary to limit the size of road vehicles according to the roads built for them. I cannot understand why we allow 8 and 10-ton lorries with solid iron tyres to use our roads. It is impossible for any system of roads to prove successful so long as those vehicles are permitted to undo the construction work undertaken for normal users. Is it fair that the State should have to find thousands of pounds for roads and have those roads damaged by these heavy vehicles? In some parts of the world it has been found that solid tyres ruin the roads, whereas pneumatic tyres are quite satisfactory. If this is so, we should be more severe upon users of solid tyres. This question should receive attention right away. When in the Old Country some years ago I found that the best roads there lasted for only two or three years owing to the heavy motor bus traffic. In those days the motor buses used solid tyres, just as we here have motor lorries using solid tyres. Fortunately for our metropolitan area most of the motor buses are using pneumatic tyres. We should consider the advisableness of making prohibitive the use of solid tyres. Manufacturers in England are producing pneumatic tyres of all sizes. The council with which I was connected purchased a 3-ton Thornycroft built to carry a four or five-ton load. With its solid tyres it has played havoc with the roads, and the council is considering fitting it with pneumatic tyres. If pneumatic tyres are available for that class of vehicle, it is obvious that manufacturers in the Old Country have discovered there is something wrong with the solid tyres.

The Minister for Works: The Traffic Bill provides for a 40 per cent. increase for solid tyres.

Mr. NORTH: But even so, if a trader found that it was still cheaper to use solid tyres, he would do so. Many of the solid tyres used on heavy vehicles have been worn to the thinness of paper so that they are really iron tyres working under the guise of solid rubber tyres. We should consider how far it is advisable to go in making good roads. In the Old Country the roads are perfect. I was talking to a farmer who had harvested a crop of 40 bushels of wheat to the acre and was comparing it with our average yield of 10 or 12 bushels. He was complaining about his position and said he was losing on his wheat, even though he had such a high yield. The reason was attributable to the magnificent roads outside his farm. Although he was reaping 40 bushels to the acre, he could not make the profit that could be made on a 10 or 12 bushel crop grown 12,000 miles from the world's market. Therefore it is possible to reach a point when the primary producer may be so heavily taxed for good roads as to kill the object for which they were provided. If we ascertained what trunk roads were necessary, a loan schedule could be drawn up, and the money raised from the land tax could be used to pay interest, etc., on the loan. The proceeds of the petrol tax and other temporary annual dues could be devoted to meeting the wear and tear on the roads. We should not be obsessed by the fact that we have such vast areas in which to provide roads. We should consider the number of vehicles using the roads. It does not matter how many thousands of miles of road we have to build so long as they are built on a loan schedule and properly maintained. If we have 20,000 motors using the roads, that is the factor to consider. Viewed in that light, we are not so much worse off than Victoria, because when that State builds 100 miles of road it has to stand the wear and tear of perhaps 30,000 vehicles, whereas the road we build has the wear and tear of only 3,000 or 4,000 vehicles. So we need not lose heart on that account. If the Government dealt with the question from the point of view of capitalisation—probably 1,500 miles of first-class road would be necessary—they could get that started in the next 12 months and provide for interest, sinking fund and maintenance as I have suggested. If the number of motors increased, the proceeds of the tax would increase accordingly.

Mr. SAMPSON (Swan) [9.25]: It is difficult to adhere strictly to the discussion of this measure because it and the Traffic Bill are like Siamese twins. The Traffic Bill seeks to elucidate somewhat similar problems to those dealt with by this measure. There is no question that the Main Roads Bill has been desired for a long time. The great advance in transport has rendered it necessary that roads should be put in a better state of repair. If they were put in only a trafficable state, we should

have much to be thankful for. Motorists and other road users labour under a heavy disability on account of the class of road they have to use, and from time to time users of roads have stated that conditional on good roads being provided, they are prepared to pay additional fees. If good roads are provided the people will willingly pay for them, and so the obligation rests upon the Government and the local authorities to do all they can to provide these most necessary facilities. The Bill will apply to only those portions of the State coming within the main roads area. The Bill opens up many questions. A select committee is considering the Traffic Bill, and I hope that the Committee stage of this Bill will be deferred until the report of the select committee is presented. Borrowing for road making has often been advocated, and few objections could logically be raised to this method of providing funds. It has been stated that it is not a good principle to borrow for road making inasmuch as a certain road had been twice constructed out of loan funds. If the authorities in control of roads only realised the vital importance of maintenance, this disability would not arise. Coade, the Australian authority on road making, has stated definitely that maintenance should commence as soon as the construction work is completed. As regards the Federal and State grants, an amount estimated to be sufficient to maintain the roads in good order for 12 months is provided, and this undoubtedly will have a very good effect. The first year in the life of a road, as in the life of a tree or a human being, is of the greatest importance. I hope the principle of providing for maintenance will be followed in all road board construction. I am sorry the member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale) is not with us to-night, for he has frequently expressed the opinion that the subsidies paid to road boards could well be used to meet the interest charges on loans for road construction. Those roads properly constructed and maintained can then be looked after by the local authority, and the subsidy which hitherto has been supplied from the traffic pool would enable the interest to be paid. The proportion of land tax on the unimproved capital value of land has been mentioned. The Minister has stated it is his intention to impose a tax of 1½d. in the pound, and hypothecate that amount towards road construction. That seems a reasonable amount. Since we are to have a land tax, unquestionably it could not be used for a better purpose than the construction of roads. The petrol tax is welcomed even by those who have to pay it. It is welcomed because we had the assurance of the Minister that every penny raised by it is to be used for the construction and maintenance of main roads. This money will be paid from the main roads trust account, but the traffic fees provide a different subject. These traffic fees are in the nature of income of road boards, as

also are the road board subsidies. The Minister stated that a sum of £25,000 would be secured from the subsidies hitherto paid to different road boards. This means that every penny that has been paid to them in the form of subsidy will in future, under this Bill, go to the main roads trust account. On the face of it that is unreasonable. The Bill sets out that it shall apply only to such portions of the State as shall be proclaimed from time to time. Since the whole State is not to be proclaimed under this Bill the Minister will need to reconsider the question of those boards which are not contained within the area proclaimed, but which will no longer receive the comparatively small subsidy hitherto paid.

The Minister for Works: You misunderstand me. I said it was only when they came within the proclaimed area that they would not receive the subsidy.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am glad I misunderstood the Minister. He stated that the total amount of revenue to be derived from the land tax, subsidies, the petrol tax, and licenses, would be £210,000.

The Minister for Works: Those figures apply to the whole State.

Mr. SAMPSON: As the member for Claremont said, it is very easy to criticise, but extremely difficult to put forward criticism of a constructive nature that cannot in turn be criticised. I now come to the Federal grant. I do not recall any statement having been made by the Minister in respect to the expenditure of this money outside the proclaimed area. Possibly he will make this clear in his reply. The whole of the State must receive consideration, and no portion of it, whether inside or outside the proclaimed area, must go without its share of the funds that are available. The Minister with characteristic modesty—

The Minister for Works: I must be slipping.

Mr. SAMPSON: —has suggested that advice from the different authorities would be welcomed. I am sure they are grateful for this, and are most anxious to help him. The Road Boards Association, at their recent biennial conference, carried a motion expressive of their desire that the Minister would bring in a Bill on the lines of the Victorian Act, with modifications applicable to Western Australia. The Minister certainly criticised somewhat caustically that Act, but perhaps on reconsideration he may have come to the conclusion that the motion was backed up by the weight of public opinion. An important feature of the Victorian Act is that the board of control consists of three members. It is in this regard that possibly the Bill can be amended. The advisory board under this Bill is to consist of five members to be appointed by the Governor. It is claimed, I think with good reason, that three members would be more likely to do

effective work than the cumbersome number of five. I am not advocating that something in the nature of an autocracy should control our main roads, but we know that if a body consists of too many members, the work suffers, and there is not the same progress made in respect to the decisions arrived at or in respect to the initiative concerning work to be done. It is suggested that of the three officers who should form the board, two should be expert highway makers, and the third an expert administrator. The expert highway makers might possibly be officers of the Public Works Department. If that were the case I take it that any privileges enjoyed by such officers would not be interfered with, and would be taken up again upon the resumption of their duties in the department when they had finished their work on the board. I am delighted to know that the advisory board is to have absolute power. That announcement will be received with gratification by all concerned. It is important that those who are appointed to carry out the work should be something more than a mere buffer between the Minister and the public, and should have power to carry out those works which in their judgment are essential. I should like to refer to the work of the Road Board Association, which for many years has given consideration to road problems. The president, Mr. Royal, and other officers, have not spared themselves in carrying out their duties. Members of this Assembly are indebted to men like Mr. Royal, Mr. Malloch, president of the Good Roads Association, and those associated with them. Without any monetary payment they have carried out a valuable public work, and done all in their power over a number of years to bring about improvements to the thoroughfares of this State. The greater progress that Western Australia will make in the future will, to some extent at least, be due to the work of those gentlemen. I trust that when the advisory board is appointed, consideration will be had for the privilege at present enjoyed by local authorities of giving to local people the work that is required to be carried out. Many settlers look to the local road boards for work from time to time. Seeing that a considerable proportion of the revenue of these boards will be transferred to the central authority, that privilege should be continued. The problem of road making and road maintenance is becoming more complex every year. Now that people realise the grave importance that attaches to good roads, we may hope that the time is not far distant when instead of towns being separated by a road, they will be joined together by one, and that those who have occasion to use the highways will be able to do so without danger or discomfort. When the board has been appointed and has got

thoroughly into its stride, possibly the matter of the Prince's highway may receive some consideration.

The Minister for Lands: Where is that?

Mr. SAMPSON: It connects the capitals of the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Lands: The Commonwealth have plenty of money to waste. Let them build the road.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister should not interject in that strain.

Mr. SPEAKER: Perhaps the hon. member will proceed with his speech.

Mr. SAMPSON: I believe the time will come when all capital cities will be connected by road.

The Minister for Lands: Wait till our townships are connected with the capital city first.

Mr. SAMPSON: Certainly.

The Minister for Lands: And our settlers should be connected up with the main roads first.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have not faltered in my desire to provide our settlers with good roads, but at the same time I trust I shall live to see Western Australia connected up with the Eastern States by road.

The Minister for Lands: You will never live to see all the roads provided that are necessary for our own requirements.

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope I shall never reach the stage when I shall be quite satisfied with our roads.

The Minister for Lands: We have quite sufficient to think of regarding the roads in our own State without thinking about roads in the other States.

Mr. SAMPSON: We are faced with grave problems relating to road construction. Nevertheless I trust we shall be connected up with the Eastern States by means of the Prince's highway. Already the other States are connected by means of that highway, and it requires but little imagination to visualise with improved motor transport and a passably good road, a constant stream of visitors from the Eastern States using the Prince's highway as a means of getting to Western Australia, spying out our land, and taking up holdings for wheat production or the depasturing of sheep and cattle.

The Minister for Lands: We have thousands of people who cannot get tucker, and yet you talk of the Prince's highway.

Mr. SAMPSON: I take it there is no general objection to aiming at the sun.

Mr. Chesson: But don't hitch your wagon too high.

Mr. Teesdale: It is the word "Prince" that is the red rag.

The Minister for Works: I do not object to the name of the road.

Mr. Teesdale: Call it "the worker's road" and then it will be all right.

The Minister for Works: Why not call it Angwin-avenue?

Mr. SAMPSON: I trust the second reading will be agreed to, and that during the

Committee stage members will apply themselves to the task of effecting alterations that will enable the Bill to prove generally beneficial and that it will give to the people what they have so long desired—a good main roads Bill.

Mr. BROWN (Pingelly) [9.50]: I am pleased that the Minister has made this Bill a non-party measure. As a road board member of many year's standing, I have had considerable experience in road making, and I realise that good roads are essential. It is generally recognised that a main roads Bill is required. I trust that the Minister will not press the Bill to the Committee stage to-night. A select committee has been appointed to consider the Traffic Bill, and this measure is closely allied with that Bill. If the select committee secures evidence that can be obtained from the chairmen and secretaries of some of our road boards, we may get information that will result in blessings being showered upon this Bill.

Mr. Teesdale: I can see a lot of blessings coming from select committees!

Mr. BROWN: As I understand it, the reason for the introduction of the Bill arises from the Federal grant. When we first heard of that grant, we understood we were to get something like £100,000, and the road boards were eager to get their share. I think the Minister had allocated amounts to the various road boards, but after the visit of the Federal engineer it was found that the money had been dealt with on a wrong basis. The result was that the Minister had no alternative and had to introduce the Bill.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Surely that is not the reason for the introduction of the Bill.

Mr. BROWN: It is, in a way. Although the local governing authorities have been advocating such a measure for some years past, I think the Federal grant had a good deal to do with it. As the Bill is framed, I do not believe it will be of advantage to the State because the incidence will fall heavily on the taxpayers in the country districts. How are we to determine what shall be main roads? If we start from Spencer's Brook we find we have the York, Beverley, Brookton, Pingelly, Cnaballing, and Narrogin Road Boards. The width of the road board areas would not exceed more than 20 miles. The worst road in the Pingelly Road Board area runs parallel to the Great Southern railway. If that is declared a main road and thousands of pounds are spent upon its reconstruction, it will mean that we shall provide a good road that will compete with the railway. If we do not proclaim that road, we shall find that whatever road is proclaimed in these road board areas, it will be surrounded by railways. Any motorist will inform members that the best roads are those away from the railways. Some of the boards I refer to have been in existence for many years. If money were allocated to those boards, with the advantage of the men of

experience at their disposal, better use could be made of the money than if the work were carried out by a main roads board. We must study this question carefully. Are we to build main roads adjacent to, or parallel with, our railways in order to permit motor traffic to compete with our State-owned railway system? The Minister should give serious consideration to that aspect. We have been told that the worst road in Western Australia is that running from Perth to Armadale. Why is that so? It is because most of the traffic by road traverses that section. The result is that it is impossible for the local road boards to keep the road in proper order. There is a grave danger to be faced in constructing roads suitable for motor traffic. We have heard of working bees on roads nearer to Perth, and we have heard of the condition of the Perth-Fremantle road. I am told that the heavy motor lorries are responsible for the condition of those roads, and they are operating successfully because railway freights are so excessive that people are able to purchase expensive motor lorries and compete successfully with the railways. We must be careful regarding the taxation to be imposed under the measure that the people are not placed in a position less advantageous than at present. If we take £1,000 away from the roads boards, and do not make that money available in some other way, the people concerned will not get the same benefit as the result of the Main Roads Bill as if they were left in their present position. The Bill will be applied only to proclaimed areas. I do not know what the powers of the Minister will really be, but it is possible that certain districts will not come within the scope of the Bill.

The Minister for Works: The board will decide that.

Mr. BROWN: Most of the bad roads that will require attention are in the outer, newly-opened up areas. The nature of the road can usually be determined by the surrounding country. If the road passes through morrell country, there are bound to be difficulties because the soil is loose and in summer it cuts up easily. If the road is constructed through salmon gum or gimlet country, it is usually found that it stands well. Nowadays improved methods of road construction have been installed, and with the aid of graders it is possible to do for one shilling or two shillings a chain what in former days cost ten or twelve shillings a chain.

Mr. Taylor: Road construction is dearer now than ever before in Western Australia.

Mr. BROWN: That is not so.

Mr. Taylor: Macadamised roads are more costly now than before.

Mr. Teesdale: But they do not macadamise roads in these days.

Mr. BROWN: That is so, and if the traffic is not too heavy the roads can be kept in good order.

Mr. Taylor: That is only formation work.

Mr. BROWN: If the Federal grant is to be an annual one, and we get £200,000 a year, and the State has to provide another £200,000, we shall make good roads throughout Western Australia for motor traffic. If that be so, there will not be the same necessity to build railways into new areas that exists to-day. The Government might have done better and more economical work if they had distributed the Federal grant amongst the road boards. I suppose Western Australia has a greater mileage of roads than has any other State in the Commonwealth, but we cannot compare our roads with those of Victoria. We know how densely populated is the State of Victoria, and the wealth of that State. At the same time the cost of constructing roads in Victoria is greater than it is in Western Australia, for the reason that in Victoria they have not the material. It would be better in Western Australia if some of our old established road boards were given the opportunity to carry out the work of road construction. If that were done they would utilise the special Federal grant to the best possible advantage. Those who use motor vehicles should contribute largely towards the cost of maintaining the main roads. The road, say, from Midland Junction to York covers a distance of about 50 miles, and passes through country where there is practically no settlement. The York Road Board and the Greencourt Road Board have to keep that road in order for traffic that goes over it, and most of that traffic perhaps comes along from the Great Southern districts. If the Federal grant were allocated to the road boards, much better service would be given. The further we get away from the metropolis the better the roads become for the reason that there is not the same amount of traffic as is to be found closer to Perth. I suggest that the Minister should not take the Bill into Committee until the report of the select committee now dealing with the Traffic Bill has been made available.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [10.5]: The principal topic discussed in connection with the second reading of the Bill is want of finance. There has been a demand for good roads in this State for many years. That has been brought about principally by the Automobile Club which has caused to be pasted on the wind screens of motor cars the words "We want good roads. It is a very easy matter to cry out for good roads. But those who say "We want good roads," also declare "but we do not want to pay for them"

Mr. Sampson: Yes, we do.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. That has been the argument right through this discussion. The cry for good roads has

come principally from those who reside in the city, a few men who want to go out into the country joy riding. They are the people who want good roads, but who want them constructed at somebody else's expense. The roads that are required in this State are those that will assist settlers that are engaged in the work of development. If members go to the group settlements they will find men there struggling because of the absence of anything in the shape of roads. The group settlers require subsidiary roads, in fact subsidiary roads are needed throughout the State to-day. I said to the Minister for Works immediately before he introduced the Bill that he would have people crying out day after day, and week after week, for good roads, and that they would be the people who would object to pay for them. A main roads Bill is necessary, but hon. members must realise that money will have to be found to enable the roads to be constructed.

Mr. Griffiths: This Bill provides for developmental roads.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have heard a lot about the Federal grant. The amount is £96,000 and it is being given conditionally that the State provides another £96,000. And the Federal people have the right to say the class of road that is to be built and the width, and we must also provide the cost of administration. I wish I were in the position to tell them to keep their £96,000. This £96,000 is merely a sop to the people of the State. The Federal Government have so much money as the result of increased taxation that they do not know what to do with it.

Mr. Sampson: They cannot use it in a better direction than in the making of roads.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the Federal Government were anxious to assist in the development of a State they should say to the State Government "Here is £96,000 to enable you to construct roads in your State. Build them in the best possible way and spend the money to the best advantage." (Members: Hear, hear.) Do they suggest anything like that? No. They tie us down hand and foot. They say to us "Build a certain class of road and build it a certain width." Some of the roads are to be 22ft. wide, but these are not required in certain country districts. Take the road referred to by the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) from Pemberton to Northcliffe. That class of road was not necessary there, but the money had to be expended. Of course the road is well built, but while that was constructed, subsidiary roads which were of considerably greater importance were permitted to remain in an impassable state. There are many of these roads over which it is not possible to take a dray. The dray has to be unloaded and the goods

carried so as to permit the dray to be drawn over it. I wish to give credit to the Federal Engineer, Mr. Hill, for his desire to assist us. He said that the legislation that had been passed dealt with main roads entirely, and added "If you can show me that you have one main road leading to a part of the State that is being developed, then that road can be constructed." But he pointed out clearly that a small road from an area in course of development to a main road, could not be brought within the scope of the Federal grant. I drew his attention to a map containing numbers, and showed him places where there were 20 settlers. He replied "Yes, you can utilise the money provided it is a main road." But of course we could not declare it a main road. An hon. member referred to Prince's highway. I do not care whether it be called Prince's highway or King's road or anything else.

Mr. Sampson: Or Angwin's Avenue.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Even Angwin's Avenue. I believe there is such an avenue. It is pure humbug to bring up the question of Prince's highway when we have hundreds of miles of roads in this State that need to be made. We should not take the slightest notice of any such suggestion about the provision of a road which will enable a joy ride to be undertaken from Perth to Adelaide. We are a small population and yet we cry out for institutions similar to those that are asked for in places where there are millions compared with our thousands. The States of Victoria and New South Wales have each a population of nearly 2,000,000, and the people in Western Australia—a mere handful of 360,000—expect to receive the same consideration as that which is given to the people of the bigger States. How is it possible for Western Australia, possessing the enormous area that it does, to have the same class of road as that which is in existence in Victoria? It cannot be done. And because that is the position, members squeal like guinea pigs. They squeal, too, because they are asked to pay. How can they expect roads to be constructed without money? As one who has taken an active interest in local government affairs for nearly 30 years, I can declare that if any part of the State will suffer under the Bill in respect of its roads it is the metropolitan area.

Mr. Taylor: Who is squealing now?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am merely drawing attention to the position.

Mr. Lindsay: Prove it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have not the mileage of roads for the contribution that has to be made.

Mr. RICHARDSON: That is the position.

Mr. Sampson: Look after the country, and the city will be all right.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the district I represent had an income of only 12d. in the pound it could have made half a dozen more main roads than it now has. The greatest portion of the money will be used on country roads. The metropolitan area is not crying out about this. It is only the country people who are raising any objection to paying for roads upon which they can travel to the city in a better manner than they do now. It is true, as has been suggested, that they may operate in opposition to our railways. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown) is, however, in error when he says that people cannot carry their goods on the railways owing to the railway charges to the metropolitan area. They can transport their goods from the port to their warehouses at a lower rate than from the railway station to the same destination. The reason for this is that there is a saving in the handling.

Mr. Pantou: A saving of three handlings.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is the handling that costs money, not so much the freight on the railways. It is because of the different system of transport that is now adopted that there is the saving in the cost of handling, and it is not because the railway rates are higher. If the railway rates were reduced by one-half tomorrow the motors would still carry the goods at an even cheaper rate. I agree with the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) that road making is more costly to-day than ever before. Last Sunday I travelled over a road not far from Pinjarra. The local authorities had recently run the plough over it. The road that was supposed to have been constructed was in a worse condition than the part that had not been touched.

Mr. Sampson: They received the money too late.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Why did not the ratepayers pay up when the rates were due?

Mr. Sampson: That is another problem. The rate-owner is always with us.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In the country there are many naturally hard roads. The road board then come along with one of their machines, with which they are supposed to make roads, and tear up the hard surface, with the result that when the rains come the loose material causes vehicles to be bogged.

Mr. Lindsay: That is not fair.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is true.

Mr. Lindsay: It is not correct.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The roads are ruined in this way before the dry season comes on.

Mr. Lindsay: There are hundreds of miles of good roads in the wheat belt made with these machines.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The wheat belt is only a small portion of the

State. I have heard the Leader of the Opposition say that our road boards are spoiling the roads already in existence. We see evidence of that in the South-West.

Mr. J. H. Smith: We can only patch the roads, for we have not sufficient revenue with which to make them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They tear up their roads with the plough, and call that road making. It is certainly a cheap method, but it is not effective.

Mr. J. H. Smith: That is only camouflage.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We are dealing with a large State, not playing with our own back yards. Thousands of miles of road are required, and these cannot be made without money.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is the point.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: People must make up their minds, when they clamour for roads, that they will have to pay for them. Those who use the roads should find the money.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Not quite that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If this Bill is passed hundreds of people in the metropolitan area will have to contribute towards the main roads of the State who have not even a bicycle.

Mr. J. H. Smith: They will benefit from them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But the men who have motor cars, motor wagons, motor buses, and so on, are howling because they have to pay.

Mr. Chesson: Have they even a perambulator?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If some of them have not, they should get one. Unfortunately perambulators use the foot-paths and not the roads.

Mr. Sampson: You are giving the Minister another scheme for taxation.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I hope members will deal reasonably with the Bill. The Minister for Works is asked to delay its passage until the Traffic Bill is dealt with. What is that?

Mr. Lindsay: A taxation measure.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The only thing that connects it with this Bill is the question of finance.

Mr. Sampson: That is reasonably important.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It makes no difference to this Bill, except that if it becomes law and the traffic fees are reduced it will curtail the operations of the board that is to be appointed under this Bill. It will make no difference whether this Bill is passed a month hence so far as the traffic fees are concerned. I have long realised that we are all prone to cry out for something we cannot get, and cannot afford to pay for. People have continually been crying out for roads. The member for Claremont (Mr. North) referred to the roads in England. I have seen roads there

that I would be ashamed to see in this State. They are only lanes, not roads. One could almost hop across them.

Mr. Davy: Some of them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The country lanes of England certainly look well, but some of them are far worse than the roads in this State, and are almost impassable. I hope we shall not take a lesson from England.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They are very good roads.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Many of them are not.

Mr. Sampson: There are some beautiful roads there.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, and we have some good roads here.

Mr. Sampson: It is hard to find a bad road in England.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Not at all.

Mr. Sampson: I have been there since you have.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I was there in 1919.

Mr. Taylor: There are good roads in Singapore.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, but we cannot afford to pay for roads like that. It is not as if we could go down to the Fremantle wharf, throw a bucket into the harbour, and pull it up full of sovereigns. People are always wanting to compare Western Australia with other parts of the world. Some time ago I visited Sydney, and was requested to look at the roads on the outskirts of the city. The roads around Perth are a thousand times better than those around Sydney. We have nothing to be ashamed of here in the matter of roads or anything else when we consider the size of our population. No part of the world that I have heard of has shown greater development or done more work in road construction or anything else than this State, with its small numbers.

Mr. Taylor: It stands alone.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If people are not satisfied with the work that is being done, they should realise that they cannot have good roads unless they pay for them, and should be prepared to put their hands into their pockets.

Mr. Griffiths: Or find a better 'ole.

On motion by Mr. Griffiths, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.26 p.m.