

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 1st November, 1927.

	PAGE
Urgency Motion : Traffic Act, motor taxi routes ...	1507
Question : State hotels, profits ...	1504
Bills : Land Tax and Income Tax, Council's pressed request ...	1534
Railways Discontinuance, Com. Report ...	1535
Mental Treatment, Com. ...	1536
State Insurance, 2A. ...	1539

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

URGENCY MOTION—TRAFFIC ACT.

Motor Taxi Routes.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the following letter from the member for Claremont (Mr. North):—

Dear Sir, I desire to move the adjournment of the House this afternoon under Standing Order 47 in order to debate a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the suspension of the North Cottesloe to Perth taxi service. Yours faithfully, Charles North.

It will be necessary for seven members to rise in their places.

Seven members having risen,

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [4.35]: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

This matter has been before the Press for many months. I am taking action this afternoon particularly because of the statement of the Minister for Works as reported in the Press as follows:—

The effect of the decision of the Legislative Council to disallow the regulation of the Traffic Act can be summed up under three headings. First, it will deprive the Cottesloe people of a taxi-omnibus service; secondly, it will prevent those who were engaged in this business from continuing; thirdly, it will cost the State more money to administer the Act. The decision has no legal effect so far as the Fremantle taxi service is concerned, because the time in which objections to the regulations must be taken had expired some weeks before notice to move was given.

According to this statement it is the opinion of the Minister that, by reason of the disallowance last week by the Legislative Council of the motor taxi regulations, the people of Cottesloe have been deprived of their taxi service from Perth. That is the real reason

why I am bringing forward this motion to-day. I want the House to learn the position that has arisen, to deal with it, and take the necessary action to restore the service, and the confidence of the people in the administration of the department upon the question generally. This taxi route question has far too long been the shuttlecock between the Routes Advisory Committee and the Press. We have had long articles in the papers for many months, there have been public protests, and complaints in Parliament. I have brought the matter up over and over again, on the Address-in-reply and on other occasions. I have also asked questions about it. I feel there has been too much time wasted on the part of members, and the Press and the public generally, in raising difficulties which need not have existed. The route from North Cottesloe to Perth has been in operation for nearly 12 months. That route came into being by reason of the failure of the Routes Advisory Committee to grant a local bus service from Cottesloe to Perth. The board were within their rights, as was also the Minister, in deciding that such a route should not be operated. The opinion of the department was that there was no need for a direct transport service between that part of Cottesloe and Perth. The people of the district then tried other means to obtain a direct transport service to the city. At the time the Minister for Works was limiting taxis to the main Perth-Fremantle-road, some seven or eight drivers, instigated by local feeling and the public need for a service, opened up this route between the outer districts of Cottesloe and the city, with a terminus in St. George's-terrace. No objection could have been taken at the time to this action by the Government, for the motor bus definition did not apply to taxis. They had every right to run as they were doing. Later on, however, the Government enforced their provisions whereby all taxis became buses. Then began the persecution against this particular run. I do not definitely charge the Minister for Works, or the Routes Advisory Committee, or Inspector Hunter with being the cause of the trouble that has occurred. I only desire to ventilate this trouble, and to show that the men have been harassed in many directions. They have continually been moved from pillar to post, and from one route to another. For a period of nearly eight months they had no route at all. It may be said there was no need for the service. On the other hand, applications were constantly made in the

proper manner through the routes committee for a route. The Minister himself was not able to deal with these matters, and everything was referred to members of the committee. Application was made for the route which these taxi drivers began to operate about 12 months ago. I am not sure that the application was ever replied to. Whether or not that is so, both then and since, from what has appeared in the Press, and from what has been said on the public platform and elsewhere, it has been obvious to the Routes Advisory Committee that the route required by the pioneers of the service was the route that the residents of the district concerned demanded. Never have the people been able to get from the committee the route they patronised. During the early part of the session a route was gazetted. This route became the laughing-stock of the Press. It had no more connection with that which was being run on commercial lines by the service than the man in the moon had to do with cheese. It was decided upon, I think, without any direct information being obtained from the local governing bodies concerned. I am informed that the member of the local governing bodies on that committee, during the time the route was being drawn up, was away in the North-West. When the route was gazetted early in this session, the regulations governing the route were very properly disallowed in the Upper House. This was not done because another place desired to throw cold water on the service, or to interfere with the working of the committee or the administration of the Minister under the Act. It was done because no other course was open to that Chamber to deal with the position that had arisen, whereby the board had laid down a route that was quite useless to those concerned. Further evidence was taken. I am told that the mayor of Cottesloe went to the Routes Advisory Committee to endeavour to obtain the correct route in place of that which had been disallowed. On that occasion the mayor, who was not able to speak for the Perth end of the route, gave evidence in regard to his own district. I am glad to say that the committee on that occasion were able to gazette a route that was perfectly satisfactory to Cottesloe. When, however, it came to the question of the terminus and the route followed, after it left the Claremont district, a second route was gazetted that was as useless as the first. The committee laid down that the taxis

should leave at Wellington-street by the markets. This is a badly lighted street, and it is well known that drunks and women of ill-fame wander all over that part of the city at night. It is very galling to the people of the districts concerned to see a service gazetted which suits them for the most part, but having a sting in the tail. It is like giving a man a cheque and cutting out the signature. They were granted the route they had been asking for after 12 months of protests, public meetings and tirades in the Press, but there was the sting in the tail, namely, Wellington-street as the terminus. The objection to the new route, which led to the second regulations being disallowed, and to my taking up the time of the House this afternoon in dealing with the matter, was that Wellington-street was fixed upon as the terminus. The mayor of Cottesloe made a statement in the Press last week showing what an unsatisfactory terminus that was for the route. Neither the Routes Advisory Committee nor the Minister had to grope in the dark to find out the needs of the service. If they had made a search at all there would have been no need for the tirade of abuse, and the general complaints that followed on the choice of the second route. Everyone knew that the old route had been followed by the taxis for 12 months. The public knew and the committee knew. An application had been made for it, and has since been made for it. Public meetings have been held. All these rumours cannot flit about in the dark. The news must have reached those concerned. There must have been some strong reason why the authorities took the action they did. The reason was that the Minister was evidently of the opinion that Perth should remain forever a deserted city, a place of the dead, that our main street, St. George's-terrace, one of the finest streets in the Commonwealth, should forever be a sort of monument of quietude and peace, and should retain about it the atmosphere of 80 or 90 years ago, and remain in slumber. In great streets like those of New York and London, and the Champs Elysee in Paris, the authorities are only too pleased to use those thoroughfares for motor traffic. It is a poor lookout for Perth that we should have a Minister who thinks we should have a deserted city. St. George's-terrace is a magnificent avenue, and greatly impresses visitors. One visitor came to Perth a few months ago from abroad. He said

that Perth was a beautiful city and beautifully situated, but that every day was like Sunday. Instead of having a street to be proud of, filled with lively bustling traffic, everything on wheels has been driven out of it except a few old derelict cars that have their stands in the terrace because they happen to belong to business men who use them during the day.

The Premier: Fancy talking about that type of car standing outside offices in the city—derelict cars!

Mr. NORTH: I will take that back and merely say that cars are standing there.

Mr. Mann: Let the statement stand.

Mr. NORTH: No, I thank the Premier for the correction. A comparatively short time ago the Premier returned from a visit to some of the big cities of the world. When he came back to Perth he must have been struck with the church-like appearance of our streets. Here because two or three motor buses appear on the road the authorities come along and say, "Out you go! The idea of buses and cars appearing on our thoroughfares! Let us polish the streets so that we can see our faces in them, but let us have no traffic on them." The thing is ridiculous. No Minister, board or any local authority can much longer champion such a condition of affairs, nor can they any longer condemn people who desire to travel by taxis to stand in some back street among the purloons, the riff-raff and prostitutes of the city.

The Minister for Railways: That is not right.

Mr. NORTH: Here I have a statement made by the chief citizen of Cottesloe.

The Premier: He is not always right.

Mr. NORTH: We are entitled to take the word of a leading citizen like the Mayor of Cottesloe.

Hon Sir James Mitchell: Of course you are, and he is backed by the opinion of the people.

Mr. NORTH: In a statement published in the Press on Friday he said—

On the first Saturday night of the operation of the Wellington-street stand I saw 14 drunken and semi-drunken men and women between William-street and the taxi-cars, of whom 11 were foreigners. On the second Saturday night nine "drunks" were encountered.

The Premier: We all read that.

Mr. NORTH: That is the mayor's statement. As a matter of fact, the Mayoress of Cottesloe herself was accosted three or

four nights ago while waiting for a taxi. That was nearly a month after the regulations had been gazetted, during which time the police had had ample opportunity to clear up this trouble. The only possible conclusion that can be arrived at by the unfortunate returned soldiers who have operated over the old route for 12 months is that although they have been following the route chosen by the Mayor of Cottesloe and endorsed by the local authorities, yet the powers that be have said to them that they must start from some back street, where girls cannot wait for motors without being asked to go home with louts who lounge around the streets.

The Minister for Railways: That is not true.

Mr. NORTH: I cannot bring the girls to this Chamber to make their statements on oath, but can merely give the House the information that I have. This question, which is really a little one, should have been settled by the people concerned quite easily. The Minister should give the taxi drivers the right to use the route they have pioneered for many months, because they did so when requested at first to serve a district that badly required some such convenience. At that time there were no regulations gazetted to kill their operations. Now, however, we are accustomed to see headlines in the papers, and the reports set out that from that day henceforth the Cottesloe services must be operated from somewhere else.

The Minister for Works: You are exaggerating now.

Mr. NORTH: Those who are in charge of this department do not appear to realise that taxi drivers cannot drive up and down the street in order to fill their cars with passengers so that they may transact their business. Taxi driving must be a commercial proposition, just as Foy & Gibson's or Boan Bros. must be. It would be just as logical to send Foy & Gibson, for instance, to some back street in Leederville and instruct the firm to carry on their business there, as to expect the taxi drivers to ply over some back streets and expect them to be able to do so at a profit.

Mr. Davy: Do the Government want the taxis to pay?

Mr. NORTH: It is hard to know what is at the bottom of it all. I speak purely as a representative of the people who have become accustomed to a service that is now

held up. To show how things are progressing and the panic-stricken state of affairs that obtains in the traffic department, I will quote one instance. One of the returned soldiers who did not take out a license under the last regulation, whereby the taxi drivers were charged £10 10s., encountered trouble. What happened was that half of the drivers using the route paid for their licenses and the others did not. The idea was that three or four would keep going one way and if they were stopped, the others would be able to continue.

The Minister for Works: Why not say plainly that they set out to defy the law?

Mr. Mann: Why should they?

Mr. NORTH: I will come to that phase of the question. Here I have a license that was granted a day or two after the latest regulations were disallowed. That will illustrate to hon. members the extraordinary state of affairs that obtains in the traffic department. The license is dated the 1st August, 1927—but that does not seem to be the right date!

The Minister for Railways: No, it is not.

Mr. NORTH: The fact is, however, that the license was granted a day or two after the regulations were disallowed. We know it was said during the early stages that these unfortunate drivers were competing with the railways.

The Minister for Railways: Are you sure of your facts?

Mr. NORTH: Yes. I was giving an instance to show what has been happening. Despite the fact that this license was issued after the regulations had been disallowed, a driver was "pinched," to put it vulgarly, for driving his car on the route prescribed on his license, under regulations which have now been disallowed. There is the position. The police go round taking names, forcing people to resort to back roads and making the drivers take out licenses, and yet the drivers are prosecuted for running over routes set out on their licenses. In effect, they are told that they cannot run over the route prescribed, as I have indicated, and they have to put their cars in the shed. Some of the men have paid £40 or £45 in 12 months in order to provide the people of Cottesloe with a service. Most of those people live 20 minutes away from the railways. The motor service was established to serve districts a long distance from the railways and has proved a boon. Without saying anything disparag-

ing regarding the motor bus service or any other service, it is a most extraordinary commentary on the present state of affairs when hon. members realise the onslaught made by the Minister, or someone else—I do not know who it is—on these unfortunate men. It is not because the routes I refer to compete with the railways. Those routes are along the railway line. The services are those provided by the charabancs and the Alpine taxis. They may be said to be in competition with the railways. I can understand some objection being taken to them, but the charabancs are as good as gold! They are not being interfered with. I realise the good service that has been rendered by the buses, but I should have thought that if any motor traffic were to be regarded as in competition with the railways, it would be the motors running along the main roads. I would mention the "Westralia" bus service that runs round the outskirts of Buckland Hill. We had to fight for months for that service and had to go to court about it. At last the route was gazetted. An onslaught was being made on a service that would convenience people living more than 20 minutes away from the nearest railway service. Similarly, the service that is the cause of all the trouble to-day and with which I am dealing specifically, is one to serve residents who live a long way from the railways and the main motor services. Take the existing conveniences away from the residents of Cottesloe and they must walk long distances to the train. Take away the Alpine taxis and the charabancs, and we will fend the railways. But how different their position is to that of the residents of Buckland Hill and of Cottesloe, who live, in many instances, more than 25 minutes away from the railway! If they are to have any service at all, it must be the one that is being harassed at present. If it is taken away, the housewives will have to remain at home and will not be able to go to the city to engage in shopping. I am aware that there are difficulties in connection with the problem. The Government deal with major matters of State import and this is a small side-issue. I would remind the Government of the story told by Uncle Remus to the little boy. It was about the concourse of animals that had gathered together in conclave. After a while the elephant started shuffling about and trod on a crayfish. The latter was only a small thing and did not matter, so the conference proceeded. A little while later the elephant again shuffled about and trampled

upon another crayfish. Then, as Uncle Remus told the boy, the rest of the crayfish saw red and they burrowed down into the bowels of the earth and brought forth the flood! There is a lesson to be drawn from that, and if the present condition of affairs affronts public opinion much longer, there will be a flood. Whether it will mean throwing out the Government, I do not know, but something solid will be done. I raised this question prior to the last elections and saw the Minister himself. I told him of the exasperated feeling that existed in my electorate about the way the taxis were being harassed. He was good enough to postpone the question for some months, and I appreciate the action he took on that occasion, which enabled the people of Cottesloe to value the service they had. Thus, when the present effrontery started with somebody drawing an absurd route over a map in the office, public feeling was stirred still more. They objected to the taxi drivers having to abandon the convenient service they had been maintaining in favour of a route over which they could not earn five bob. The men honestly feel that an injustice has been done to them. They have endeavoured to follow the new route and the experience has nearly ruined some of them. Some had to give a bill of sale over their furniture in order to pay the ten guineas, the imposition of which was thrust upon them under the recent regulations. Those men have been nearly ruined by being forced to operate over a non-paying route. Others, who could afford to pay the impost, did so, while some could not pay the amount at all. Our chief duty is not to the taxi drivers as such, but to the people as a whole. Why should the wage earners and breadwinners, as well as others who do not own their own cars be punished and penalised as they have been under the Traffic Department's regulations? Why should these taxi drivers be told that they shall not run somewhere, but must drive over some other route, only to be told in the following week that they must run somewhere else? This has actually been done. During the trouble regulations were published in the Press and many people, who were not in a position to know what those regulations really signified, thought that the publication meant that the new routes were to apply straight away. Others who knew what they meant, were able to operate on the old routes until the new regulations came into force. I do not wish to delay the House unduly because I think

hon. members have read the reports that have appeared in the newspapers and they will have a grasp of the position. All that is asked is an assurance from the Minister that he will have the injustices I have mentioned remedied as soon as possible, so that the seven returned soldiers, nearly all of whom are unable to earn a living at pick and shovel work owing to disabilities arising out of the war, may again be able to earn a living, for which they are paying upwards of £35 a year already in licenses and fees. If the Minister will give me that assurance, I will have much pleasure in withdrawing the motion. If he is determined, however, to use a phrase of his, to vigorously maintain the law, it will be different. He may say that in the Eastern States the authorities have crushed the taxis and that he will do so here as well. In my opinion that will not be a good line to take. It may not prove a good line in the Eastern States. We know that 100 years ago the workers smashed machinery because they considered it was not wanted. Are we to smash every new form of transport, because the railways may be adversely affected by seven unfortunate returned soldiers who are driving a few people to Perth on a hot day? The thing is out of all proportion. The Premier expressed the view some time ago—and I think hon. members were inclined to support him—that we had £20,000,000 tied up in our railways and therefore all other forms of transport were viewed with suspicion and should be controlled. Of course it must be, but we can carry that too far. Parliament, having got that view well rammed into it, passed the Traffic Act Amendment Bill, giving the Minister power to regulate routes and limit vehicles. But the reason why those routes were disallowed in another place was because they were not practicable. The evidence obtained by the board and influenced by Inspector Hunter was not evidence justifying the commercial aspects of the running question. We must allow business to find its own level, and we must respect the rights of the public, who pay the taxes. Even if the railways are to lose a couple of hundred pounds per annum because of these services, the loss is the taxpayers' and it is the taxpayers, not the Routes Advisory Committee, that sent us here. So we cannot lay it down as a thesis that because the railways are a public utility they must for all time curb this new form of transport. The second principle

is on the question of law and order. Of course it is a good ruling principle that the Government are supreme and must be obeyed, and that these unruly drivers cannot play fast and loose with the regulations. But when we passed the amending Act giving the Minister power to regulate routes and limit vehicles, surely we assumed that he would act upon the evidence of the people who use the routes. We did not expect him to take the power given him by the House to mean that simply by giving an order he could say "Frame a route that is non-paying and will result in the ruin of these men." It may not be realised that these Cottesloe taxi men are nearly ruined by the new regulations. They went to Wellington-street and they kept to the route. I advised them to obey the law and give the Government an opportunity to amend their grievances. For a month they have done that. They have seen their girl patrons insulted—some of them have gone home in tears to their mothers—by louts accosting them at the terminal point given by the committee. The men have lost their business and some of them have had to mortgage their furniture to find the ten guineas over and above the weekly money they earn on a run not worth more than 8s. or 9s. On the principle of law and order we cannot expect the taxi men or the public to support regulations that are in defiance of the existing routes demanded by the people. We did not hold in Claremont and Cottesloe two large meetings merely for fun. We showed the Government what we wanted, and all we got back was no route at all for several months, and in the end two impossible routes that were promptly disallowed by another place. It is a striking fact that a member who supports the Government took the necessary steps to move in that matter. That should show the Government that up to the present it has not been a political question, but a question of the rights of the people. The third and last point I wish to make is an appeal to the Government's sense of fair play. These taxi men have not had a fair run. They have been harried from pillar to post. They have had the police on their tracks the whole time over little things not worth talking about, things such as the right to pick up passengers and put them down, and overcrowding—everything under the sun has been declared to be wrong.

The Minister for Works: Absolute nonsense!

The Minister for Railways: Why not put up your case fairly?

Mr. NORTH: I am doing so. The whole matter could be so easily remedied. It would not take five minutes if the Minister were to say "Seven taxi men have paid their licenses, or will do so. We now know the case. We are not going to have any more trouble. We will let them run on a route improved at great expense by the local authorities." The moment the local authorities spent the money making good the routes, they had to turn attention to some new route at the behest of the Routes Advisory Committee. That is not good. The people feel they have no routes at all. There are 24,000 people in my electorate. It is not their fault that they have only me, a poor back-bencher, to get up here and speak for them. Probably there are in my electorate as many people as are represented by so many of the Cabinet as occupy the front bench. If we had proper representation my electors would not have to rely upon one voice.

The Premier: You are making wild exaggerations.

Mr. NORTH: If we had a redistribution of seats, my electors would have at least two members, perhaps more. Yet we are advised to respect law and order, when the people know they have not their proper representation in Parliament, and cannot get the speaking power they need.

The Premier: If every other section had the same power as they have, I do not know where we would be.

Mr. NORTH: At present there is only one member to speak for 24,000 people. I defy the Government to put up any instances of dangerous driving on the part of the taxi men, or overcrowding, or obstruction in the streets, at all events before the men were harried about as they have been. I have taken the liberty of moving the adjournment in order to bring this matter before the Government. I merely want to have it settled and to allow the taxi men to earn their living in a peaceful way. They are returned soldiers, men who, for the most part, are unable to earn a living with pick and shovel. One has a wife and six children and can scarcely carry on. He has given good service and stuck to his guns through all sorts of persecutions for 12 months. I ask the Minister to give these

men justice and to take the matter in hand personally and override his committee and others, who would have the whole place a deserted village of the dead, and would drive all traffic out into the bush. I plead that these men be allowed to earn their living in the manner they are entitled to do.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [5.9]: I am prepared to add my word of protest to what has been said. I want the hon. member who moved the motion to understand that if he puts it to the vote I shall be unable to vote for it. But I would be lacking in my duty if I did not do what I could to draw attention to the way in which these taxi men have been treated during the last few months. We have had them moved about all over the place, their routes altered and their terminal points shifted from one street to another. We have had them taken from William Street, Fremantle, to one side of Queen Street, then back to William Street, and back again to the other side of Queen-street. Before the Traffic Act Amendment Bill was introduced, the Alpine Taxi people had a conference with the Minister and asked him to impose a restriction on the number of vehicles plying on the route. After the Bill was passed, they again saw the Minister, who said the desired restriction would be made. The maximum number of cars to be allowed on the routes were those taxis the owners of which could satisfy the Commissioner of Police that they had plied continuously on the Perth-Fremantle-road prior to the 1st September, 1926. When the Minister moved the second reading of the Bill, he spoke in favour of restricting the number of vehicles, and pointed out the dangers to the public for want of such restriction, and the precarious living the men upon the run were making while no restriction was imposed. And the regulations subsequently gazetted imposed a limitation. Those regulations went right through, although another place objected to certain of them. After those regulations were gazetted, the Minister was approached by the taxi people, and he promised to suspend the regulations for the time being. That was done. Later new regulations were gazetted, after the taxi people had waited for some considerable time. Then those regulations were disallowed by another place. Still later, new regulations were gazetted, but again another place

disallowed them. At present, the men driving the taxi cars operating on that route have to work from 12 to 18 hours per day. With anything like a reasonable restriction such as was proposed when the Bill went through, and in the regulations of the 14th January, the industrial conditions of the drivers would be considerably improved, and they think it would even be possible for the drivers on that run to work only eight hours per day. On 22nd September new regulations were put up repealing the earlier regulations, which provided for limitation and which the department said were ultra vires. If they were ultra vires, where was the necessity for the regulations of the 22nd September, repealing them? I think it was merely a legal quibble, and that if we were to go to some of the K.C.'s. in Perth we should get a different ruling from that given by the department. There is also the matter of the Fremantle terminal point. The present terminus is most dangerous. The taxis have to proceed down Adelaide-street and take a right hand turn into Queen-street. While William-street may not have been all that could be desired, the present terminus is much more dangerous. And, under the regulations, the charries have been shifted to Queen-street and thence into Short-street, one of the most dangerous streets for charries in all Fremantle. The vehicles, in order to turn round, have to get right over to the wrong side of the road. But while the taxi men are struggling for a living—some of them cannot raise enough to pay their instalments on their cars—the charries have been enjoying a relatively quiet time. This is largely due to the fact that they are fortunate enough to have a representative on the Routes Advisory Committee, whereas the poor taxi men enjoy no such privilege. It was stated in another place when the department were putting up their case that the Fremantle council were in favour of the Queen-street terminal. I have made it my business to inquire, and I find that is not so. Far from it. A couple of years ago the Fremantle council found it necessary to get a Bill through Parliament to enable them to resume property in order to make Queen-street. They made Queen-street at a cost of seven thousands pounds, and the traffic department now take charge of it and use it as the terminal point for the taxi cars. I am informed by the town clerk of Fremantle that the council as a body do not

favour the use of Queen-street as a terminal point. After the taxis were shifted from William-street to Queen-street the municipal council passed a by-law making two stands in William-street for taxi cars. The council, of course, had no power to fix routes, but they were so much in sympathy with the taxi owners using William-street that they provided two stands there. The council bitterly complained that, although a communication was sent to the Public Works Department on the 23rd September, they have been ignored in that they have not received an answer. Any local governing body should be consulted in the fixing of terminal points within its boundaries. I believe the Perth City Council have been consulted, and it is only right that the Fremantle council should be consulted. A few days ago I introduced to the Minister a deputation that included the mayor and Councillor Sumpton. The mayor said that if the Government insisted on using Queen-street as a terminal point, they should allow not more than two cars to be there at a time. He added that after the council had spent £7,000 to make a new street in order to relieve the congestion, the department had no right to take charge of the street and fill it with taxi cars. As the member for Claremont said, I believe the whole thing could be fixed up in a few minutes at a round-table conference. There is not much outstanding between the various parties and the question must be brought to a head sooner or later.

Mr. North: That is so.

Mr. SLEEMAN: There is another question affecting the use of Mount's Bay-road. The taxis turn up Thomas-street, a road that is very dangerous owing to the fact that, with the tramway on one side, people going in a westerly direction have no chance of passing the trams on the right side, but have to pull around to even stop to allow the taxis coming from Cottesloe to pass. The road is not only dangerous, but is rough on tyres, and very few cars will use the road as a matter of choice. While hard working people of Perth and suburbs are deprived of the use of taxis on the Mount's Bay-road, huge lumbering vehicles are allowed to use it. I hope sweet reasonableness will prevail and that a round-table conference will be arranged so that the matters in dispute may be amicably settled.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Norham) [5.19]: We have heard an excellent speech from the member for Claremont and an excellent speech from the member for Fremantle.

The Premier: It is the first time that, in your opinion, the member for Fremantle has made an excellent speech.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, I think he often does. He used very strong language and I wondered that the Minister did not jump. He spoke about the taxi owners being persecuted.

Mr. Sleeman: I did not say the Minister persecuted them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Shall I introduce the hon. member to the gentleman who is responsible for everything that has happened in connection with the administration of the Traffic Act? There is no statutory body to administer the Act. If the Minister appoints an advisory committee it is merely to advise him. We do not want an advisory committee and we do not recognise it. Neither can we attack the officials. The Minister is the man responsible, and it was the Minister that made a statement after the regulations were disallowed in another place. What are Ministers for? It is their duty to manage departments, and the Minister for Works alone must take the responsibility in this instance. Every word that members have spoken has been spoken against the administration of the Minister for Works. If the taxi owners have been persecuted, as the member for Fremantle says they have, they have been persecuted by the Minister and by no one else. He alone has control of the position. I do not know why the Minister wants an advisory committee. If he wanted someone to meet the taxi owners, as suggested by the member for Fremantle, I could understand his getting someone in the department to confer with them, but I do not think we should hold the officials responsible for the administration of the Act. Of necessity much must be done by regulation, particularly with respect to the larger and heavier vehicles, but having given the Government power to make regulations, we do not expect, nor shall we be doing our duty if we permit the Minister to abuse the power. If the member for Fremantle and those who sit with him will not vote against the Government, the Minister will go on doing those things to which we all object. After the speech we have heard from the member for Fremantle, I hope he will vote with mem-

bers on this side of the House and not only he, but all those members who believe that the Minister has abused the power entrusted to him under the Traffic Act. The public must be considered. It is true we have a railway to cater for them, but there are many people who own private motor cars and can use them and do use them to go to Fremantle and other places. The taxis are more or less motor cars, but they are used by people who cannot afford to own motor cars, and I cannot see why such people should be inconvenienced. I cannot understand why a motor carrying several passengers should not be allowed to stop in the street, where any other car may stop, and put down its passengers.

The Minister for Works: So it may.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It may not. The taxis have to stop at certain places.

The Minister for Works: There is no regulation to say that the cannot set down or take up passengers wherever they like, except along a tram route.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The regulations distinctly fix the terminal point.

The Minister for Works: The Act provides for that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am not talking about the routes. When the taxis reach the City of Perth they must go to a spot indicated by the Minister, a most undesirable spot and absolutely the wrong place. It is a place calculated to cause the greatest discomfort to users of taxis as well as to the owners. I cannot understand how the Minister could have approved of the selection of such a spot. The terminal point has been the subject of much criticism by the member for Claremont and also by the member for Fremantle. If the member for Fremantle is right in saying that almost day by day, or anyhow frequently, the terminal points are changed, I am surprised to hear it.

The Minister for Works: It is not correct.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The member for Fremantle says it is correct.

The Minister for Works: I will explain the position presently.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope the member for Fremantle is not correct. If it is correct that the terminal points are changed so often—

The Minister for Works: There is only one body of people who have changed them, namely the Legislative Council.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Legislative Council have done nothing of the sort. They have neither changed any terminal point nor suggested any terminal point. The Act which is supposed to control the Minister and which the Minister is supposed to administer—it was passed in 1926—provides that the regulations may be disallowed by either of the two Houses. That is the proposal the Minister himself submitted and he could not have it otherwise. While regulations are necessary to enable the Minister to carry out the intention of the Act, they are surely not intended to extend the law. We do not propose that the Minister shall have power to make law by regulation. The Minister knows that the approval of both Houses is necessary to pass a law and that either House can disallow a regulation. When we pass a Bill it is sent to another place and, if it is not agreed to there, the Bill is rejected and does not become law. Consequently when the Minister by regulation extends the law, both Houses of Parliament have the same opportunity to disallow the regulations. Either one or the other may agree to a motion to disallow the regulations. Let us see what the Minister had to say after the Council disallowed the regulations. The Minister takes very strong exception to the action of the Legislative Council in having twice refused his regulations. It is the duty of the Legislative Council, just as it is our duty, to look into regulations that are tabled and, if they are wrong, to disallow them. It is clearly the duty of every member to support the member for Claremont if the statement he has made is correct. If the taxi drivers are being persecuted and unfairly treated, it is our duty to insist that they be fairly treated.

The Premier: It is rather significant that the disallowance of regulations in each instance has been left to another place.

Mr. North: But notice of motion to disallow them was given in this House as well.

The Premier: After the proceedings in the Council were under way.

Mr. North: No.

The Premier: Yes. The taxi owners went to the House that represents the people!

Mr. North: The motion was on our notice paper, anyhow.

The Premier: That is as far as you got with it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Council have the right to exercise that power.

It would be a bad thing for the people if the other House did not sometimes come to their rescue. They have come to the rescue of the people now.

The Premier: Why did you overlook all this responsibility and leave it to another place to take action?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Why leave it to another place?

Mr. North: It was on our notice paper.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course it was.

The Premier: Were members of this House indifferent to the persecution?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Certainly not.

The Premier: They left it to another place to take action.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: What chance had we in this House? The Premier has his 26 willing supporters and we have no chance to carry any vote or disallow any regulations. The member for Fremantle is pleased that this question has been raised, but he will not vote against the Government.

The Premier: This is a motion for adjournment, which is quite a different thing from a motion to disallow regulations.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Not a bit of it.

The Premier: You have been sleeping on this persecution all along.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Not at all.

The Premier: You went to sleep on all this persecution.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Will the Premier keep quiet? We on this side of the House must be allowed to say what we wish to say. Here is an autocratic Minister who, when regulations are disallowed, rushes to the Press and declares that, regulations or no regulations, he will administer the Act in his own way. But he is not going to do what he pleases. I am not so sure that he has much power without regulations. I am by no means certain that his threats can be carried into effect. The Act says the Minister may make regulations fixing routes, but does not say he can decide where these people may run or where they may not run. He can only act under the provisions of the measure. Strangely, he goes on to say—

It is difficult to understand the reasons which prompted the Legislative Council to carry the resolution, as the great majority of the regulations were taken out almost verbatim from the Act itself, and in effect did not differ in any respect from the law itself.

What that means I do not know. The Minister certainly cannot take a section of the Act and throw it into the form of a regulation. He states, too, that he objects to one House of Parliament having the right to reject regulations.

The Minister for Works: I did not say that at all.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, the Minister did.

The Minister for Works: No. Read what I stated.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The hon. gentleman said—

Section 41 of the Traffic Act sets out what may be done by regulation, and all that was proposed was to do just that which this section said may be done, and nothing more; but the Legislative Council has now said that what Parliament agreed should be done under Section 41 must not be done.

The Minister for Works: That is not a regulation.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But it is tantamount to repealing a regulation. The statement goes on—

The Act sets out that an omnibus can only ply for hire on a prescribed route, and as the Legislative Council has twice refused to agree to a prescribed route in Cottesloe, it is obvious that it will be illegal for this service now to be carried on in that district.

I do not know that it will be. However, as the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) said, the lawyers can decide that point. I hope the Minister will be reasonable, and not unreasonable, as apparently he has been up to date. It seems that if he cannot get what he wants by regulation, he will not have anything at all. That, of course, is nonsense. The Minister is there to administer the Act as passed by Parliament. If these matters were to be decided by the Minister, and not by regulations, Parliament should have said expressly that such things were to be determined by the Minister. Parliament expects the Minister to be reasonable. So far as I understand the position, the terminal to the Cottesloe-Perth route is the great objection. The case put up by the member for Claremont and the member for Fremantle ought to be answered, and we should be told that there will be no persecution, that there will be no change in the terminals, and that the men engaged on the service will be allowed to run it for the convenience of the public to the utmost possible extent. We maintain roads alongside the railways into the country districts, and the heavy motor traffic cuts up those roads al-

most as soon as they are made. The traffic here in question is for the benefit of people who cannot afford to run motor cars of their own. One cannot turn back the clock. Years ago people walked wherever they went; then came horses and horse-drawn vehicles; trains and trams followed, to be succeeded in their turn by motor cars. The people will use the means most convenient to them. If improvements come from time to time, those improvements will be utilised, no matter what the Minister may say or do. The hon. gentleman would be well-advised to see that the men who furnish this convenience receive a fair deal. We cannot recognise any authority other than the Minister to whom we have given power and also responsibility. If the matter is to be decided by a board, then the Minister should bring down an amending Bill vesting authority in a statutory board. I hope the case put up by the two hon. members to whom I have referred will receive the Minister's most earnest consideration. I trust he will see that the men who have paid the license fee are allowed to conduct the taxi service in peace, assisted by the department, and not hampered by frequent changes of terminals as at Fremantle.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [5.38]: I cannot understand why the Premier should try to cloud the issue. He keeps on asking, "Why leave it to another place?" I put the same question back to him, "Why leave it to the other place?" The control of business here and in another place is in the hands of the Government. Both notices of motion were given at the same time.

The Premier: No; not at the same time.

The Minister for Works: One was given a week later than the other.

MR. DAVY: I will take the Minister's word for that. But the fact of the matter is that this notice of motion has been on the Notice Paper here—

The Premier: The motion was moved in another place before notice of it was given here.

MR. DAVY: Suppose that to be so.

The Premier: It supports what I have stated, that the matter has been left to another place.

MR. DAVY: By the Premier.

The Premier: Not by the Premier at all.

MR. DAVY: Yes. The Premier has the control of business here, and his Minister elsewhere has the control of business there.

It is absurd for the Premier to try to make political capital out of the matter.

The Premier: What political capital could I make out of it?

MR. DAVY: The next time the Premier goes on the hustings at a general election—

The Premier: You are looking a long time ahead.

MR. DAVY: —or the next time he appears before the public, he will roar against the undemocratic House which has blocked the will of the people—presumably at the instance of two Labour members of another place. The motion for disallowance was moved by Mr. Kitson and strongly supported by Mr. Gray; two Labour members who are presumably thwarting the will of the people.

MR. PANTON: They got into very bad company over that motion, I will admit.

MR. DAVY: I have no doubt the rule has been put well and truly over them. This is not a political matter at all.

The Premier: Of course it is not.

MR. DAVY: It is an administrative matter, and I regret that the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman), having strongly supported the motion and strongly criticised the administration of this particular matter, yet feels himself bound to support the party with which he is associated.

The Premier: Would you do it in similar circumstances?

MR. DAVY: I do not know that I would.

The Premier: The carrying of this motion would turn the Government out. How would you vote in similar circumstances?

MR. DAVY: It is a peculiar motion, with which I am not very familiar; but if the result of carrying it will be to turn the Government out of office, there may be some excuse for the member for Fremantle. The disallowance of a regulation, however, does not turn out the Government; and if the Premier had seen fit to allow the motion for disallowance to be discussed instead of deliberately preventing it from coming on—

The Premier: It has hardly been decided by another place.

MR. DAVY: The Premier's criticism that the matter has been left to another place deliberately is unjustified, because business both here and elsewhere is in his hands.

The Premier: You are wrong.

MR. DAVY: Does the Premier suggest that the other place took the business out of the Chief Secretary's hands?

The Premier: The Standing Orders of another place provide for motions of that sort coming on, and the matter is not in the hands of the Leader of the House.

Mr. DAVY: I cannot compete with the Premier when he quotes Standing Orders and rules of procedure.

The Premier: The Minister elsewhere has no control over private motions.

Mr. DAVY: But the Premier has power here. The matter was undoubtedly in his hands; and if he was so anxious that the question should be decided here, why did not he bring it on?

The Premier: Because it had been decided in another place.

Mr. DAVY: Yes, after the Premier had delayed it long enough here. However, I cannot understand some of the things which have been said by the Minister for Works. In the course of an interview or statement to the Press he said—

The decision has no legal effect so far as the Fremantle taxi service is concerned, because the time within which objections to the regulations must be taken had expired some weeks before notice to move was given.

If that is so, it is rather extraordinary that the motion was not ruled out of order in another place. The Interpretation Act lays down distinctly that regulations are to be laid on the Tables of both Houses and may be disallowed provided a resolution disallowing them is carried notice of which has been given at any time within 14 sitting days of such House. These traffic regulations were laid on the Table of this House on the 11th October. I do not know that it would be the same date in another place, but very approximately it would be.

The Minister for Works: It was months before.

Mr. DAVY: These regulations were laid on the Table here months before? Then it is rather an extraordinary thing that the official note made by the Clerk of the Assembly should be, "Laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Works and Labour on the 11th day of October, 1927." If we are to be told that the official notes on documents lying on the Table of the House are wrong, we shall not know where we are. However, I cannot contradict the Minister there, because I do not know the exact time.

The Minister for Works: You contradicted the Premier.

Mr. DAVY: I did not contradict the Premier without knowing that I was correct. If the Minister is right that the regulations were out of time in the other place, the motion was out of order and the regulations are still valid. The Minister went on to say—

Section 44 of the Traffic Act sets out what may be done by regulation, and all that it was proposed to do was just what this section said should be done, and nothing more.

Perfectly correct, but both Houses of Parliament are entitled to turn down regulations if they disapprove of them. Then the Minister added—

This is in fact tantamount to one House repealing a section of the law that has been passed by both Houses.

With all due respect to the Minister, he cannot mean that. Our law states that regulations may be disallowed. Regulations are not law. They are tentative and are liable to be challenged. What complaint can the Minister have if another place disallows regulations made in accordance with the Act. Then he further states—

The Act sets out that a bus can only ply for hire on a prescribed route.

At the risk of being contradicted by the Minister, I say that that is not so, and the Minister in control should know better than to make a statement of that sort. What the Act says is that the Governor may by regulations prescribe the route and may prescribe sections and terminal points of such route and that he may by regulation prohibit the use of omnibuses elsewhere than along a prescribed route. The Minister turns the piece of law into a statement that a bus can only ply for hire on a prescribed route.

The Minister for Works: You are wrong again.

Mr. DAVY: I am not afraid to stand up to that statement.

The Minister for Works: But you do not know what has happened.

Mr. DAVY: I know what the Act says and I know that the Minister tried to tell the public what the Act said.

The Premier: If your interpretation is right, you will have a good chance of getting a brief from those taxi men to defend them.

Mr. DAVY: As my friend the member for Perth has said, they have not any money with which to fight. I am certainly not going to try to make trouble for the Gov-

crument by fighting a case for nothing. I suggest that this matter be faced fairly and properly, and in spite of interjections from members of the Cabinet, I submit that the member for Claremont has put the position fairly and correctly before the House, and the matter should be decided apart from political considerations and with absolute candour and fairness to all. All that the member for Claremont is trying to get for these people and the public is a square deal. He has made out a good case for certain sections of his constituents to secure a continuance of the taxi service, and to bring about a different terminus from the one in Wellington-street, which is admittedly dark and inconvenient, apart from the difficulties associated with it to which the hon. member referred. I have no doubt that the hon. member will withdraw his motion in due course, but I hope that the Minister for Works will not continue to take up a dogmatic attitude. If I were the Minister for Works, it is just possible that I would not always be as dogmatic as he is, but perhaps it is a very different thing being dogmatic in opposition from being dogmatic as a Minister of the Crown. I suggest to the Minister that if he wants to acquire merit, he will meet this afternoon's criticism fairly and squarely and give the consideration to the request that it deserves.

MR. MANN (Perth) [5.53]: During the past few years I have taken deputations from the taxi men to the Minister for Works. The first asked the Minister to fix the maximum number of taxis that should be licensed, and the taxi drivers put up such a case as to satisfy the Minister. Later on the Minister saw fit to open the field, and the result was that a number of men on the various ranks went on the Perth-Fremantle run. Recently I took another deputation to the Minister and the question of routes cropped up. The representative of the local bodies was present and it was apparent that he was not in touch with the desires of the local authorities. One of the representatives of the local authorities and he got at cross-purposes in the Minister's room because the gentleman representing the local authorities, or a member of one of the local bodies, accused him of not looking after their interests, and of not knowing what they required. That member of the deputation cited the case of the Nedlands route and the Minister said he had no

intention of inspecting routes but he would look at that one and see whether the position was as had been stated. What has struck me in connection with the matter is that no complaints have come from any of the local authorities with regard to the starting or finishing points of the routes.

The Minister for Works: The Minister for Works is responsible.

Mr. MANN: Surely the Perth City Council must be recognised as a responsible body, and it must be admitted that they are as anxious as the Minister that the traffic should be well conducted.

The Minister for Works: The responsibility is mine.

Mr. MANN: That is admitted, but at the same time the City Council desire to see that the traffic in their streets is well conducted. Has there been anything to warrant this change of route that has taken place? What seemed to be operating in the Minister's mind on the occasion of the last deputation was that the taxi men went into certain streets that were not constructed strongly enough to carry that traffic, and the Minister thought that the local authority would immediately approach him for the maintenance of the thoroughfare or ask that it be declared a main road so as to be able to collect traffic fees. If that is the reason for his drastic action—

The Minister for Works: I have not taken any drastic action.

Mr. MANN: It may not be drastic in the eyes of the Minister.

The Minister for Works: I have not done anything yet.

Mr. MANN: The statement made to the Press by the Minister threatened drastic measures. The reason seemed to be the action of members in another place in supporting the motion for the disallowance of the regulations. The motion for the disallowance was moved by a member of another place who is not hostile to the Minister and who, if possible, would have supported the Minister in the action that he took. That member and a colleague of his are open-minded men, and they put up such a case, not once but on both occasions, that another place decided to disallow the regulations. It is all very well for the Premier to ask why the motion for disallowance of the regulations was not submitted in this House. It would have been futile.

The Premier: If members of this Party in another place were free to take the action

they did, why would not members of the same party in this House be free to do the same thing?

Mr. MANN: They were not too sure of carrying it in this House.

The Premier: That is only your suspicion. Do you suggest that there would have been a block vote here, and that that is why the motion was moved in another place?

Mr. MANN: All this trouble has arisen within the last 12 months. When the late Inspector Smith was in charge of the Traffic Department we never had any difficulties of this kind. There was no trouble and I do not know that there have been any more accidents since that time and I am not aware that the traffic has increased materially. I do not know that there has been any reason for these drastic movements since the days of Inspector Smith. The Minister would be wise if he made a personal inquiry into this matter to see for himself whether there was any necessity for the constant changing of the routes that was giving rise to so much discontent all round. With regard to Wellington-street, it is not a street that should be set apart as a taxi car starting or terminal point. Going west from the Royal Hotel it is badly lighted and there is a wine saloon, which is largely used by foreigners, a little way round the corner. There is also a cheap lodging house close by. There is nothing in the locality to commend it as either a starting or a finishing point for taxis.

The Minister for Works: Why did they not approach me about that. They did not approach me from the time the regulations were gazetted.

Mr. MANN: Apparently the Minister thinks he could have remedied the trouble.

The Minister for Works: I said so, and the Minister in another place said so, but they would not come near us.

The Premier: They fell back on the disallowance of the regulations in another place.

Mr. North: They had to go to the Routes Advisory Committee.

The Minister for Works: They did not come near me.

Mr. MANN: It does not seem to me that the Minister himself is too satisfied with Wellington-street as a terminus.

The Minister for Works: I have said so.

Mr. MANN: Upon that admission, I have nothing further to say.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [6.1]: I am sorry that the member for Claremont (Mr. North) did not extend to me the ordinary courtesy that one member extends to another when submitting a motion such as this.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is my fault.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I had no notice of it. All I knew about it was what I read in the Press. I thought that when the newspaper stated the hon. member had discussed the matter with the Leader of the Opposition, the least he might have done was to mention it to the Premier.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I should have done that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Neither the Premier nor I had any notice that this motion was to be moved. I do not think it is characteristic of the hon. member for Claremont to show lack of courtesy to the extent of trying to catch me unawares when he moved this motion.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, of course not.

Mr. North: I saw the Leader of the Opposition last week about it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It should have come before either the Premier or me.

Hon. G. Taylor: The Leader of the Opposition accepts the responsibility.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No notice whatever was given to me of this motion. This is the second occasion of a similar nature. I know the member for Subiaco (Mr. Richardson) tried to get me on the afternoon when he moved the motion about the Perth water supplies. I did not know anything about it.

Mr. Richardson: I interviewed the Premier on the matter, because I could not find you.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I was away, and did not reach the House until the meeting hour. I did not know about the motion until it came on then. In his very heated, dogmatic and emphatic speech, the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) dealt with only one point. He said the Premier was wrong in claiming that this motion should have been dealt with here instead of in another place, and that it was the

Premier's fault it was not done in that way. Let me say that two hours after the member for Claremont gave notice of his motion in this House, a similar motion to disallow the regulations was carried in another place. The notice had been given on 12th October in another place, and it was not given in this House until the 25th October. On the 25th October, two hours after the notice was given here, the division was taken in another place.

Hon. G. Taylor: The motion was moved in another place a week before.

The Premier: It was moved a fortnight before.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What has that to do with it?

The Premier: It has a lot to do with the statement of the member for West Perth.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It shows that the member for West Perth was entirely wrong.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It does not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It seems to me that those associated with this business have lost all sense of proportion. They appear to think that if the taxi service stopped running the whole State would stand still.

Mr. Mann: Why should it stop?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They think that it is the one thing that should command the attention of the Government, and that it is of more importance than all the other work that is being performed by the Minister. Here we have the suggestion that the Minister's time should be taken up by running round after taxis, up and down different streets to see which is the most convenient, personally inspecting suburb after suburb and district after district, and himself deciding which routes the taxis should follow. Here we are this afternoon in Parliament, in solemn conclave, discussing which streets the taxis should take. It is altogether out of proportion to the importance of our duties.

Mr. Thomson: It has a great effect upon the taxi people.

Mr. North: It is a matter of principle.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Those associated with this business have become sufferers from a new form of paranoia. I may call them taxi paranoics. They can see nothing outside the taxi business, and seem to be obsessed with it. They cannot recognise anything beyond that.

Mr. Sampson: It is of great importance to these men.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The interests associated with the business of controlling traffic are so divergent that I do not think any human being could satisfy everybody. Take the viewpoints of the mover and seconder of this motion. The mover of the motion wants the route from Cottesloe to go along the Perth-Fremantle-road. The seconder of the motion complains that the Perth-Fremantle-road is so overcrowded as to be dangerous, and that the Government should limit the number of cars that use it. How are we to satisfy both the mover and the seconder?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Both are agreed that you are wrong.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Either one or the other is wrong, and I submit they are both wrong. One says we should permit these people to select their own route and to take the Perth-Fremantle-road, and the member for Fremantle says that that road is dangerous and so overcrowded that the Government should limit the number of cars that use it.

Mr. North: They have offered to limit the number.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member wants to put more on that road.

Mr. North: I want to put seven on and take thirty off. That would be a difference of 23.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So long as the hon. member's district, or the taxi men, get what they want, that is all he desires.

The Premier: He would settle one difficulty and open up another.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I shall show some of the ridiculous features of that argument. The whole history of the service is that when the charabancs came into operation, the Act classed them as motor buses. They were trading on certain routes, and had to pay a tax of 30s. per seat according to the number of passengers they were registered to carry. That Act was passed by Parliament in 1924. Shortly afterwards, there was a doubt as to whether these smaller taxis, that carry eight passengers or less, came within the definition of a bus. There was a difference of opinion amongst legal authorities on the matter. Instead of involving the State in expensive litigation, and also involving the taxi men in a like expense, I decided not to test the issue in the courts, although I was advised to do so, but to wait until we could get a definition

into the Act so that a motor bus could be more clearly described. The definition now given in the Act is that which exists in the English Act. In the meantime these taxi people had been trading against the buses. They had been running up one street and down another, wherever they liked to go. They were not confined to any route or to any time table, and were not paying the 30s. tax that the other people have to pay. The motor bus people have had to pay their tax all along, and since 1924 have been confined to definite routes. It is only now that we are bringing that into force so far as these taxis are concerned. These people have had their own way up to now. They have run wherever they liked without paying any fee, and have been doing what they liked without any control. They are now chafing because they are being brought under control, in the same way as the buses have been controlled since 1924. They are doing all they can to get away from that control. The hon. member who moved the motion in another place distinctly stated that his objective in attempting to have the regulations disallowed was to prevent the Government from enforcing the Act. He wanted a free hand for them to do as they liked. He has since advised them that they can do as they like, and run wherever they like.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You ought to have regulations to govern them.

Mr. Mann: Knowing the hon. member who moved that motion, it seems to me that statement is a doubtful one.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member will find his speech in "Hansard." He states clearly that unless the regulations are disallowed, the Government will be able to take proceedings to enforce the law. He did not want the Government to be in a position to enforce the law.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is ridiculous. You can always enforce the law.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is the history of the whole position. That is why we are suffering from all this agitation now. The trouble has arisen because these people have not complied with the law. They have been a law unto themselves. They have been doing what they liked over all this period. The police and other people say that these taxi men are boasting outside that they can pull sufficient strings in Parliament to prevent any regulations from coming into force and controlling them. The member for

Claremont (Mr. North) found it necessary to come to me personally on one occasion to warn me of certain things that were happening.

Mr. Mann: That showed his honesty of purpose.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, but they have carried on in this way ever since.

Hon. G. Taylor: I am afraid he will not take that risk again.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am afraid not.

Hon. G. Taylor: Perhaps you should not have divulged the fact.

Mr. North: It is no secret.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am going to divulge a little more before I sit down, to show what has been happening. Abuse is being showered upon my head, and I have taken it very quietly. There is, however, too much Scotch blood in me to sit quietly for very long.

Mr. Wilson: Hear, hear to that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The police have told me that this is being flaunted in their faces by these people, "You can prescribe what routes you like, do what you like, put up whatever regulations you please, but we have sufficient influence in another place to have everything disallowed." They have gone so far as to produce copies of draft regulations, and flash them in the faces of the police before they had even reached me.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: How is that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am making inquiries, and if I find out how these people got hold of these regulations I will take action.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Surely you arrange the regulations.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. Before the draft of these regulations had reached me, they were being flaunted in the faces of the police.

Hon. G. Taylor: They should never have had them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of course not.

Hon. G. Taylor: There must be something lax in the office.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So far as the Cottesloe people are concerned, I tried twice to give them a route and a service, but on each occasion the Legislative Council disallowed the arrangement. It is not my fault that the Cottesloe people have no route. The fault lies with the Legislative

Council. I have tried twice to give them the route they wanted, and on the last occasion I gave them exactly what they asked for.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Did you give them the terminal point they wanted?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If there had been any fault with the terminal point in Perth—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is the new regulation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The least these people could have done was to come to me and say, "You have given us the route in Cottesloe that we want, but we disagree with the terminus. Will you alter that?" On the contrary, I was not approached by anyone, or met by anyone on that score. I do not for a moment admit that the Wellington-street terminus is all that is desired. I made the statement that I was open to discuss it and review the position, just as the Minister in another place said when he was replying to the motion that was moved there.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Where was the terminal point before?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It only shows what the taxi people are out for. They thought they could find enough support in another place to have all the regulations disallowed. There was no question about meeting me and discussing the terminus. It was not a question of the Wellington-street terminus. They could have had that altered if they had desired, but they thought they had sufficient backing to get all the regulations disallowed. In defiance of all the provisions of the Act and of the advice given by the police, they took the action they did, and now they find themselves without any route prescribed for Cottesloe.

Hon. G. Taylor: The two members for the Fremantle Province took the action.

The Premier: They can be wrong as well as anyone else.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is well that the House should know just what the regulations are, seeing that they were disallowed, and how far the views of some who considered I was adopting an autocratic attitude and harassing the men engaged in this business, were justified. I want to read the regulations and compare them with the provisions of the Act itself.

Under Section 42 of the Act the Governor is given power to make certain regulations and among those powers is the following:—

The Governor, by regulations made under this Act, may prescribe the routes within the metropolitan area, or in any other defined parts of the State, to be observed by omnibuses, and prohibit the use of omnibuses elsewhere than along a prescribed route.

The regulation that has been disallowed reads—

The use within the metropolitan area of any vehicle as an omnibus elsewhere than along a "prescribed route" is hereby prohibited.

That is just the power that is given by the Act! Another direction in which the Governor may make regulations is—

To prescribe the maximum number of omnibuses which may be licensed to ply for hire on any prescribed route.

The regulation under that heading reads—

So far as by any regulation hereinbefore prescribed under the Act, the number of licenses to be granted in respect of any prescribed route is restricted or limited, such restriction or limitation is hereby repealed.

I will deal with the question of limitation directly. The Act also provides that—

The Governor may, by regulations under this Act, prohibit the use of vehicles as omnibuses within the metropolitan area, or in any other defined part of the State, unless a prescribed route is specified in or indorsed on the license for the vehicle by the local authority, and on any route other than the route so specified in or indorsed on the license.

Mr. Davy: That is under Section 41?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, under Section 42, Subsection 2. Under that heading the regulation reads—

The use, on and after the 1st day of October, 1927, within the metropolitan area of any vehicle as an omnibus is hereby prohibited—
(a) Unless a "prescribed route" is specified in or indorsed on the license for such vehicle, by the Commissioner of Police as the local authority in the metropolitan area; and (b) on any route other than the route so specified in or indorsed on the license.

That is almost verbatim with the section of the Act.

Mr. Davy: Of course the Act gives power to the Governor to do these things by way of regulations, but the objection is to the way the regulations have been administered.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Another section reads—

The Governor, by regulations made under this section—(a) may prescribe that the holder of a passenger vehicle license for an omnibus in force at the commencement of the

first regulations made under this section shall surrender such license, and may be granted in lieu thereof a passenger vehicle license to be issued in accordance with such regulations.

The regulation is as follows:—

The holder of a passenger vehicle license for an omnibus in force at the commencement of these regulations, and having effect in the metropolitan area, shall surrender such license, and shall be granted in lieu thereof a passenger vehicle license for such omnibus to be issued in accordance with these regulations, subject to the payment of the prescribed fees for the current year, if and so far as such fees have not been already paid for the surrendered license.

Another section of the Act reads—

When routes within the metropolitan area or other defined part of the State have been prescribed under this section as the routes to be observed by omnibuses, and the use of vehicles as omnibuses has been prohibited unless a prescribed route is specified in or indorsed on the license for the vehicle, any owner of, or person in charge of a vehicle who uses the vehicle or suffers or permits the vehicle to be used within the metropolitan area or other defined part of the State as an omnibus without a prescribed route being specified in or indorsed on the license, or on any route other than that specified in or indorsed on the license, or in a consent granted by the local authority under a regulation prescribed pursuant to Subsection (3) of this section, or on any road within the metropolitan area or such defined part of the State as aforesaid which is not a prescribed route, shall be guilty of an offence against this Act, and shall be liable on conviction to a penalty not exceeding £20 or to imprisonment with or without hard labour for not exceeding one month.

The regulation under that heading is as follows:—

Any owner of or person in charge of a vehicle who uses the vehicle or suffers or permits the vehicle to be used within the metropolitan area as an omnibus without a prescribed route being specified in or indorsed on the license, or on any route other than that specified in or indorsed on the license or in a consent granted pursuant to Regulation 7, or on any road within the metropolitan area which is not a prescribed route, is liable on conviction to a penalty not exceeding £20, or to imprisonment, with or without hard labour, for not exceeding one month.

Thus hon. members will see that what was attempted to be done by way of regulations has really been what the Act says the Governor may do.

Mr. Davy: Yes, "may" do.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But we have simply done what the law gave us authority to do, and we have hardly departed from the verbiage of the Act by one single word.

Mr. Davy: That is so with practically every regulation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Act itself sets out that in order that the Governor may enforce the Act, regulations may be made with that object in view.

Mr. Davy: Subject to the consent of Parliament.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I know that. I am not complaining about that.

Mr. North: No, of course not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Once the Act was agreed to and it prescribed that the Governor in Council could make regulations dealing with certain matters and the regulations framed are almost in accordance with the sections of the Act themselves, what objection can there be? On the other hand, the regulations sought to give effect merely to what the sections of the Act provided for. They were kept as nearly verbatim with the Act itself as was humanly possible, without any attempt being made to take additional powers that the Act did not provide for. We did not attempt to extend those powers or to embrace others that the law did not intend us to take. Notwithstanding that the regulations were taken almost verbatim, from the wording of the sections, they were disallowed by the Legislative Council. I still say that that is tantamount to one House of Parliament repealing a section of the Act. Both Houses agreed to place on the statute book a law under which it was set out that the Governor in Council could do what was defined by Parliament in that Act, then one House disallowed regulations made in accordance with that power. Had the Government gone outside the Act to the smallest extent possible or had we attempted to assume authority and take control in directions Parliament had not intended, either House would have been warranted in stepping in and disallowing the regulation. On the other hand we stuck to the letter of the law, as closely as the Crown Solicitor could do it, yet one House of Parliament steps in and disallows the whole of the regulations.

Mr. F. B. Johnston: Either House of Parliament can disallow new regulations.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of course, but in this instance the Act was passed by both Houses of Parliament and gave the Governor in Council the authority to do what has been done. Had we departed at all from those powers, either House of Parliament would have been within its rights to disallow the regulations. On the other

band, what has happened has been that one House of Parliament has practically nullified that section of the Act. When such action is taken, I claim it amounts to overriding the law. I have endeavoured to examine the reasons that were given for the disallowing of the regulations. The main one that was advanced was that the Government had decided that they could not subscribe to the principle of limitation. That question was discussed by Cabinet on more than one occasion. It appeared to us that if we applied that principle to those engaged in the motor business, we could not deny the application of the principle to those operating any other form of business. That the men employed on the motor run to Fremantle are not earning a decent living, I am convinced, for I believe that some are working for the garages in order to pay off the cost of their cars. On the other hand, to ask the Government, because too many are competing for the business, to limit the number of motors that may ply for hire along that route, and to say that no one in future shall be allowed to engage in that business, is merely to suggest that I should adopt an autocratic attitude and prevent other deserving people from engaging in the operations. The Government claim that if we had done that we would have had to apply the principle to butchers, bakers and candlestick makers and to every other class of business. We could not logically apply the principle to one class only. So far as I am aware, the only business in which there is a form of limitation is that in which persons concerned are engaged in selling spirituous liquors.

Mr. Davy: Do not you limit the number of charabancs?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. That reminds me of one phase of the argument that was advanced. It was stated that I was not concerned about those engaged on the run with their charabancs.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Who said that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) made that statement.

Mr. Sleeman interjected.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Perhaps it was not in so many words, but that was the effect of the statement. In the Legislative Council it was stated that the Government had given every consideration to the charabancs, that we had limited their number and given them everything that they desired. On the other hand they asserted

that we were harassing the taxi drivers. As a matter of fact, there is no limitation upon the number of taxis or buses. The decision of Cabinet regarding no limitation applies to taxis and charabancs alike. Of course it is recognised that a taxi is an omnibus.

Mr. Davy: Do you say that anyone who desires to run a charabanc between Perth and Fremantle can do so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Hon. G. Taylor: Provided he gets a license.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. Davy: On any run?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, so long as it is over a prescribed route. All those who ply for hire and collect single fares from passengers are running omnibuses.

Mr. North: Yes, under the law.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Has there been any decision on that point?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. Davy: I can quote an instance of a license having been refused for a bus to proceed along a certain route.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I know the decisions that have been given.

Mr. Sleeman: There was one within the last few days.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, not for many months past. I want to express my objection to the treatment meted out to the Chief Secretary in the Legislative Council. Members accused him of telling untruths, of telling half-truths, of misrepresentation and so forth. The insults that were hurled at the head of the Minister in that House were shameful. They were such as to cause interjections, the inference from which was that the Government were interested in the company controlling the charabancs. Those interjections were strong enough to give rise to that innuendo concerning the Government. There has been no decision arrived at by Cabinet that does not apply to one section equally to the other. So far as the Fremantle road is concerned, the only trouble I know of that exists now is that concerning the control in Queen-street, which forms the new terminus. I have lived in Fremantle for 20 years and I think I know it as well as the next man. I say without fear of contradiction that the old terminus at William-street was positively dangerous, and that the alteration has made a marked improvement. Anybody speaking without prejudice must admit that the new arrangement is in the interests of

the men engaged in the business, and has made a distinct improvement to the traffic in the town. In the past, as the taxis came out from William-street, they had to cross four lines of trams, all converging at that point. When the Minister in another place mentioned this he was defied to point to four lines of tram rails coming in there. I say that the Beaconsfield trams, the Marion-street trams, the East Fremantle trams, and the North Fremantle trams all come in at that point.

Mr. Sleeman: Still, there are not four sets of tramlines there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Minister in another place refused to make any mis-statements. He said there were four lines of trams coming in there; he did not say there were four lines of tram rails. Neither do I say it.

Mr. Sleeman: But you are leading people to believe it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Nothing of the sort. There are four lines of trams coming in there, and the terminus of the North Fremantle tramway is right there. When functions are being held at the Fremantle town hall the position there is very much congested and positively dangerous. A whole lot has been said about the attitude of the Fremantle council, and the statement was made at a council meeting that the council had been ignored. As a matter of fact there have been three conferences, each with full discussion, between the Routes Advisory Committee, the business people, the taxi proprietors, the Tramway Board, and the representatives of the municipal council. Yet at a meeting of the council it was stated by one of the members that the council had been ignored. At the same meeting a lot of extravagant statements were made and a deputation was appointed to wait upon me. Naturally I expected that a big section of the council would attend. As a matter of fact, when the deputation came along, the mayor was the only one there to support the council. He was accompanied by Councillor Sump-ton, a member of the Routes Advisory Committee and representing the local authorities, who had been responsible for recommending the alteration. So it cannot be argued that he was there to represent the council.

Mr. Sleeman: Was he there to support what the men put up?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He could not have been there to support the council, for he was a member of the committee that recommended the alteration. I have here the shorthand notes of the deputation that waited on me on the 17th October. Let me read the transcript, as follows—

Mr. Gibson, the Mayor, remarked that he was not altogether in accord with the opinions expressed by the Councillors. They objected entirely to the use of Queen-street, but he did not mind the fact that the department had chosen it as a starting point, that being a question for the department to decide, but he wondered if the department could regulate the number of cars to be parked in Queen-street at the same time. At present the whole of the street was occupied by the cars; that morning there were 15 taxis there together. Mr. Gibson wondered whether it would not be possible for the Traffic Department to have two stands, and have cars coming in at the top of Queen-street Those were all the points he wished to raise, and he stated that Mr. Sump-ton had come and agreed with him, but did not wish to speak. The council were sympathetic with the Traffic Department, because they were up against a difficult proposition. They only desired to help, and not interfere with that department The first day on which the terminal point had been fixed at Queen-street the taxi drivers had deliberately made it impossible for other vehicles to get through the streets. He asked, if the Traffic Department had the right to fix the terminal point, could not the Works Department limit the number of cars standing on it? Mr. McCallum said he thought he could, but he would look into it and see what could be done. Mr. Gibson remarked that that would make it considerably better for the business people. He drew Mr. McCallum's attention to the fact that when the taxis were located in William-street, sometimes the drivers created quite a nuisance by blocking the footpath and very often using bad language. Mr. McCallum said he would see if he could limit the number of cars to be there at the one time, and he thought that that should suit everybody.

That is the transcript of the notes of the deputation. When people come along and say that the Minister in another place made statements misleading to the House and indulged in half-truths it is as well that the shorthand notes of the deputation should be placed before the House.

Mr. Sleeman: Even so, the notes show that the council were against Queen-street.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The statement made was that the council had been ignored. Yet conference after conference was held. But some people seem to think that if they are consulted their views and decisions must stand. Despite all that, I am the Minister charged by the Govern-

ment to look after the Traffic Act, and it has nothing to do with the Fremantle Municipal Council. We confer with them and take their opinions into consideration, but to say that their view is to stand is to say something that cannot be accepted.

Mr. North: They represent the views of the ratepayers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We also represent the ratepayers and, in addition, we represent the people. Here is another minute put up to me after the conference between the local authorities, the Tramway Board, and the Fremantle taxi people was held. This is signed by Mr. Treadgold, the representative of the Commissioner of Police on the Routes Advisory Committee. In an addendum to his report Mr. Treadgold says—

I took the opportunity to speak with the mayor of Fremantle and the chairman of the Tramway Board and they assured me they were in favour of the alteration as representing those two parties, and had no objection to my recording the same.

Those are the facts of the case, and they speak for themselves. I have said before that no matter what decision another place or this House arrived at in respect of the Fremantle route, it is already law. The Crown Solicitor has put up this minute—

As regards Route 7A in the schedule, this is an existing route. Regulation 3 adopts the routes existing at the date of the "Gazette" ((27th September, 1927) as set out in the schedule. It does not prescribe any new route. Route 7A was gazetted 14th January, 1927. The regulation was duly tabled and not objected to, and it has now the force of law and cannot by any resolution of the House cease to have effect.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then why was it put on the Table?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Merely to give the information. The statement of the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) that there has been chopping and changing about from one route to another is entirely incorrect. Really there has been only one change made from the route. The amended route was disallowed by the Council, and so we had to fall back on the old route. One member of the Council, in supporting his contention that this route should be disallowed, said he was surprised at the Labour Government prohibiting the taxis from going round the river, as the families of working men had only that opportunity for taking that lovely drive. Yet he spoke

against and voted to disallow that very route when the Government proposed it. What is to be done with a man like that? He spoke against the route because he disagreed with the terminus. It goes to prove the point I made at the beginning, namely, unless these people get all they want they prefer to have nothing.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is so with the Minister also.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The facts I am producing show that it is not my attitude at all. I have tried on every occasion to meet those who disagree with us. The only point in respect of the Fremantle route is the number of taxis that now park in Queen-street. I notice that the City Council has again prescribed stands. They can prescribe stands where they like, but that has nothing to do with the taxi service and the terminal point of a route. The Act distinctly lays it down that that is the function of the Government, and that where the authority of the local authority and the authority of the Government clash, the authority of the Government shall prevail. A stand is entirely different from a terminal point of a route, and the City Council or the Fremantle Municipal Council can prescribe stands wherever they like. But, as I say, that has nothing to do with the terminal points of a route. I repeat that in this last regulation the Cottesloe people were given just what they asked for.

Mr. North: Everything except the terminus.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, everything except what they asked for at the Cottesloe end. The terminal point in Cottesloe necessitated their starting on the river side of the railway and going over the level crossing by the Cottesloe Beach station. They were passing over that crossing with their passengers aboard. No man with any sense of responsibility would prescribe a route passing over a railway level crossing. Only yesterday morning at the very next level crossing, towards North Fremantle, a motor truck coming into collision with a railway engine was smashed to pieces and the driver had a miraculous escape. We said the taxis must start from the other side of the railway, instead of going over the level crossing. In order to bolster up the case against the regulations, it was said in another place that that necessitated the people of the district walking

three-tenths of a mile, which was regarded as a hardship. But those who said that, forgot to say that at the old starting point there are 120 taxis and 22 charabancs passing every day—I do not know how many times a day they pass. However, all those vehicles are running on the Fremantle route, and it is not likely that people would prefer to go joy riding round Cottesloe when on the direct route there are 120 taxis and 22 charries available. It shows how the case was misinterpreted. As to the route round Dalkeith, it was stated that the man who pioneered it had been squeezed out while the route was being discussed, and that the Routes Advisory Board allowed other people to come in. There is not a word of truth in that, for the man who pioneered the route is running there to-day, and there is no limitation to the numbers of others who may come in and put charries on that route. The local authorities asked us to prohibit the taxis going there as they thought the route was suitable exclusively for charries. When statements like that are made to Parliament to induce the House to disallow regulations, it is seen how desperate the case is.

Mr. North: Was not that route altered?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was no route at all until this one was prescribed.

Mr. North: You have since altered the route?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. When the regulation was put through and that route was prescribed I do not think the man confined himself to any particular street. There was no route to govern him, and he went where he pleased. The original route was not the one he usually took, and immediately my attention was directed to that fact, I altered the route. It was gazetted before this matter was dealt with in the Legislative Council. The man followed the route which was laid down for him and which the local authorities wanted. As to the terminus in Wellington-street, I do not consider it is all that could be desired. I regret that neither I nor the Routes Advisory Committee was approached in the matter. I have been told by the members of the committee that they were not approached, and I myself heard nothing about it. After the gazettal I was not approached in any way. If it had been brought to my notice, no doubt we should have been able to make some better arrange-

ment. That is the only point upon which the Cottesloe taxi owners have cause for complaint. I disagree with that terminus and say it could be improved. But when they say that was all they had to complain of, I want to show the House that it was not. They were prepared to accept the Wellington-street terminus. They made a proposition to the Routes Advisory Committee that if they were permitted to go under the subway at Claremont—their route was direct to Perth along the railway—cross to the Fremantle-road, run along the Fremantle-road for half a mile or more and back again to the railway, thus taking the Cottesloe people for a ten minutes' joy-ride around Claremont and on to the same road that the Fremantle taxis use, they would be prepared to accept Wellington-street as their terminus. So the real cause of their objection is not the Wellington-street terminus. I am sorry that the member for Claremont has made such serious charges against the police. He has made some very serious charges, and no doubt the police will have something to say about them. I repeat that I think the Wellington-street terminal can be improved. But the taxi people want St. George's-terrace or nothing.

Mr. North: They said they would accept Wellington-street?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, provided they were given the other route. Is not it preposterous to propose that the Cottesloe taxis should be allowed to leave the railway at Claremont, cross to the Perth Fremantle-road, go along that road for some distance and then back to the railway?

Mr. North: That is their business.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would mean their cutting into the business of the Fremantle taxis. I am told that the Fremantle-road is dangerous and that the number of taxis plying on it should be limited. If I limited the number to-morrow, I am told they would be satisfied. That was told to me at the deputation. Their advocate in the Legislative Council said if that were agreed to it would meet the whole objection. But they want to run along that route.

Mr. Thomson: You do not say that the Fremantle-road is congested.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, I did not say so.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The whole trouble is that the taxis will not pull to one side when they draw up.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A regulation was put through that only those vehicles on the road at a certain date should be granted licenses. The Act sets out that if in the opinion of the local authority the requirements of the district do not warrant further licenses, the Government may refuse to grant further licenses. The Crown Solicitor said the regulation as framed was *ultra vires* and could not be enforced.

Mr. Sleeman: It took a long time to find that out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No attempt was made to enforce it. At present the William-street-St. George's-terrace corner is the terminus for no fewer than 115 taxis and 36 charabancs, and in the middle of St. George's-terrace is a lavatory. That is the dead spot in the city that the hon. member spoke about. At that point the big vehicles have lumberingly to turn around and there is considerable congestion. The business people have threatened the department with legal action owing to the congestion in front of their premises. We have been warned more than once that unless steps are taken to prevent the congestion, legal proceedings will be started. Consequently to ask us to permit other taxis to stop there and cause further congestion is quite out of the question. Much has been said about the attitude of the mayor of Cottesloe. The mover of the motion referred to it. It was actually said that the Minister who made the speech in another place did not correctly set out the views of the Mayor of Cottesloe. The Chief Secretary was provided with his information by members of the Routes Advisory Committee, and he discussed the position with them. Let me read to the House the report that the committee gave him when the accuracy of his statements was questioned. Mr. Drew sent along a minute complaining that his statement had been questioned, and this is the reply—

The Hon. Mr. Drew's minute and the circular letter issued by Mr. Bryan (Mayor of Cottesloe) were placed before the Routes Advisory Committee on Wednesday last, and after discussion the following resolution was passed: Mr. Backshall moved and Mr. Sumpton seconded—"That this committee confirms information given the Hon. Mr. Drew by the chairman." It is incorrect that the committee were reinforced by Inspector Hunter and advantaged by representatives from the City Council.

That was a statement made by the Mayor of Cottesloe.

A conference was held under the provisions of the statute by which the Advisory Committee, on behalf of the Minister, requested the attendance of delegates from the Cottesloe and City of Perth Councils. It is disconcerting to refer to the delegates from the City Council as "advantaging" the Routes Advisory Committee for the reason that they attended and gave the best of their views quite as fairly and independently as the Cottesloe Council, and the conference was really at the instigation of the latter council. Inspector Hunter was present as an expert in traffic matters, the same as Mr. Higge, who accompanied Councillor Howling on behalf of the City Council, and Mr. McLaren as the expert for the Cottesloe Council. In regard to the discussion, the Mayor of Cottesloe occupied the principal part of this, and the summary of his remarks was that he was principally concerned in getting a service between North Cottesloe and the city by the most direct route for his rate-payers, and the route in question was the outcome of his suggestion. The whole of those present were unanimous in regard to the route, and when it came to the question as to what the terminal point should be, it was then that Mr. Bryan made the three suggestions and after these were discussed, resulting in Wellington-street, the question as to what particular part of Wellington-street was discussed. The Mayor of Cottesloe suggested that he would retire, but was prevailed upon to remain whilst the question was discussed as to whether the cars should stop opposite the Railway Institute or go across William-street and land their passengers near the railway carriers' rank. The discussion of this latter point was referred to by Mr. Bryan as outside his direct concern. The brief shorthand notes attached hereto clearly show that Mr. Bryan did not suggest retiring until the whole route had been settled, and it is quite clear from these notes that both Mr. Bryan and Mr. McLaren took a lively part in the discussion, not only of the route but also in connection with fares, timetables, etc., and the lighting and shelter at the terminal point, resulting in the generous offer of the City Council representative (Councillor Howling) that an extra light could be placed at Bazaar-terrace if that should be decided upon. The subsequent action taken in regard to the matter is contained in the précis hereunder. A regular round table conference took place, and Mr. Bryan had by far the greater part of the discussion, which was quite agreed to as he was most concerned. Therefore he should have been the last to put forward such a circular as this.

From the shorthand notes taken, this is what occurred—

Inspector Hunter said he had received an objection from the Technical School authorities asking that the taxi stand be shifted from their vicinity. The stand in front of Winterbottom's was suggested. Councillor Howling said that if the Traffic Department thought Bazaar-terrace was a good place, he did not think they would have any objection, and that there would be no objection to an extra light being placed there. Mr. Bryan said that if the inspector did not want St.

George's-terrace, he would be willing for the stand to be made in Wellington-street near King-street. It was suggested that the exact point should be fixed in Wellington-street, but the stand was to be fixed after the City Council had consulted with the Traffic Department.

That surely disarms all those who say that an arrogant attitude has been adopted, that those people have not been consulted or their views obtained, when they actually assented to what had been done until the taxi owners started to raise objections.

Mr. North: You admit that the Wellington-street terminal was a bad choice.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, that is my personal view. Let me repeat what I said to the newspaper reporter—

The effect of the disallowance of these regulations by the Legislative Council can be summed up under three headings:—First of all it deprives Cottesloe of any omnibus route at all; second, it deprives those men engaged in the business of conducting that business, and third, it is going to make the administration of the Act more expensive.

The member for West Perth has obviously overlooked the regulations that were framed in 1924, or he could not possibly hold the opinion he has expressed to-night. The regulations, prescribed on the 24th October, 1924, and laid before both Houses of Parliament, were not challenged and consequently they now have the force of an Act of Parliament. They read—

No person shall cause or permit any vehicle licensed as a passenger vehicle to ply as an omnibus within the metropolitan area elsewhere than along the routes indicated and set forth in the schedule hereto.

Every holder of a passenger vehicle license in respect of a vehicle plying as an omnibus within the metropolitan area shall, within seven days after the passing of these regulations, present his license to the proper licensing authority, who shall cause to be indorsed thereon the route along which the vehicle is authorised to ply.

Every passenger vehicle license hereafter issued for any vehicle which it is intended shall ply as an omnibus within the metropolitan area shall have indorsed thereon the route along which such vehicle shall ply.

No person shall cause or permit any passenger vehicle plying as an omnibus to ply along any route within the metropolitan area, except that indorsed on the passenger vehicle license issued in respect of such vehicle.

Consequently if there is no route prescribed for Cottesloe, there can be no service. That is plain to anyone who can read English and nobody can contend otherwise. The fault of Cottesloe's not having a taxi service when the law is enforced will not rest with

the Government or with me, but with the champions or those who pretend to be the champions of the taxi owners and the Legislative Council. I have tried twice to give Cottesloe a route, and because objection is taken to one feature of it, the taxi owners say they will not have any route at all. I regret that they seem to want to take an extreme attitude all through, and not to modify it in any way. Had I been approached regarding a modification of the terminus in the city, something could obviously have been done. The taxi men's suggestion to run the joy ride along Claremont and then back to the ordinary route shows that the taxi service to Cottesloe is not a payable concern, that it is not the Cottesloe business the men want, but the business from here to Claremont. They were not prepared to give the shortest route to the Cottesloe business. Evidently the Cottesloe traffic is not payable, and these men want to cut into business already being catered for by 120 others, according to the statement of these men themselves; otherwise the proposition is not payable. I have put forward my view that the Cottesloe taxi men should have accepted the route, because now they have no route and cannot ply.

Mr. North: But they followed the route.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They should have accepted the route and approached me for a modification of the Perth terminal, which the hon. member declares to be their main concern. Undoubtedly some arrangement would have been arrived at, and then the men would have been able to carry on their business.

Mr. North: Do you blame the men for the Council's action?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Certainly. The hon. member surely does not want me to believe that the resolution was moved without having been prompted!

Mr. North: There was no suggestion as to route, only as to terminal.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Members would not have moved without being prompted to move. The Leader of the Opposition by his interjections and his speech tells me that my duty is to administer the law. The law is that no omnibus can trade except on a prescribed route.

Mr. Davy: The law?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; the law. The regulation I have just quoted states that distinctly.

Mr. Davy: That is the regulation which was disallowed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Mr. Davy: Was it not disallowed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was gazetted in 1924.

Mr. Davy: But was it not disallowed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was never even challenged.

Hon. G. Taylor: Does not this motion challenge it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Even without the regulation, the Act makes the matter quite clear. The Opposition Leader has urged that I administer the Act, and the Act says these people can only ply on a prescribed route. There is no prescribed route in Cottesloe.

Mr. Davy: Where does it say that in the Act?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will administer the law, and I hope these people will show themselves prepared to accept the law.

Mr. Davy: But where does it say that in the Act?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In my judgment these people have been badly advised, and the advice given them is likely to prove exceedingly expensive. They should show that they are prepared to live within the law, like other people. There has been absolutely no persecution whatever. If there is any charge to be made against the Government, it is the charge of having stood idly by too long. Since 1924 the charabanes have paid fees and kept to their route. These other people, catering for the same class of business, have neither paid fees nor kept to the route. If they hold the view that that is to continue for all time, the Minister will be lacking in his duty if he does not enforce the law. The member for Claremont (Mr. North) urges that these people should select their own route. If they are allowed to do that and in doing so to cut out the very vitals of the railway traffic, the only thing that can happen is that the country people will have to pay higher fares and freights, while the metropolitan people will enjoy the convenience. That will be the position. As to the Fremantle terminal for charabanes, an agreement has been reached. It would have been gazetted ere this but that we wanted to clear up the other position. The new terminal will be Elder Place, near the gas works, thus avoiding the congestion of traffic. As regards the license which was read out by the member for

Claremont, the date, 1st August, is long before the disallowance of the regulation, which occurred on the 26th October. I shall have the matter inquired into, though I can hardly credit that the police have done such a thing. I hope the House will not regard either the Government or myself as opposed to up-to-date transport. One would be denying the obvious were one to say that motor transport had not dispossessed a great many of the old transport methods. I would be the last to suggest that anything should be done to damage motor transport. But there must be regulations, and the men must be given to understand that the law is to be obeyed. They openly defy and taunt the police, and seek to make the position as difficult and chaotic as possible. They declare they can pull strings and use influence that will prevent any regulation whatever from becoming effective. In October of last year the law was made perfectly clear. Prior to that time doubt existed, but since then it has been made quite definite that these motor cars were omnibuses. The money from the fees does not go to the Government, but to the local authorities; and the traffic pool has lost thousands of pounds owing to that part of the Act not being enforced. On behalf of the Government I say that from now on the Act is to be enforced. The police have instructions to that effect. I hope the men will be reasonable and will recognise that they must keep within the law as other members of the community do. If they are prepared to obey the law, they will find that the Government and everyone connected with the administration of the Act will show them every consideration and make their occupation as profitable and congenial as possible.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [8.25]: The Act and the regulations have been fully discussed. The complaint of the member for Claremont (Mr. North) referred to the terminal point in Perth, and to seven taxi drivers who are returned soldiers. From the hon. member's speech it seemed to me that these factors prompted him to move the adjournment of the House, especially having regard to the urgency of the case and the fact that the men have been compelled to pawn their furniture in order to pay license fees. On top of all that, they were prevented from operating. The Minister need have no doubt as to whether the regulations have been dis-

allowed. They were disallowed on the 25th October, according to the records of Parliament; and the license which has been quoted was issued on the 26th October, the following day, while the route is prescribed on the back of the license.

The Minister for Works: There is some mistake there.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: But for the documentary proof of the mistake, a contradiction coming from the Minister would have been accepted as final. Now we find that although the Minister doubted the mistake, nevertheless it is a fact. Most of the Minister's reply was directed to the speech of the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman), and dealt with the difficulties, trials and tribulations of the Fremantle people. The Minister devoted very few words to the complaint of the member for Claremont regarding the seven men who are in financial difficulties, and who deserve some consideration as their cars are now omnibuses. Regulation 4, which was disallowed, merely repeats a regulation gazetted in 1924. If the 1924 regulation stands in view of Regulation 4 having been disallowed on the 25th October, I do not think the Minister is quite right, notwithstanding the authority of the Crown Law Department to the effect that the regulation of 1924, being unchallenged, holds good. The other regulation, practically in the same terms, was disallowed. That being so, I naturally infer that the previous regulation cannot hold good.

The Premier: That matter will be decided by the court.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Premier is right as to that. The Act gives the Governor power to make regulations. Such regulations merely execute the authority of the Act of Parliament. If regulations drawn up by the Crown Law Department are ultra vires, they will be disallowed by our courts. But Parliament reserves to itself the right to disallow regulations whether they are in accordance with the Act or not. Parliament can say, "We do not like them, and we do not want them." A resolution of either House can disallow regulations; and when these regulations were tested in the House, they were disallowed. The reason for the disallowance was not that the Governor had not every authority to gazette them and make them law, but that Parliament did not like them. The Minister has sought to stress the matter from another aspect. It is no use trying to confuse people

as to this. If the regulations were ultra vires, the courts would disallow them; but Parliament reserves to itself the right to say, "Whether the regulations are or are not in keeping with the authority we gave you to frame them, still, if we do not like them, we will disallow them." The Minister said in plain language that they had no right to run on any route; there was no route open to them.

The Minister for Works: Not in Cottesloe.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: That was the cause of the hon. member's grievance, but now they are cut clean out and the Minister has expressed his intention to see that the law is carried out.

The Minister for Works: The intention of the Government.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: How does the Minister tally that with the view of other members of his party? Surely they had some ground for moving the motion in another place. They did not move it out of pique. They must have had strong reason for taking the action they did.

Mr. North: And against their own Government.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is all very well to treat the matter lightly. Those members in another place must have had strong representations made to them and they must also have felt that there did in reality exist, a grievance that required to be remedied. We should look at the matter fairly and squarely and if we do so we must come to the conclusion that the Government have not done the right thing in connection with the regulations. If the Public Works Department keep on framing regulations I have no doubt that in time to come they will be able to prepare a set that will be acceptable to both Houses of Parliament. Unfortunately up to date they have been very unsuccessful.

The Minister for Works: I do not think I am ever likely to satisfy the Upper House.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: You cannot even satisfy your own party in that House. I have no intention of repeating anything that was said in another place, because if I did so I would be ruled out of order, but I do know from conversations, that the case put up for the defence of those regulations swayed the House in their favour until the member who moved the motion replied. That reply, I understand, was so scathing on the Minister and in regard to the inaccuracies, that he had no difficulty in securing the disallowance of the regulations.

The Premier: And if the Minister had had the opportunity to reply, he, too, would have shattered those arguments. Unfortunately the mover of the motion had the last say, and was able to make any statement.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The intention of the member for Claremont to move the motion this afternoon was made known several days ago. I know that when it is proposed to submit a motion for the adjournment of the House, it is the proper thing for the mover to acquaint the Premier.

The Premier: All explanations are accepted, but that does not affect the situation.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Then the Minister comes along with a leather case filled with documents and supported by the Under Secretary sitting at his elbow, and beside him the Secretary of the Police Department. He wanted to make sure that he would not be without all the information that he required to defeat the motion of the member for Claremont.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: A whole body-guard.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The member for Claremont has sufficiently ventilated the matter and now I am sure he will not press the motion. In any case, he would not get a fair vote. Members opposite could not vote for the motion; if they did, it would be an expression of no confidence in the Government. If we had been discussing the regulations, members opposite would have been free to vote as they pleased, but not so with a motion for the adjournment of the House, which, if carried, would have to be taken as a vote of no confidence. The matter has been sufficiently ventilated now to enable the public to get an idea of the attitude of the Government on the question, and towards the seven men who have invested their all in the business even to the extent of mortgaging their furniture, for the purpose of earning a living.

The Premier: Go on, more sob stuff.

MR. NORTH (Claremont—in reply) [8.37]: I presume I have the right to reply.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is a moot question whether the hon. member has the right to reply, but as it has hitherto been permitted, on motions for the adjournment, the hon. member may proceed.

Mr. NORTH: I am sorry that the Minister is still in the dark as to what were the needs and wishes of the men concerned. The

route was applied for over and over again, and I myself interviewed the Minister and meetings were held in Cottesloe and Claremont. There has been a good deal of correspondence and the men approached the routes committee. Further, the municipal council passed resolutions, and yet in face of all this the Minister was not aware that Wellington-street was selected as the terminus, and that it was not the desire of the men to leave St. George's-terrace. On the 17th September I wrote to the Minister for Works and stated that the City Council had granted to the service a splendid stand in St. George's-terrace. So far as I am aware, all the councils and road boards concerned are prepared that the existing route should be maintained. I asked the routes committee to receive evidence from the men concerned or from anybody they wished on this question. That application was never replied to and therefore all we can assume is that there was a determined effort on the part of those in authority to crush the service by letting the drivers have the foolish route as set out in the first regulation or else the foolish terminus as proposed in the second regulation. Either those interested were to have a dud route or they were to be given a terminus where respectable women could not with safety wait at night time. There was reasonable ground for complaint. It was idle to say that St. George's-terrace was congested to such an extent that a stand could not be granted for one car in front of the Technical School. I am astounded that the Minister should seriously contend that the seven taxis running at intervals of a quarter of an hour, should do any harm by having their terminus in St. George's-terrace. There was a determined effort on the part of the authorities to crush the service by providing either a foolish route or a foolish terminus. In all fairness I should be allowed to explain the attitude of Mr. Kitson in another place. It was said that he was agitating in the direction of defeating the Act, or that it should be ignored. What he did say was that the regulations limiting buses to specified routes should be thrown out. Otherwise there would have been no possibility of the vehicles giving a service to the public during the hiatus between the period when the then existing regulations were thrown out and when the Minister would frame new ones. Another place expected that the regulations

would be brought into force again excepting, of course, those that had been objected to. If the Council had accepted the regulations, the Minister would have said, "The law is that the terminus shall be in Wellington-street and I must rigorously enforce it." The Council's endorsement of the disallowance of the regulations proves that we were justified in bringing the matter forward and it was proof that the taxi drivers had been persecuted for some time past. I hope the matter will not end here, and though the Minister said that these men were defying the law, I assure him that they are willing to abide by the law. They have always been willing to do so and they express the hope that the Minister will bring in regulations at the earliest opportunity on lines similar to those that existed at the beginning. There is a far more vital principle at stake than that of seven men losing their livelihood, although that is bad enough. It is pretty rotten to find the authorities hounding out those who are trying to earn a living under the Traffic Act as it is now administered. I hope that better counsels will prevail and that the Minister will consent to receive these men. They have tried to get his ear. He says they have never once called upon him, and he thought they had accepted the Wellington-street terminus. They got as far as the Minister's secretary, Mr. Andrew, who referred them to the routes committee. With all his duties the Minister is not in a position to deal with every matter, and this case he referred to the committee. As soon as the "Gazette" was out on Friday the men went straight to the Minister in the hope of seeing him, but Mr. Andrew sent them to the committee. They then approached the committee. I have learned this evening that the committee would not receive them on the ground that the matter was sub judice and under discussion in another place. That being so the men were unable to get a hearing, although they made every effort to do so. The Mayor of Cottesloe, Mr. Bryan, may have been tricked into saying something he was sorry for afterwards. The moment he finished his evidence before the board he asked leave to withdraw. He was, however, persuaded to remain. He was then told that Inspector Hunter would not allow taxis in the Terrace, and would have them all removed later on. He was also told he would have to choose between Wellington-street or some other place. He chose Wellington-street because he was in a corner. Inspector

Hunter should seek advice from men of wider experience and acquire knowledge from larger cities.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is the Minister you must go for, not the inspector.

Mr. NORTH: The objection is to the terminus chosen on the expert evidence not of the committee, but of Inspector Hunter.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is the Minister's affair.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is the Minister you should attack.

Mr. NORTH: I do not want to attack anyone, but to show the sort of difficulty we have got into. The inspector is the Minister's officer, and he considers that the traffic must be taken away from the Terrace. There are 90 taxis using it to-day and 32 charabancs. There is room for them all, as well as for the seven I am principally concerned with. It is a cruel thing to think that six months ago those seven taximen enjoyed the use of a rank. It was gazetted by the Perth City Council, and now they have been denied the privilege of using it. I ask that they should be restored to their position. If the action of these men for the last month is closely examined it will be found that they have obeyed the law. They are looking for regulations by which they may abide. They have given a service for 12 months and should be allowed to continue it. When the matter is dropped I ask the Minister to allow these men to go back to the service they pioneered. I now ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Council's Pressed Request.

Message from the Council received and read, notifying the Assembly that it pressed its requested amendment.

QUESTION—STATE HOTELS, PROFITS.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: 1, With reference to the profit shown on the balance sheet of the State hotels for the last financial year, what amounts would have been payable by a private owner of the said hotels on the following accounts: (a) road board rates; (b) health board

rates; (c) licensing fees, including 5 per cent. on purchase; (d) compensation fee of 2 per cent. on purchases; (e) State income tax; (f) Federal income tax; (g) State land tax; (h) Federal land tax? 2, What profit, if any, would have been shown by the State hotels if the heavy charges to which all private hotels are liable were debited against them?

The PREMIER replied: 1 and 2, This information will be compiled and laid upon the Table of the House in due course.

BILL—RAILWAYS DISCONTINUANCE.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Schedule:

Mr. WITHERS: I move an amendment—

That the first paragraph be struck out.

This relates to the Bunbury Racecourse line. I was not aware that it was included in the Bill until I saw the newspaper report of the debates on the morning after the second reading was carried. I have been approached by different bodies concerning this line. I have figures to dispute the statement of the Minister with regard to the annual revenue which he set down at £20. The secretary of the race club informs me that in 1923 the sum of £50 was paid to the Railway Department; in 1924 the amount was £30; in 1925 it was £45; and in 1926 it was £52 10s. Last year the show committee paid £5 16s. for shunting charges of stock and material. In addition, certain sums were paid on account of the passenger traffic returns. In 1923 the Railway Department authorised the expenditure of £432 for the construction of a show ground platform. This ground is used for show purposes as well as for sports, and it will be the general recreation reserve of Bunbury. Even now people are looking it over with a view to establishing a motor speedway there. Other people are considering the clearing of the racecourse as an emergency landing ground for aeroplanes. Trucks have frequently been loaded at the head of the line for the carriage of turf, stone, and gravel, and could be used again in connection with the operations of the Main Roads Board. The Minister would be unwise to

take up these rails. I have received a telegram from the acting Mayor of Bunbury, saying, "Understand Government propose removing racecourse railway. Council and residents strongly protest against action of Government without being consulted." I have also a letter from the town clerk stating that other local bodies are incensed at the idea of the line being taken up. It is only 1½ miles in length, and I do not know what good purpose could be served by removing it. The secretary of the Bunbury Race Club informed me that it was intended to run special trains from Perth to Bunbury in order to convey passengers and horses direct to the racecourse. I believe the same thing is done at Northam and York. At present the horses have to be landed on the main platform at Bunbury because there are no yarding facilities to enable stock to be detained there. There is a possibility of the establishment of superphosphate works adjacent to the line and in view of these considerations I hope the Minister will not be hasty regarding the line. I realise from the railway point of view that it will cost a considerable amount to put the line in proper order for passenger traffic, but why did not the Railway Department safeguard the position long ago? There is a danger from show stock taken through the streets of Bunbury and that will be necessary if the railway is taken up. Such a thing is not allowed in Perth or Claremont. I do not see why the railway facilities should be taken away seeing that the rails will be of such little value elsewhere.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I was surprised to hear the figures quoted by the hon. member, seemingly with authority. They were apparently supplied by people who should be in a position to give figures correctly. It is not usual for a Minister to test the financial details supplied to him by his department. Such figures are always accepted in good faith. The departmental figures supplied to me showed that the earnings averaged £20 for the past three years. If one organisation, such as the Race Club, can show that £50 was paid in one year, someone will have to find out where the difference has gone! During the 3½ years I have been Minister for Railways the departmental figures have always stood the light of investigation. The point is that the line cannot be used without an expenditure of between £700 and £1,000. We have

endeavoured to keep trains working over the line, but at a reduced speed of eight miles an hour.

Hon. G. Taylor: It would be a grand thing to go to the races at eight miles an hour.

Mr. Sampson: It would create the proper atmosphere.

The Premier: I think the motors would beat us there.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We have to consider the question of safety, and if the engineers report that the line is in bad order and requires an expenditure of upwards of £700 before the safe working of the line can be guaranteed, I will not be prepared to say that the trains must run, nor will I be prepared to recommend the Treasurer to spend that money.

The Premier: If the amendment were agreed to, it would simply mean that we would close the line up and let it stay there.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That would be the position.

Mr. Lindsay: Anyhow, a mile and a half is not far to walk to a racecourse.

The Premier: Many people have to walk back after the races.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If we agree to the schedule, and the line is taken up, will the taxis be permitted to run over the route to the racecourse? Is there any guarantee that they will not be prevented from doing so?

The Premier: There is an open go down there.

The Minister for Railways: That question is dealt with by the local authorities, as it is outside the metropolitan area.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I think the Minister should ascertain whether the returns he quoted are correct before he asks the Committee to agree to the line being taken up.

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope the Minister will agree to accept the suggestion made by the Leader of the Opposition. There can be no need for expedition in this matter. The Minister when moving the second reading was silent respecting the Bunbury race-course line. The taking up of this line would be a very serious matter to Bunbury, and I hope the Minister will reconsider the departmental decision. The delay involved will not injure anybody.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Minister on the second reading told us the position of the three lines, what they were earning and the losses involved. This is purely a depart-

mental matter. The Minister has been informed by the Commissioner of Railways that it is necessary to pull up these lines and utilise the rails for other purposes. I expect the Minister has been just as accurately informed as to the Bunbury line as he was with respect to the goldfields lines. The Committee would not be justified in accepting the suggestion of the member for Bunbury that the Minister's statement regarding the Bunbury line was incorrect. There is a discrepancy somewhere, and the Railway Department is a pretty shrewd judge of the value of its lines. If I were to disbelieve the Minister as to the one line, I should have to disbelieve him as to the other lines.

Mr. WITHERS: As I have said, I called at the office of the secretary of the Bunbury Race Club, and that official pulled out his book and read out the figures for 1923, 1924, 1925 and 1926. I put down the figures as he called them out, so I could scarcely have made a mistake. Therefore I must accept these figures. This railway was constructed and actually used for traffic before the Bill authorising its construction was passed. I hope that, if this Bill passes, the Minister or the department will not be in a hurry to put it into operation. It would be an awful pity if the line were removed and then within the next 12 months we had some developments that would necessitate the putting back of the line.

Amendment put and negatived.

Schedule put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—MENTAL TREATMENT.

In Committee

Resumed from the 27th October. Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Health in charge of the Bill.

Clause 4—Involuntary patients (partly considered):

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: When last the clause was under discussion, the question was raised as to whether Subclauses 1 and 2 should be read jointly or separately. I have since consulted the Crown Solicitor on the point. He says it is clear that the two subclauses must be read conjointly. The

one provides the method under which the order can be issued, whilst the other prescribes the proofs that must be provided. However, since there is the possibility that some justices might read Subclause 1 separately, the Crown Solicitor suggests that to make it quite clear we should delete the numeral "(2)" and so make the first and second subclauses read as one. He also suggested the addition of a proviso to get over the difficulty, pointed out by the member for Perth and other members, of obtaining two medical certificates in a remote district. A further amendment suggested by Mr. Sayer is that in the proviso to Subclause 6, dealing with the extension of treatment, we should strike out "may" and insert "shall." I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 2 "(2)" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added to Subclause (2):—"Provided that if in any part of the State it is impracticable to obtain the certificate of two medical practitioners, an order may be made on the certificate of one medical practitioner subject to the expressed condition that the certificate of another medical practitioner must be indorsed on the order within 14 days after the patient is received into the hospital or reception house."

Mr. DAVY: There is no such provision in the Lunacy Act applying to a person previous to his being declared. It is necessary to have sworn testimony.

The Minister for Health: No one will be accepted if he has been previously certified insane.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move an amendment—

That in the proviso to Subclause (6) "may" be struck out, and the word "shall" inserted in lieu.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister has shown commendable consideration in meeting the suggestions of the member for Perth and the member for East Perth, but there is no justification for this amendment. If two certificates are provided at the outset, there should be no need for a certificate to detain a patient for a further period.

Mr. Kenneally: Would you give that power to any justice of the peace?

Mr. SAMPSON: Under the proviso a justice may require a certificate.

Mr. Thomson: It will take two certificates to put a man in the home and only one to keep him there.

The Premier: No, it will need the Inspector General and then another doctor, which will make two.

Mr. SAMPSON: In view of the consideration given to this clause in another place, I see no reason why we should alter it.

Mr. THOMSON: The proviso should go even further. Patients should be made to feel that they are getting a fair deal. It is necessary for two doctors to certify a patient as insane before he can be admitted to the home.

The Minister for Health: No, a patient will not be certified insane.

Mr. THOMSON: When a patient is placed in the home he will be in need of mental treatment. As we require two certificates in the first place, two should be required to extend the period. Relatives, too, would feel more satisfied if two certificates were insisted on.

The CHAIRMAN: Let us deal with the amendment first of all.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The member for Swan agrees that two medical men should be required to complete the evidence on which patients are received into the home, but he objects to an amendment making it mandatory to have an independent medical certificate, in addition to the signature of the justice, to extend the period. I appreciate the manner in which the Minister has met our criticism. It should not be left to a justice of the peace to extend the period from six months to 12 months.

Mr. Davy: Or to decide whether there shall be a doctor's certificate or not.

Mr. KENNEALLY: That is so. I hope the amendment will be accepted.

Mr. SAMPSON: When the Bill was introduced in another place the period was 12 months and Dr. Saw was instrumental in getting it limited to six months with a right to extend it to a maximum of 12 months. Under the amendment, no matter what the condition of a patient may be, another certificate will be required before the period can be extended. That is quite unnecessary.

Mr. DAVY: I wish to go a little further than the Minister proposes. The extension of the period of incarceration by twice as

much as the original period should be as closely safeguarded as the original admission. Such words as "The medical practitioner whose certificate shall be required shall not be a subordinate of the Inspector General of Insane" would secure an independent opinion entirely outside the Inspector General's influence.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Two medical certificates have been suggested for the purposes of this clause. I am anxious that patients under the conditions here laid down should receive fair treatment; but irrespective of where the patient might be. No authority in the land would be likely to prefer any other medical opinion to that of the Inspector General in this connection. However, I want the Inspector General's opinion backed by another opinion. If my amendment is carried, I shall have no objection to accepting that suggested by the member for West Perth.

Mr. BROWN: How is this clause to be administered? In the case of a man out-back acting queerly, in the first place it would be necessary to communicate with the police.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. THOMSON: I move an amendment--

That in the proviso the words "a" and "practitioner" be struck out, and "two" and "practitioners" respectively inserted in lieu.

People who have been under restraint have told me of their experiences, and of the difficulty they had in securing release.

The Minister for Health: They had been certified; these would not be certified.

Mr. THOMSON: "Medical treatment" under this measure will mean detention for six months, except in the event of the Board of Visitors recommending release earlier. The case quoted by the Premier gives cause for thought, and this provision affects the liberty of the subject. One of my informants, who stressed the difficulty he had in obtaining release, is now carrying on business quite as keenly as he did before his unfortunate seizure.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I shall not accept the amendment, which I do not think is necessary. Two opinions are required now, that of the Inspector General and that of an independent medical practitioner.

Mr. Thomson: What if those two disagree?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Then the patient would have to be discharged.

Mr. SAMPSON: The home to be established under the Bill would not be a home for certificated patients but one for the treatment of uncertificated patients. Too many of these amendments will defeat the object of the Bill.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. DAVY: I move an amendment--

That in the proviso after "practitioner," in line 3, there be inserted "who is not a Government officer."

Mr. SAMPSON: Many doctors are subsidised, and that fact creates a difficulty. Further, there is always difficulty in getting a private medical practitioner's signature for anything relating to admission to a home or an asylum. The amendment refers to extension of the time during which the patient is treated. As regards the first six months of treatment, there is no provision for a private medical practitioner's opinion.

Mr. DAVY: The amendment is necessary, and the words "medical practitioner" indicate that the draftsman had a private medical practitioner in mind. The carrying of my amendment will afford a safeguard against possible certification by a junior medical officer.

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

Clauses 5 to 9--agreed to.

Clause 10--A person charged with an offence may be remanded to a hospital for observation:

Mr. SAMPSON: At the second reading stage it was stated that the observation ward at the Perth Hospital would no longer be required if this measure passed. How is it proposed then to treat acute and urgent cases of delirium tremens and the like if there is no mental hospital nearer than that at Point Heathcote? I do not wish to see the observation ward continued, but some temporary accommodation, surely, will have to be provided.

The Premier: Why?

Clause put and passed.

Clause 11--agreed to.

Schedule, Title--agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—STATE INSURANCE.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 18th October.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [10.2]: It is wearisome enough to have to make a second speech on more or less the same subject when the two speeches are separated by only a year. It is more wearisome at this time of the night, and perhaps even more wearisome for those who have to listen to me.

The Premier: They cannot escape.

Mr. DAVY: However, I thought the Premier exhibited some sense of weariness when moving the second reading. I found he did not seem to quite enjoy it, and he was almost too bored to get cross with us. He was in a particularly good temper that night and did not give one the idea that he had very much enthusiasm for his task. However, he got through his job, and now we have to criticise his proposition even though it be late at night. It does not seem to me that in its immediate results the Bill has any great importance, except to the Government. The Government embarked on a course of action in regard to State insurance against the law of the land, and it became necessary for them to get their action ratified. It is only natural that they should come along and desire Parliament to ratify their action. To that extent the passage of the Bill is of some importance to the Government. In so far as the Bill is to authorise them to embark upon branches of insurance that they have not hitherto undertaken, it seems to me it is going to make very little immediate difference to the Government or to anybody else. For after all, even if the establishing of a State insurance office did do everything that its most ardent advocates claim, it is going to make very little difference indeed to the pockets of the workers of this or any other country. I regret, and everybody must regret, that a greater number of the wage earners of this country are not insured. We should like to see such a state of affairs as that every man in regular work would own his own house and other property.

Mr. Panton: He can't do it on the wages he receives.

Mr. DAVY: Of course I am not suggesting it can be done, but I, like every other sensible person, would desire to see such a position as that. We all desire to see every

man in regular work in his own house and accumulating certain other property as he goes on through life. But that is not so. So there is a very small proportion of wage earners in this or any other community that has to take out insurance. That being so, the immediate results of establishing a State insurance office, even if it does everything the Premier claims for it, will not appreciably benefit the worker. The Premier says he has a mandate to bring down this measure and so establish State insurance in all its branches in Western Australia.

The Premier: I said, of course, as far as it was possible to get a mandate.

Mr. DAVY: I will deal with that in a minute. My comment on that statement by the Premier, made, I admit, with his characteristic appreciation of the difficulties facing him in establishing what he is claiming—my comment is first of all that no such thing as a mandate for anything was given to the Government at the last elections. After all, I take it, when a member of Parliament claims he has a mandate from the people, he means that a certain proposal capable of being fully understood, and actually fully understood, by the people has been put to the people and that a majority, even an appreciable majority, has declared in favour of that proposal by returning that politician to power. That, I take it, would be more or less defining what a mandate was. Of course the matter I now propose to deal with has been dealt with before. Yet it is necessary to declare again that in point of fact the Government did not receive, even after making due allowance for uncontested seats, a majority of the votes of the people of Western Australia.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, they did.

Mr. DAVY: If we simply quote the ordinary figures, the actual votes recorded for candidates supporting the Government, and for those candidates not supporting the Government, there were 63,666 for the Government and against the Government 76,773. Now, of course, the Premier justifiably says that that does not conclude the matter. But if we go farther and after making allowances—I will admit they must necessarily be to a certain extent arbitrary, for we cannot make a hard and fast rule—after making allowances for votes that would have been cast for the Government, if there had been a contest with a candidate

representing the Government in constituencies where there was not a contest, and making allowances for votes that would have been against the Government if there had been a contest in other electorates where there was no contest, we nevertheless arrive at a result showing for the Government 75,000 odd votes, and against the Government 77,000 odd votes.

The Premier: How do you arrive at the figures? There were the uncontested seats. You have to calculate there.

Mr. DAVY: Yes; and it is a very difficult thing.

The Premier: You can only calculate the votes that would have been cast for and against the Government.

Mr. DAVY: Yes, but it is possible to make an estimate and get some sort of a guide. Probably a person desiring to make out the opposite case would have taken percentages slightly different. One would be apt to do that. The result I have quoted has been arrived at by taking the nine seats uncontested by candidates who were against the Government, six of them goldfields seats, and allowing a percentage for non-Government candidates on the basis obtained in districts of a similar kind that were contested. I allow to the Government in the six goldfields districts 57 per cent. of the votes polled and on the opposite side 43 per cent. For a place like Collie it is very difficult to arrive at an estimate. Collie being a strong industrial centre, although a considerable amount of farming is carried on in the district, I assume that the Government would get 60 per cent. of the support.

The Premier: I do not think it would work out on the basis you have taken. A reasonable assumption is that the uncontested seats were more strongly Labour than the seats that were contested.

Mr. DAVY: If that is so, it would cut both ways, because there were six seats not contested by Labour candidates. Take Wagin, Beverley and Pingelly: for the purposes of the figures I have quoted I calculated them on the basis of Katanning.

The Premier: As contested seats.

Mr. DAVY: Wagin, Beverley and Pingelly were not contested.

Mr. Mann: What about Toodyay?

Mr. DAVY: Toodyay is dealt with on another basis because it is in a different part of the country. Wagin, Beverley and Pingelly might reasonably be said to be

on the same basis as Katanning, where 30 per cent. of the poll was in favour of the Government candidate. On the suggestion that the Premier has just made, I am more than fair to the Government candidates when I give Labour the same percentage in Wagin, Beverley, and Pingelly. The Premier now says that because there was no contest in those three districts—I believe something happened at Pingelly to prevent it—it is reasonable to assume that his party would have done worse than at Katanning.

The Premier: No.

Mr. DAVY: It would cut both ways.

The Premier: You could have taken York, for instance.

Mr. DAVY: In York, Irwin, and Toodyay there was no Labour candidate, and I took them on a common basis because they were analogous. In those districts I have given Labour 26 per cent.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Now give us a bit of State insurance.

Mr. DAVY: I am becoming accustomed to being dictated to by certain members on the front benches, but I do not propose to be dictated to by the member for Guildford.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: State insurance would be more to the point.

Mr. DAVY: York was worse than Katanning in that the percentage of Labour supporters was only 26. On that basis, which I am ready to admit is not a final solution of the difficulty, we find that there were polled more votes against the Government than for them. If one can make out even a reasonable case, an arguable case, that there would have been more votes polled against the Government than for them, if one can put up a case that is entitled to be considered as honest and sensible, it is idle for the Government to claim that they have a mandate, that is that a majority have declared in no uncertain voice in favour of a particular piece of legislation. I remind the Premier that in South Australia the Labour Government claimed a mandate to establish State insurance. I quote that because I know it is practically impossible to get a mandate on a subject like State insurance. It is difficult to get numbers of people who are not personally in contact with what insurance means, to understand the pros and cons of it. It is not a matter of inferiority of understanding; it is a matter of their not having come

into contact with it. It is easy for the Premier or for any of us to understand what insurance means, because we all do some insurance and are in contact with it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is a question on which everyone is an authority because everyone does some insurance.

Mr. DAVY: I am not talking about persons in authority; I am talking of persons who work hard all day and have their own concerns to attend to and do not come into contact with insurance. At one of my election meetings I was asked why I was opposed to State insurance in view of the fact that State insurance in England had been such a boon and blessing to the people. The questioner was referring to the national insurance scheme established by Mr. Lloyd George which has nothing to do with the proposal we are debating at present. In South Australia the Labour Government claimed a mandate from the people to establish State insurance and they fought vigorously to get the measure passed, but it was thrown out by the Upper House. At the next election, the Government that claimed to have received the mandate were thrown out by the people. That shows that one can take very little notice of these claims to having received mandates from the people. The Labour Government in South Australia claimed to have a mandate for State insurance; the measure was thrown out by the Upper House and at the next election the Government were defeated.

The Premier: I suppose they were defeated because they did not carry out the mandate.

Mr. DAVY: No, they did their best to carry it out. I suggest as a word of warning to the Premier that the claiming of mandates on matters of this kind is at least sometimes followed by being turned out of office by the people at the next available opportunity.

The Premier: It is the first time in my life I have taken a mandate.

Mr. DAVY: I think the Premier did it with considerable diffidence, and properly so. Passing from the question of mandates, which I submit is a contention that will not hold water, the Premier claims that insurance is peculiarly something that the State can do more efficiently than can private enterprise. He has admitted, though all his supporters will not admit, that there are many things that could be better done by

private enterprise than by the State, but he says insurance is peculiarly a thing that can be run more efficiently by the State than by private enterprise. After I heard that statement made I could not help finding it difficult to reconcile it with the undeniable fact that in New Zealand, where State insurance has been carried on for many years, the State Insurance Office does 8 per cent. of the whole of the business and the private companies do 92 per cent. I think the establishment of a State Insurance Office there must date back to some time before 1890. I know my father left New Zealand early in the 90's, and he had a policy taken out in a New Zealand Life Insurance Office before he left. If there was this exceptional efficiency about the State Insurance Office doing this kind of business, I cannot understand why the private companies in New Zealand have been able to survive all this time and do practically the whole of the work.

Mr. Corboy: It is difficult to understand why the private companies object if they do so well.

Mr. DAVY: To tell the House the truth, I do not know why they object. It does not seem to me that it will hurt them in the slightest. I know why I object, and I will tell the House later on.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We have been waiting a long time to hear.

Mr. DAVY: I hope the hon. member will be patient. If one were able to analyse the figures, one would find that State insurance offices everywhere in the world mainly did their own business. The Premier tells us that in Victoria, which has a State Insurance Office to deal with workers' compensation only, one-third of the whole of the business done by it constitutes Government business. I am making an assertion which I cannot support by figures, but I strongly suspect that if we had an analysis of the whole of the work done by the Victorian Workers' Compensation Office, we would find that of the balance of two-thirds practically all of it is business that can be influenced by the Government, such as local authorities, etc. The only conclusions to be drawn from the experience of New Zealand and other countries is that people prefer to deal with private enterprise. There is an enormous number of people who unless they were canvassed or compelled by law to do so, would never insure. Most members will have taken out some insurance policy on their lives. A prudent man does that, but how many of

us took out a policy of our own volition when we originally insured, and how many of us voluntarily increase the value of our policies? As a man's means increase, if he is prudent, and can afford more, he will increase the cover upon his life.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I suppose you know this Bill does not deal with life insurance?

Mr. DAVY: The Premier admitted that it did. This Bill will enable the State Insurance Office to deal with any kind of insurance.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I do not think so.

Mr. DAVY: It deals with all kinds of insurance. The Premier does not deny that the Bill, if carried in its present form, will give him power to establish an office to deal with all kinds of insurance, including life.

The Premier: It is not intended to deal with life insurance, although the Bill is a very broad one.

Mr. DAVY: One cannot judge of the intentions of the Government, except by what they say. We are asked to give that power.

Mr. Angelo: Perhaps they will agree to a proviso exempting life insurance.

Mr. DAVY: No doubt this Bill, if it ever becomes law, will be in a very different form from what it is now, just as the Bill the Premier brought down last year, if it had been put on the statute-book, would have been put there in a different form from what it first stood in. I do not propose to pour out a mass of figures at this time of the night. One of the chief pieces of statistics produced by the Premier that stuck in my mind was his statement from the New Zealand year book regarding the New Zealand insurance office. He said that owing to the activities of that office the premiums had been decreased by a very large amount. I have not been able to get hold of a copy of the report to see the context from which the extract was quoted, but the Premier was good enough to give me a copy of the extract which also appears in "Hansard." If it was just that and nothing more, one would desire to know how that conclusion was arrived at. It is not sufficient to say that before a certain time the premiums were so and so, and that after the State Insurance Office had been established the premiums became so and so, and that such and such a result was the consequence. That would be an absurd argument to use. I have been informed that there have been substantial decreases in premiums in Western Australia during the past six or seven years. To quote

one marked example, I am told that the premium rate on fire crop insurances has diminished from 30s. per cent. in 1909 to 17s. 6d. per cent. in 1925. That is what one would expect. As the field of operations enlarges and the risk is spread over a bigger area, the underwriters should be able, other things being equal, to reduce the premiums. I am told there have also been substantial reductions in premiums in respect to other insurances. As towns reach a certain stage of development and have proper fire brigades established, and have arrangements for reducing the risk, the premiums come down substantially. I suppose that if there had been a State Insurance Office in 1909 in this State, we would have been told that the reason why the fire crop insurances had dropped from 30s. to 17s. 6d. per cent. was because that State office had been established. What has happened shows clearly that it would not be so. I think the Premier will admit that it is almost impossible to arrive at a comparison of rates between one State and another. The conditions almost invariably differ. In Wellington, where up to comparatively recently all the buildings were constructed of wood because of the earthquake danger, I suppose the cost of fire insurance was greater than in Auckland, which is not built of wood. How can we arrive at a comparison of figures between two different countries? A lot depends upon the area of the country, the sparseness of the population, the climatic conditions and all kinds of things. A comparison is difficult to get at. Here is a rough way of comparing the cost of insurance in New Zealand to the general public and the cost of insurance in Western Australia to the general public. I quoted the figures myself last year and so far as I know they have not been challenged. For fire and accident insurance the people of New Zealand pay per head of the population £2 1s. 11.7d., while in Western Australia they pay £1 18s. 1.7d. I do not say that those figures are conclusive but they furnish a rough guide—I defy anyone to do more than furnish a rough guide—that to the people of Western Australia insurance is costing less than the people of New Zealand have to pay. I have no doubt that if one had all the figures possible, we might arrive at some explanation to show why the cost is less in Western Australia than in New Zealand. But no doubt we might also get an explanation

to show that we should pay more. I do not think those figures I have mentioned have been challenged at all.

The Premier: It is difficult to judge. It may be affected by a considerable proportion of our population on the goldfields, for instance, living in tents and so forth, for which fire insurance is not effected.

Mr. DAVY: I agree that it is difficult to draw a comparison, and a recognition of such difficulties may cut both ways. It may destroy any figures to show that the cost is dearer in other parts than it is in Western Australia, just as they may destroy figures to show that insurance is cheaper in Western Australia than elsewhere. As a matter of fact I have not discovered any figures quoted in the arguments advanced either here or in South Australia where the debate was a long and able one. I have had time to read most of the best speeches on the subject that appeared in "Hansard" in South Australia, and I was not able to ascertain that anyone could prove that insurance was dearer here than in any other State where State insurance obtains or vice versa. It appears to me that we have to cut out that line of argument, and we must consider the question from some other point of view. The argument that the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) would advance if he were here would be the same as he used regarding State trading concerns. It is one I have always found difficult to reconcile with his statement of principle that it is not the function of the State to do for the people what the people can do for themselves. It is the function of Government to do what the people cannot do for themselves, yet the member for Guildford, after stressing that point, proceeded to say that it was necessary for the State to establish brick works, an insurance office and a host of other undertakings because they will prevent private enterprise from charging the people too much for the services rendered.

Mr. Thomson: The State Brickworks have not cheapened bricks at all.

Mr. DAVY: Nor has any State enterprise cheapened anything else.

The Premier: We are selling bricks cheaper to-day than ever before.

Mr. Mann: Have you broken away from the combine?

Mr. DAVY: I will repeat what I have said in the past and assert that, even with the number of bricks we can get from the State works, the market will still be left

short and so private enterprise in the brick-making industry will still be able to exploit the public if that is what they have done in the past.

The Premier: We are still making bricks—

Mr. Thomson: They are no good to us in the country.

Mr. DAVY: Surely the people can protect themselves. Let us consider the question of life insurance, for instance. Let us admit that the life insurance business, if run for profit without any check upon it at all, would prove to be too greedy. I suppose they were too greedy in the past, but what was the result? Co-operative life companies were started all over the world. We can take one of the biggest life insurance companies in the world, to say nothing about Australia. I refer to the Australian Mutual Provident Society, which is a purely co-operative concern that is not run for profit at all. In spite of that, there are a number of other insurance companies that are run for profit and pay handsome dividends. The co-operative effort, I presume, keeps private enterprise in order, while the private insurance companies keep the co-operative concerns more efficient. The remarkable thing is, and I regard it is a commentary on the enterprise of those who carry on such concerns without the necessity for making profits, that there are any dividend paying life insurance companies at all. When we know that a company like the A.M.P. has every penny it collects available for holding out inducements by paying bonuses and providing attractive life insurance policies—I mean every penny, of course, apart from expenses—it is remarkable that there is a possibility of others succeeding. Without the necessity for paying dividends, as is the position with co-operative or State concerns, a certain inefficiency may creep in to more than compensate for the fact that such concerns are not paying dividends. Otherwise the old-established companies like the A.M.P. would have run the other insurance companies out of business. Just the same we might expect the New Zealand office to have run the other insurance companies out of business altogether. But that has not been the experience. The farmers, for instance, in this State run their own co-operative company through the Western Farmers. Thus the farmers themselves make their arrangements to protect themselves from exploitation. Therefore there

is no necessity, as the Premier suggested, for the establishment of a State insurance office to protect the farmers in that direction. They already have the necessary protection. It is being efficiently done at present. The member for Yilgarn (Mr. Corboy) asked why the companies objected to this legislation. I do not think that the companies individually will suffer much, if at all, should a State insurance office be established. I believe they will retain the bulk of the business they do now and most, if not all of the business the Government will secure will be its own insurance business and such business as it can influence. My objection to the Bill is from the general point of view that the State should not poke its nose into things that should not concern it, and regarding which it has no need to interfere. It is not, in other words, the function of the Government to do for the people what the people can do for themselves. Unless powerful arguments can be adduced such as those in favour of the State running the police force, steamers on the North-West coast, or the railways, then my rooted objection to the interference of the State in such matters will not be overcome. For a man to dub himself an individualist hard and fast and never depart from that attitude would be foolish because when a war is declared the State has inevitably to undertake numerous functions that it would not otherwise do in times of peace. At any time it may be necessary for the State to step in and do things that it would not undertake under normal conditions. Should there be an epidemic of disease, that would be necessary, and the Government would have to adopt an attitude that in other circumstances would not be justifiable. At the present moment no case has been made out to demonstrate why the Government should embark upon the business of State insurance. The Government told us last year that they were only embarking upon that business with the greatest reluctance. The Premier and the Minister for Works said the Government had no desire to undertake it.

The Premier: I think we said we embarked upon it with the greatest reluctance without parliamentary authority.

Mr. DAVY: That is not so. With the greatest possible respect for the Premier, neither he nor the Minister said any such thing during the course of the long debate. I challenged him over and over again about

his reluctance. I am not prepared to contradict the Premier but I am merely stating what is in my mind and what I believe was and is in the mind of every member who participated in the debate. At that time the attitude of the Premier and the Minister for Works was that they had no desire to embark upon this class of business. I believe those are the very words he used.

The Premier: The charge made against us at the time was the illegality of embarking on something without Parliamentary authority, and the answer to that charge was that we did it reluctantly.

Mr. DAVY: No; the statement in question was made before any charge was made against the Government. Mr. McCallum's first announcement to the people of the Government's intention to establish State insurance included a statement that the Government had no desire to enter upon this class of business; and there was no qualification to that.

The Premier: That must have been the case, because, as the hon. member knows, State insurance is a prominent plank of our platform. The Minister could hardly say we had no desire to attempt to put into effect one of the principal planks of our platform.

Mr. DAVY: Do I understand the Premier wants it broadcasted that he is willing and anxious to embark upon all the enterprises that are prominent planks in the Labour platform?

The Premier: An objective is not a plank.

Mr. DAVY: Perhaps not, but the objective is the ultimate end to which the planks are directed. The objective is the ship, and the planks are those units which build up the ship.

The Premier: They are not quite so closely related as that.

Mr. DAVY: I think so. If the Premier wants us to believe that he is anxious to embark upon every enterprise which the planks of his platform set forth, he must be politically anxious only. I cannot think the Premier is really and sincerely desirous of putting them all into force.

The Premier: We have tried every one of them. This is the last one. We have brought down, I think for the last two years, Bills to put into effect every plank of the platform. I do not mean all those resolutions, but the planks of the platform.

Mr. DAVY: I am not subtle enough to distinguish between planks and resolutions.

I have heard the member for Menzies (Mr. Panton) say in this Chamber that he was bound by the resolutions of conference.

Mr. Panton: When did I say that?

Mr. DAVY: The fact remains that the Premier endeavoured to fix it in our minds that he was absolutely sincere in his statement as to having no desire to enter upon this class of business.

Mr. Kenneally: Without authority.

Mr. DAVY: When the Premier addressed the free and enlightened electors of Boulder, he could not quite take up that attitude. He then added a few useful little words. He then put in that the Government had not been anxious to embark on State insurance in the manner in which they did.

The Premier: I can assure you that that is what I had in my mind all the time. I could not get up in the House and say I had no desire to give effect to the platform.

Mr. DAVY: I suggest that the Premier again turn up the letter addressed to the Press by the Minister for Works, and also the "Hansard" report of his own remarks. If he meant to put in that qualification, I suggest that in future he insert his qualifications first, and not afterwards. He misled me then; I was convinced, against my better judgment, that his reluctance to embark on this class of business was genuine. He got quite angry one night when I twitted him about his reluctance, and the hon. gentleman said he really was reluctant. I accepted as a fact that he was reluctant to embark on this class of business. But this year we find an entire change of attitude.

The Premier: We have a mandate now, and so my reluctance has disappeared.

Mr. DAVY: I presume it is highly difficult for the Premier to reconcile his actions, when governed by his better judgment, with the actions which some of his hot-headed supporters would like him to take. It must be an everlasting trouble to the Premier to keep the extreme left quiet while doing what he thinks right and what will be acceptable to the bulk of the people of Western Australia. He is always on the horns of that dilemma. I sympathise with him, and I realise that it must be a terrible business to keep going. Everybody knows perfectly well that the Premier, as Premier, has a terrible tussle to keep that business

in order. The reason for the establishment of State insurance is probably that a bone may be thrown to the extreme left without startling the extreme right. So the Premier brings in this socialistic measure. The reason why he chooses this particular kind of socialistic measure is that it is least likely to give offence to the extreme right. Of course those on the extreme right have got used to the idea. New Zealand established State insurance many years ago. If the Premier could not point to isolated instances of State insurance here and there, it would frighten the life out of the right. That is my rooted objection to this class of business. It "kicks" the people, if I may use a vernacular word, along the path which the Premier's party desire them to follow towards the objective.

The Minister for Lands: And your people have always "kicked" them along the very same path; you did exactly the same.

Mr. DAVY: I should not answer that interjection. A member sitting on the Ministerial front bench ought to find something better to say to an opponent than "Tu quoque"—"you're another." As I have said here previously, I am not responsible for what my crowd did in the past, and I have not yet accumulated any political sins. I do not propose to accept responsibility for what they did, nor do I desire to gain credit for it. The danger of this measure and of the objective aimed at is that people are "kicked" just a little further along the path. Increasingly the people of this country, though not so rapidly as the peoples of other countries, are expecting more and more to be done by the State and less by themselves. It is my objection to seeing that process going on which makes me desire to oppose the Bill and to express the hope that it will be defeated.

On motion by Mr. Thomson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.50 p.m.