

the year 1919, there was a surplus revenue of £3,523,058 which, under the Constitution and under the Act passed by the Federal Parliament, the Federal Treasurer was compelled to distribute among the States. He never attempted to do anything of the sort. He carried it forward to the next year and put forward his Estimates showing how he intended to spend it. In 1920 he anticipated that there would be a surplus of £334,000. He did not spend that money, however; he carried forward the accumulated surplus and at the end of June, 1920, he found himself with an accumulated surplus of £5,747,423, which he was compelled under the Commonwealth law and under the Constitution to distribute amongst the States. Again he did nothing of the kind. He carried it forward in his statements covering the financial year and showed what he intended to do with the money. He indicated that as they had that amount in hand there would be no necessity to raise so much taxation and he predicted that they would end the year about square. At the end of the 12 months, he actually found himself with a surplus of £6,000,000. He is compelled under the law of the Commonwealth and under the Constitution to distribute that money among the States, but again he has done nothing of the sort. He is carrying it forward to next year.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Cannot you sue the Commonwealth for the amount?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not know how we could succeed.

Hon. J. Cornell: They do not intend to ever have a surplus.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: This is making the task of financing the States increasingly difficult. Whereas the framers of the Constitution clearly intended that the financial powers of the Federal Government should be to raise by taxation the revenue they require and to hand the balance to the States, the Commonwealth Government are doing exactly the opposite. It was never intended that the Commonwealth operations should increase the financial embarrassments of the State. The position is that the Commonwealth Treasurer lightens all his financial difficulties by passing them on to the States. I trust that when the Federal convention is held, it will be composed, as has been urged by this Chamber, of representatives in equal numbers from each State. That is the only legitimate manner in which a compact, involving the partnership of the States, can be varied. If that should be the case, I do not think we need have any fear but that the representatives of the smaller States will demand not only that the future arrangements shall be not less favourable than was intended by the framers of the Constitution but will demand that the clear provisions of the Constitution shall be carried out in the letter and in the spirit.

Question put and passed; the Address-in-reply adopted.

House adjourned at 9.6 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 1st September, 1921.

	PAGE
Questions: School teachers and quarters ...	581
Storm water drainage and rates ...	581
Trawling and fishing, Government assistance ...	582
Railways, overcrowding ...	582
Bills: Inspection of Machinery, 2r. ...	582
Gold Buyers, 2r. ...	586
Fisheries Act Amendment, 2r. ...	588
Building Societies Act Amendment, 2r. ...	590
Land Agents, 2r. ...	591
Auctioneers, 2r. ...	594
Stamp, 2r. ...	594
Grain, 2r. ...	595
Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report ...	598

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

QUESTION—SCHOOL TEACHERS AND QUARTERS.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH asked the Premier: 1, Is it correct that the head teachers of the North Perth and Victoria Park schools suffer no deductions from their salaries though they do not occupy the official quarters? 2, If so, is it his intention to lay on the table of the House the papers in connection with these cases?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. The quarters at Victoria Park are not occupied by the head teacher on account of their being situated in a low-lying locality. The health of the head teacher's wife was impaired through residence there. The quarters are let to a private tenant by the Public Works Department. The quarters at North Perth are not occupied by the head teacher, as the Minister when inspecting the school considered that the quarters were unsuitable as the residence of a teacher of a first class school. The quarters are let to a private tenant by the Public Works Department at a rental of 25s. per week. 2, Papers herewith.

QUESTION—STORM-WATER DRAINAGE AND RATES.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH asked the Minister for Works: 1, How many drains are there in the metropolitan and suburban areas

gazetted as storm-water drains under the Water Supply Act? 2, What are the disbursements in original cost, interest, maintenance, etc., of each drain up to the 30th June last? 3, What is the aggregate amount collected from ratepayers since the storm-water tax was imposed, up to 30th June last? 4, Is it not a fact that the property owners on high land in proclaimed areas, by reason of higher property values, pay considerably greater taxation in this respect than owners of properties in the immediate drainage areas, and yet receive no service? 5, Do the Government intend to give taxpayers some return for the payment of storm-water rates paid over a number of years by undertaking the construction of subsidiary drains to link up with the arterial mains?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied: 1, 33. 2, Separate accounts are not kept for each drain. The expenditure on the entire system to 30th June last is as follows: Capital cost, £279,954; interest, £96,361; sinking fund, £23,457; maintenance, £16,603. 3, £138,856. 4, A flat storm-water rate of 5d. in the £ is levied on the annual values of all properties in storm-water districts, irrespective of location. 5, The department constructs main drains only. Local authorities are responsible for subsidiary drains.

QUESTION—TRAWLING AND FISHING, GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE.

Mr. J. H. SMITH asked the Colonial Secretary: What is the amount of money expended by the Government on (1) soldiers' fish-canning scheme, Shark Bay; (2) money advanced smoking factory, Bunbury; (3) amount of money expended on trawler "Penguin"; (4) value of "Penguin" at time of wreck; (5) amount of money paid to one Coleman, and for what purpose; (6) value of services rendered by Coleman; (7) approximate loss on all transactions?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: (1) £1,450; (2) £1,500; (3) Approximately £5,500. (4) £7,000—vessel insured for £8,000; (5) £45 18s. 4d.—for wages when acting as fish salesman and distributor at Albany, and when employed at Middle Island on salvage operations; (6) answered by No. 5. (7) collections are still being made, and final figures are not available.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, OVER-CROWDING.

Mr. CORBOY asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it a fact that No. 3 train on Wednesday, 24th August, was overcrowded? 2, Is it a fact that a special coach was attached to the train for the use of Mr. Shillington, a railway official. 3, Did the fact that such coach was attached prevent proper accommodation being provided for the public?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. The accommodation on train provided for 62 first class passengers and 66 second class passengers, and the buffet car for 20 additional. Only 39 first class and 58 second class travelled. 2, An inspection car was provided for Mr. Shillington, who was proceeding to hold an inquiry. 3, No.

BILL—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [4.37] in moving the second reading said: Perhaps it is in accordance with the desire of hon. members that the first Bill set down for introduction in the Chamber this session shall be one possessing no party significance whatever. It is a Bill intended to amend the existing Inspection of Machinery Act, and instead of following what is the usual practice of making amendments to that Act, we have provided a Bill which will both amend and consolidate the existing Act. So far as is possible, there will be no misunderstanding regarding the Bill as introduced to this Parliament. The existing Act was passed in 1904. Since that date we have made considerable progress both by way of introduction of new types of machinery, as well as in the methods of control. It has been found necessary to make amendments to the existing legislation, and members will find these included in the Bill before them. In view of the progress made, the amendments are very necessary. On this occasion opposite each clause in the margin, there appear the words "altered" or "new." My purpose is to draw the attention of members to those clauses which are new, as compared with those in the existing Act, and also to indicate those which have been altered. The remainder, so far as I am able to ascertain, do not alter the existing law. By this means it will be simple for members to follow the provisions of the Bill as placed before them, and to compare them with the existing Act. My main purpose is to avoid difficulties arising in the future and also to make it simpler to follow the passage of the measure through this Chamber. The general practice in the past in dealing with a consolidated Bill was for members to compare the Bill with the parent Act and so ascertain what amendments were made, as it was not possible for a Minister, dealing with a Bill of such magnitude, to traverse the whole of the alterations made. The prime essential in connection with the measure is the provision for proper inspection of boilers. The measure deals with machinery as well, but the main feature is to provide for the inspection of boilers, particularly those which carry any considerable pressure. These boilers may become dangerous to life and property, and we desire to see them kept in such a condition as to minimise the risk attaching to them. We have made some

slight amendments in connection with the inspection of boilers. Boilers, it is set out, shall include any vessel used at a pressure higher than that of the atmosphere. It is not practicable to raise pressure by steam in vessels which have a free outlet. The steam must be enclosed in such a way that by continuance of operations one may increase the pressure. In some cases the pressure is increased far beyond that which the type of vessel is capable of carrying without causing an explosion. We have had a number of cases where vessels used in various places such as clubs, hotels, and factories have been subjected to a pressure beyond that which their capacity warrants. As these vessels have not come under the law and consequently no safety appliances have been attached to them, explosions have followed where they have been subjected to this excessive pressure and serious scalding accidents have occurred. That is the reason why we are making the interpretation of "boiler" apply to any vessel where pressure is raised above that of the atmosphere. Then we have included air receivers. They are similar to the boiler insofar as they carry high pressures. We had one accident on the Fingal mine—I think it was in 1910—and it was attended by fatal results. A subsequent inspection resulted in the discovery that the explosion had been caused by the serious corrosion that had taken place in connection with the air receiver, which had not been inspected for a period of three years. It is desirable that air receivers shall be inspected. It is essential that these air receivers shall be regularly cleaned in order that they may pump purer air to the men below. They accumulate oil and dirt and so on, and it is therefore necessary that they should be subjected to inspection which will necessitate them being maintained in a clean condition, which will also help to avoid corrosion. We also include digesters under the definition of boilers. They were not formerly embraced definitely under the existing legislation. These digesters carry a pressure of from 50 to 60 pounds to the square inch, and they are subject to corrosion and pitting which is probably due to the fatty acids used in connection with the operation of that type of plant. These digesters we consider should also be subjected to regular inspection. We also include steam jacketed vessels. This is for the purpose of preventing explosions or accidents in factories, particularly where there are boys or girls employed. Scalding accidents have occurred in factories where children have been employed, and it is essential that proper care should be taken in connection with these appliances. The whole principle underlying the measure is that they shall be kept in such a condition that those who have to come into contact with steam jacketed vessels shall at least know that we have, so far as we can, provided means for their safety. Then we come to the question of the inspection of machinery. The essential part of the

inspection of machinery outside of winding engines is to provide that they shall be properly guarded, so that those operating them might be protected against accident. I do not suggest that this measure will have the effect of preventing accidents entirely, but by proper inspection accidents will be reduced to a minimum. We also provide that while it is necessary that machinery shall be inspected, setting out the nature of machinery to come under the Act, any class of machinery may be exempt from the Act, subject to conditions that the Governor-in-Council may impose. Inspectors of machinery may perform certain duties and those duties may be extended in the direction of certain work now performed by inspectors of mines. I do not want members representing mining constituencies to conclude that we want to make the inspectors of machinery inspectors of mines, or vice versa. We frequently find that an inspector of mines has to be sent to a district at a great distance at a heavy cost, not only of time but of means of travelling either by rail or motor, in order to make a very small inspection of something about a mine which might be undertaken by a person with less qualification than that possessed by an inspector of mines. At the same time it is necessary, for the purpose of compliance with the law, that the inspector of machinery should travel the same distance to make a very slight inspection of some plant in order that the plant might carry on. This might be very nice, having proper regard to the safety of property, but in these matters the responsibility should first of all be cast upon the owner. We should not be called upon in connection with the inspection of mines or machinery to carry the responsibility of saying that wherever a person is working, that locality is absolutely safe, and thus relieve the owner from all responsibility. When we consider the cost of some of these inspections, members will realise that we ought to adjust matters somewhat. When in the North Coolgardie district recently I met in one place an inspector of mines and an inspector of machinery. The inspector of machinery had been sent there from Kalgoorlie and a tremendous amount of travelling, apart altogether from the time occupied, was necessary in order to make a small inspection. At the same time an inspector of mines was making a very slight inspection of mines as well. This applies in other directions, but outside of the goldfields districts we have only one class of inspectors, namely the inspectors of machinery. Here again we have inspectors travelling great distances to pass a plant. For that work we collect 5s. to 10s. and the inspection costs probably £5 or £10. In the circumstances we are not doing what is best in the interests of the general community. We desire, therefore, to provide that any member of the Government service who has

sufficient qualifications—we would not allow the office boy to undertake such work—might be appointed by the Governor subject to the necessary conditions or restrictions to make an inspection for the purpose of this Act. I have introduced another new provision. Where a small plant in a remote part of the State could be inspected only at great cost to the State, we propose that instead of another inspection being made, if the last report is satisfactory and the owner satisfies us that he has kept the plant safe from the point of view of those operating it, we might send him a form in which to state certain particulars required by the department. On supplying these particulars, combined with a written declaration that the plant has been kept in proper order to do the work required of it, provided that there is no vital reason for making an inspection, we propose to grant him an exemption certificate. This, I think, will be found to work satisfactorily in most cases, because the onus of making a correct statement will be cast upon the owner of the plant. I know of a number of cases in which it has been not only absurd for the inspector to make an inspection, but it has been done only at great cost to the State. We propose, too, to take further powers with regard to lifts and their operation. In these days lifts are quite common in up-to-date hotels and clubs, and even in private residences, though I am not so much concerned about the latter. I am more concerned about the buildings where people are employed and where extensive use is made of the appliances provided. Lifts are being introduced to a greater extent than ever before. In big shops and warehouses where they are used, little has been done to protect the people using the lifts and those employed on them. We suggest restrictions with regard to young persons who may be employed on a lift. No person under the age of 18 shall have charge of a lift. I am not certain whether the member for West Perth (Mrs. Cowan) will agree with my next suggestion, but we provide that no female shall effect repairs to a lift. I do not think it would be very difficult to find a number of women who could effect repairs to a lift as well as men, but women are not quite so cautious as men, generally speaking. We had a fatal accident in Perth not so long ago; a young woman, in attempting to effect repairs to a lift, fell down the shaft. We consider that this is one of the walks of life in which an exemption can be made.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You are not agreed as to their equality.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Well, I have not yet suggested to my wife that she should chop the wood. When we provide for the Government control and nationalisation of main roads, we do not propose to stipulate that women shall do their share of the metal cracking.

Mrs. Cowan: Some women do it in the country places now.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have not known of it, and therefore will not urge it. No one will suffer great inconvenience as the result of this restriction preventing females effecting such repairs. Lifts are used during a great number of hours each day in the warehouses and big shops. They are extensively used in a store like Boans. I suppose in the course of a year thousands of people travel up and down in Boans lifts. In the circumstances the lifts should be examined more than once a year, and we provide for half-yearly inspections. We also stipulate that if necessary certain safety appliances must be provided. These will be prescribed in order to further protect the people using lifts. We provide that winding engines used to raise and lower men in a mine shaft shall be equipped with certain safety appliances, and therefore we desire that, by direction of an inspector, safety appliances may be required for ordinary lifts. Some members know that on some of the big mining plants—not so much now as in previous years—there was a system of introducing steam into the cylinder which was a very slow process, and the method of cutting it off also was slow. There are other methods more simple and certainly much safer which might be employed, and we provide that where lives are at stake we may, if necessary, compel owners to provide these more modern safety appliances rather than the obsolete ones. The provisions regarding boiler fittings are much the same as those in the existing law except that we provide for all gauge glasses being properly protected. At present the protection only applies after a certain pressure. I have already referred to the exemption certificates for machinery when it is not considered really essential that an inspection be made. I propose to allow members to decide whether a fee shall be charged for granting such exemption. If an inspection took place and the inspection fee was £1, we might provide for a fee of 50 per cent. or 25 per cent. if an owner was permitted to continue operations under exemption. I intend to ask the House to give a decision on the question whether exemption shall be granted without payment or otherwise. The only cost to the Government would be the cost of the form, which would not be very great as compared with the cost now entailed of sending inspectors out to make the inspection.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is also the office expenditure.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That would apply if the inspection were actually made. We already contemplate making a considerable saving in the salaries of the inspecting officers and by way of travelling expenses, so that if we did not receive any payment for granting an exemption certificate, the State would still be reaping an advantage. This, of course, would apply only to simple plants, and not to plants employing a considerable

number of men, or where great danger was involved. Such plants would still be examined periodically. Following the lines of the Mines Regulation Act, it is proposed that proper inquiries be made by qualified inspectors when accidents take place. We have also followed the provisions of that Act in the direction of providing for an exemption from such inquiries where the accident is trivial. At present it is necessary to make a report if any accident happens, even if an employee happens merely to cut his finger. Where a serious or fatal accident occurs, however, a proper inquiry by an inspector of machinery will be made, and we propose to confer on the inspector the same power as is provided under the Mines Regulation Act to appear before a coronial inquiry. The main object of the introduction of the Bill at this stage is to bring about reciprocity between the States in connection with engine-drivers' certificates and their qualifications. At present the whole of the States are at sixes and sevens. We in Western Australia have for a number of years given certain recognition to certificates granted in other States, although we have not in all cases agreed with their standards. For the better protection of the engine-driver and of those who employ engine-drivers, and in order to bring about uniformity, conferences have been held at which the engine-drivers have been represented through their association, and we have come to an arrangement that uniform grades of certificates shall be issued and that the standards shall be similar and shall be recognised throughout Australia. Over 12 months ago, when I was in Melbourne, the general secretary of the Amalgamated Engine Drivers of Australia (Mr. Gibson), together with other officers of the executive, asked that when our Machinery Act was being amended, we should give effect to the decisions arrived at at the conference I have mentioned. We have also included, for the purpose of uniformity, that boiler attendants' certificates shall be obtained. Where a certificated engineer is in charge, he has to pass an examination which shows his qualifications to control boilers, and in that case a boiler attendant's certificate is not essential. Where a driver is not in charge and there is a group of boilers, it is not necessary that every person should hold a boiler attendant's certificate. The one in charge of the boilers must be the holder of such a certificate. Thus proper care and attention will be paid to the operations of the boilers. Then in the classification we give relative values to the existing certificates following what is the usual practice in new legislation, that any person who has been engaged in an occupation which requires afterwards the obtaining of a certificate shall not be put to a disadvantage; he may obtain a certificate of service if he gives evidence of the fact that he has been engaged at his work for a certain period, sufficiently long to qualify him to carry on his operations as previously. Cer-

tificates of engine-drivers are now classified on a different basis, and we propose to enter into a reciprocal agreement with the other States so that those holding certificates under the existing law may, on application to the department, obtain certificates as set out in the Bill of an equivalent value, which certificate would be accepted in any part of Australia. I do not know that there is anything else that requires to be explained.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How will the Bill apply to a surface certificate?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: From that point of view, the position will be quite satisfactory.

Mr. Pickering: Are the other States entering into the reciprocal agreement?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. In the Bill we have kept as nearly as practicable to the decisions arrived at by the conference which was representative of all the departments throughout Australia, so that there will be no doubt about uniformity. It is frequently found that the purchase is made in Victoria of a boiler carrying a certain pressure to the square inch, a pressure which suits the purpose there. But when inspected here it has been found necessary to reduce the pressure, and, of course, it then becomes of no use to the person who purchased it. Under the Bill, when a person accepts a boiler in Western Australia, he receives a certificate with it which will ensure to him that he is getting what purports to be a boiler up to a certain standard.

Mr. Davies: Why exclude the Government railways and tramways?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We do not want one department inspecting the boilers of another department when they have equally qualified men to attend to these duties regularly. The men we have in the railway and tramway services are qualified and are called upon, not annually, but almost hourly to make inspections of machinery operated by the Commissioner of Railways in connection with the railway or tramway services. There has never been any suggestion that any other method should be adopted, and it would be useless to have one set of qualified men inspecting the work of other qualified men. As I have already explained, this is a simple measure, although it appears to be extensive from the point of view of the number of clauses. The amendments it contains are not very numerous except in the direction I have mentioned. We have for the purpose of economy attempted to give the clauses in the existing Bill the same numbers and forms as the sections in the existing Act so that we shall not have to scrap a great quantity of stationery already provided under the existing law. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin, debate adjourned.

BILL—GOLD BUYERS.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Seaddan—Albany) [5.8] in moving the second reading said: May I first of all explain what seems to be a misunderstanding which has arisen in connection with the introduction of this measure? It has been charged against me that I have been practically compelled by certain organisations to introduce this Bill whether I agree with it or not. Hon. members know me well enough to be aware that unless I am satisfied that the provisions of a Bill are in the best interests of the country and are likely to prove acceptable to the House, I am not likely to be influenced by any organisation in the direction of submitting it. What has happened in regard to the question of the better control of gold buying is this: for a number of years the question has been discussed at different Premiers' conferences and finally a decision was arrived at that in order to have better control, there should be uniform legislation in the State, and the basis of that legislation was laid down and ultimately adopted. The State of Victoria has enacted a law. From time to time we in Western Australia have been urged to introduce a Bill on similar lines. Western Australia, as we all know, produces 50 per cent. of Australia's gold output. There were many reasons which prompted the suggestion that legislation of this nature should be passed. It was evident that there was a good deal of gold buying, and gold selling. I do not think hon. members will adopt the attitude that any person is entitled to take the property of another and dispose of it for his own benefit. I had a request last year from the Chamber of Mines to introduce this Bill during the then current session. I conferred with the Premier and we decided that in view of the number of Bills then before Parliament, and the amount of work that Parliament had to handle before the session closed, it would not be possible to submit the Gold Buyers Bill as well as some others. I advised the Chamber of Mines that subject to our being here again after the elections this Bill would be one of the first to be introduced. Evidently there are people in the community who doubt the word of a Minister so they got busy and engaged somebody who perhaps was given a small fee—as often happens when someone is requested to draft a measure—to prepare a Bill. This was a very simple matter since it was only necessary to adopt the Victorian Act as a pattern with perhaps slight alterations necessary because of the conditions existing in Western Australia. A deputation waited on me and submitted this draft and urged its introduction. I can give hon. members an assurance that I never read a single clause of the draft which was put before me and that I told the deputation that we were quite capable of drafting our own measures. I agreed, of course, that the Victorian Act was the model

on which we would frame our legislation, and I told the deputation that they had wasted time, if not money, in going to the trouble that they had done. Having said that much I may explain the law as it is at present governing the purchase and the sale of gold. The Mining Act, 1904, Secs. 204 to 225, provides that no person shall buy or sell gold unless either the buyer or seller is the holder of a gold dealer's license and the sale is effected at the registered place of business of the gold dealer and under his personal supervision. Under that we have licensed practically only banks, although there have been exceptions. Notwithstanding this, there has been a certain amount of illicit gold stealing and buying. If I were Treasurer, in view of our recent experience, I am doubtful whether I would be in favour of the Bill I am submitting as Minister for Mines, because we have recently made one or two very fine catches of gold. This gold has been confiscated by the Crown and in one case the total amounted to £3,000 in value.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Then, can we afford to lose revenue in that direction at the present time?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think the hon. member would suggest that we should encourage people to engage in this business so that we might afterwards confiscate their property. But recent happenings show that something is required to protect those people who are, after all, the rightful owners. The Bill practically enacts the Victorian measure amended to suit local requirements, but restricts the holding of gold buyers' licenses to the banks excepting in isolated localities where there are no banks, and here, if after notice that the Minister considers the issue of a license is necessary in any such locality and the banks omit to nominate an agent, he may grant a license to any approved person.

Mr. Chesson: Does the Bill provide that a man must be licensed before he can smelt gold?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That applies only to smelting in quantities for purposes of sale; I shall come to that later. No person may buy gold unless he is the holder of a gold buyer's license. No person shall assay or smelt gold unless he is the holder of a license as a gold assayer. That, however, does not apply to a person who is assaying for the purpose of discovering the value of any gold bearing ore, nor to a person who obtains a sample of gold bearing ore for the purpose of ascertaining its value. The object of the provision is to prevent the establishment of bogus assaying plants for the purpose of treating ore or zinc slimes and so forth in quantities and extracting the contents and selling them. Therefore we provide that no licensed assayer shall sell gold, and that no person shall sell for him except as may be prescribed; but the definition of gold excludes assayed beads and cornets. The usual work of an ore assayer's office would not come under this measure. It is only

when the material handled is treated for the extraction of gold in commercial quantities that this Bill will come into play; not for assays made simply for the purpose of valuation of the material.

Mr. Corboy: Sub-clause 6 of Clause 16 seems to preclude the holding of an assayer's license without the ownership of works.

The MINISTER FOR MINES. I realise that some of these matters require discussion in Committee. At present I am merely outlining the main principles of the Bill. If any provision appears to the hon. member to conflict with what I now state, then it will be his responsibility and his privilege to call attention to the matter on the second reading, whereupon inquiry will be made with a view to amending the Bill if necessary. The Crown Solicitor assures me that the measure contains nothing which will interfere with the operations of the general assayer, except as regards the extraction of gold for purposes of sale. The Bill goes on to provide that no person shall buy gold matter—that is, copper plates, slags, magnetings, battery or assay office sweepings or refuse, concentrates, precipitates, or other matter containing gold as the result of the treatment of ores, and sand, slimes, and other residues, the product of treatment of ores, and also rich specimens of gold ore—unless he is the holder of a license to deal in gold matter; but the proprietor of any crushing battery or treatment works may obtain a gold assayer's license which shall entitle the holder to smelt and assay gold obtained from material crushed or treated, the product of his own mining tenement, or for any company leaseholder, claim holder, holder of a prospecting area, or a registered tributer and such gold assayer's license shall entitle the holder to buy gold ores, concentrates, sands, or slimes from leaseholders, claim holders, holders of prospecting areas, or registered tributaries, if such sale be effected by contract in writing, and show that the gold ores, etc., were produced from and taken out of the ground comprised in the seller's registered lease, claim, or area. We do not want to exclude persons from buying such residues. It is not always convenient for the owner of residues in small quantities, or even in large quantities, to treat them himself; and, therefore, he disposes of them to some other person. But that other person must hold a license which compels him to keep proper records, available for examination from time to time to ensure that he is not dealing with gold brought to him illicitly, and that under the guise of a purchaser of slimes and so forth he is not engaged in illicit treatment of slimes from ore which has been otherwise treated. Applications for gold assayers' licenses and for licenses to deal in gold matter, and for renewals or transfers of such licenses, shall be dealt with in the warden's court, when the warden must be satisfied (1) as to the character of the applicant, (2) that the premises of the applicant are such as will not facilitate illicit

dealing with gold, and (3) that the provisions of this measure have been complied with in reference to the application. The warden may, upon certain grounds, revoke or suspend a gold assayer's license or a license to deal with gold matter. The granting or renewing of gold buyers' licenses rests with the Minister, who may grant a general gold buyer's license to cover all the branches of a bank, and, if desired, additional branches may be added to such general license during its currency; and the Minister may, on the application of a bank, or after notice to the licensed banks, grant a special gold buyer's license to any person carrying on business in any sparsely populated or remote part of Western Australia; and the Minister may at any time revoke any such special license. It is not desirable that in these matters the control should be completely taken out of the hands of the Minister, who is really responsible. The last provision gets over the difficulty to which the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) alluded by way of interjection, namely, the fact of a warden not being available in certain places. The measure goes on to provide that all licensees shall keep the books prescribed, entering therein an account of all gold, gold ore, or gold matter they become possessed of, excepting bullion samples left by a bank for assay; and also an account of all such gold matter as they sell, smelt, or dispose of, and shall supply to the Under Secretary for Mines all such particulars in regard to such transactions as are required by this measure and by the regulations. Failure to keep the required records and to supply the said information render the licensee liable, for the first or second offence to a penalty of not more than £20, and for every subsequent offence to a penalty of not less than £10 nor more than £100, or to imprisonment with or without hard labour for a term of not more than six months. Officers of the police force, or members thereof authorised in writing by an officer, may inspect a licensee's books and any gold or gold matter in the possession of the licensee. A licensee who wilfully makes a false entry in his gold entry book shall be liable to imprisonment with or without hard labour for a term of not more than six months, or to a penalty not exceeding £100. The holder of a miner's right, or the registered holder of a gold mining lease not being the holder of a battery or treatment plant in his district, may smelt any gold obtained by himself by gold mining, if his full name, address, and signature, and particulars of any appliance in his possession or control for treating or smelting gold, whether in use or not, are registered at the police station nearest to his address; and if he is in possession of a prescribed and valid certificate of such registration, signed by the officer in charge of such police station, such a person so registered shall not be deemed a gold assayer as defined by the Bill. That provision, as a whole, may, of course, appear to be a re-

striction on the liberty of the subject. However, there have been recent happenings—and not merely recent happenings—of people holding gold mining tenements and recovering a good deal of gold, the tenements on investigation proving to contain very low grade ore. It has been assumed in some cases, and it has actually been discovered in other cases, that the gold treated has not been the product of the tenements, but has been brought from other places. No doubt one effect of the passing of this Bill will be the surrender of some tenements in respect of which rent is now being paid. Revenue will be lost in that respect; however, that cannot be avoided. The Bill further provides that a manufacturer of jewellery or other manufacturer of gold may without license buy from the Mint or any bank gold for his own manufacturing purposes in the ordinary course of his business, and may in such ordinary course smelt such gold; but every such manufacturer shall keep a gold entry book and record therein all particulars required regarding his transactions. The Minister may issue a license authorising the licensee to buy wrought gold at its metal value; that is, its value to the buyer according to its carat quality. No person shall buy wrought gold at its metal value unless he is a licensed buyer of wrought gold. The license may at any time be called in and cancelled by the Minister. Every licensed buyer of wrought gold shall keep a book of account, showing—(a) the full name and address of the person from whom any wrought gold is bought, (b) the weight of the wrought gold bought from each seller, (c) the price given therefor, (d) the date of each purchase, and (e) such other matters as may be prescribed. The whole purpose of the Bill is to enable the Government to satisfy themselves that people who are entitled to deal in gold are fit and proper persons to do it, and that persons purporting to be recovering gold from their own mining tenements are, in fact, recovering it therefrom, so that it will not be necessary to suspect every second person of illicit gold-buying. The best means of achieving those ends is to render it a matter of difficulty to dispose of stolen gold; then there will be no longer the same desire to take that which does not belong to one. The other provisions of the Bill are on the same lines. While the measure inflicts something in the nature of restrictions on the liberty of action of those who sell and buy gold, I do not think those restrictions will materially hamper the gold-mining industry: indeed, I consider that the effect will be quite in the opposite direction. I have never held the view—which has recently been disproved more plainly than ever before—that the men working underground are stealers of gold in large quantities. It is not the man on small wages who steals any considerable quantity of gold. There have been many cases of theft of gold from places where the ordinary worker has no

opportunity of reaching it. Most of the gold stolen has been stolen in the form of amalgam or zinc slimes, which are quite out of the reach of the men working underground. If gold in those forms is stolen in any quantity, the company's return of gold produced is, naturally, lowered. In the case of a company working on a narrow margin of profit, the result may be to compel it to close down. Thus the ordinary mine worker, on whom suspicion frequently falls without his being in any way guilty, may find himself victimised by losing his employment. We cannot have an army of detectives continually harbouring suspicions against innocent persons, and therefore it is proposed, by this measure, to make the disposing of gold more difficult. Then there will be less need for looking upon numerous persons, in the vast majority of cases persons absolutely guiltless, as *prima facie* guilty of gold stealing simply because we know that gold is being stolen. I submit this Bill with a full realisation of the possibilities of misunderstanding which it involves. Let me say, most emphatically, that the measure is not aimed at the men employed in our mining industry, who, I repeat explicitly, are in my opinion not the guilty parties. I know of men now living over East in affluence, and indeed some of them holding highly responsible positions of a public nature, who made their money by purchasing gold from working men. Very frequently those now affluent persons held it over the heads of such men that they "could put their pots on any time if they squeaked." Those persons have left the State to enjoy their ill-gotten wealth, while the poor beggar who was really taking the risk is left here lamenting that somebody else has been able to do better out of his misdoing than he himself has done. I believe the same practice still obtains in that particular aspect of the evil. Briefly, the purpose of this Bill is to remove suspicion from the men who work where the gold is first obtained out of the earth, and to place the suspicion where it belongs—namely, on the man who is really making money by carrying on an illicit traffic in gold. Without further comment, I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin debate adjourned.

BILL—FISHERIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. T. Broun-Beverley) [5.30] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this small Bill is the amendment of Section 30 of the principal Act, which provides for the issuing of exclusive licenses for the taking of green-backed turtle and other products in the water along the North-West coast. There is a proviso to that section which precludes the issuing of licenses for the

taking of hawk's bill turtles, dugong, or beche-de-mer, commonly called trepang. The green-backed turtle is in large numbers along the North-West coast, and exclusive licenses may be granted for the taking of that product. Already an exclusive license has been issued, and a company is being formed with British capital to the amount of £30,000. Works will shortly be erected near Fremantle to cope with that product, which will be used principally for making tinned soup, while the flesh will be canned and sent away to Singapore and the adjacent islands, where it is mostly relished and required. The amendment I am asking for will enable us to issue an exclusive license for the taking of other products now practically going to waste. The hawk's bill turtle is found mostly in the warmer waters at the far north of the State. There are not many of them further south, except about Shark Bay. But they are in large numbers in the far north. That product should be utilised. At present it is going to waste. Quite a number of koepangers and others who inhabit the islands along the North-West of Australia come down to our shores at various seasons of the year and exploit the hawk's bill turtle and the dugong and carry them off for their own purposes. We have no control over that, no power to prevent the islanders from doing it. The flesh of the hawk's bill turtle is not of great value, but the shell is of very high value. If hon. members will look in at the Industrial Development Exhibition at present being held in Barrack-street, they will there see a number of specimens of hawk's bill turtles.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What area do you propose to give under these licenses?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Under the present Act an exclusive license can be granted up to 75 miles of foreshore. If it is proposed to exceed that extent, the license must first be laid on the Table of the House for 14 days, so that any hon. member may object to it if he thinks fit.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If you get this amendment you will be able to grant licenses over the whole coast-line from Fremantle to Wyndham.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, it will have to be done under the Fisheries Act, which provides that if more than 75 miles of coast-line is to be included in the license, the license must be tabled in Parliament. As showing how valuable the industry is, at the last London sales, in May of this year, the Australian tortoise shell brought 27s. per lb., whereas the West Indian shell, which is of superior quality, brought 12s. At present the prices are much lower. There is no systematic method of taking these products. If we are able to grant exclusive licenses for taking the hawk's-bill turtle, with certain protective provisions, the industry will be of benefit to the whole State, because it will

bring in considerable capital. Of course to protect the industry there must be certain restrictions in the license.

Mr. Pickering: That will be a matter for regulation, will it not?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Just so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Two or three licenses have been issued for turtle, have they not?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No. No exclusive licenses can be issued for this purpose. We are asking for the repeal of the section, so that we may grant exclusive licenses, just as we are able to do in respect of whaling or the hunting of the green-backed turtle or certain other products of the North-West. The dugong, as is known to most hon. members, as an aquatic herbivorous mammal. It is to be found in large numbers along the North-West coast. Thus far it has been exploited by only the islanders, who get the benefit of the product, whereas we should be getting the benefit of it ourselves. I have said that we cannot prevent the islanders coming down and taking these products; but of course it is clear that the islanders coming from the islands into the territorial waters to take the animals, will not be able to do it on the same favourable conditions as will those operating under a license. The flesh of the dugong is most valuable as food, it being scarcely distinguishable from pork.

Mr. Pickering: How do you propose to control these industries?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The same as other industries have been controlled namely, by supervision and inspection. Other parts of the dugong are of great commercial value, being used for the preparation of medicinal oil. Moreover, the hide is of still greater value. From it is prepared a leather of exceptional quality.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why, you cannot sell hides from bullocks now! Why set up further competition?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That will have to be for the consideration of the company which will be formed. It is for them, not for us, to say. Of course, the company will have to pay so much per annum for the license. Licenses can be granted up to 14 years, but as a rule we do not grant them for so long a period. We are guided by circumstances. Beche-de-mer is a small slug from 6 inches to 8 inches in length. It is found in deep water on the North-West coast, and is mostly exploited by the islanders, who are very fond of this delicacy. Mr. Underwood: Have you ever tasted that delicacy?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, I cannot say that I have; but the oyster also is regarded as a delicacy, although in my view there is nothing very delicate about it, except to an acquired taste. The smaller varieties of the beche-de-mer realise over £300 per ton. They are mostly dried and smoked for sale in Singapore. Here again we have a valuable product which is practically going

to waste. Of course, these products will have to be protected under the license, for I do not believe in granting licenses to just anybody who cares to come along for them. I ask the House to agree to the proposed amendment, so that these licenses can be granted. There will be no difficulty whatever about the formation of a company in this State. I have had many inquiries in regard to this industry, and I know for certain that there will be a large sum of money invested in works to be established in the North-West, and that the industry will be fully developed. We have had inquiries on the point, not only locally, but from the Agent-General. A few days ago I received a letter from Sir James Connolly, pointing out that there were in the Old Country men willing to put capital into the industry. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin, debate adjourned.

BILL—BUILDING SOCIETIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. T. Broun—Beverley) [5.44]: Since the Act was passed last session, it has been found necessary to bring in certain amendments in order that the Statute may be brought into operation. Last year Subsection (1) of Section 2 of the principal Act "an ordinance for the regulation of building societies" was definitely repealed. Subsection (2) of the same section provided that such repeal should not affect the registration of any society under the Act thereby repealed. There is some doubt as to the actual position of a society under the repealed ordinance, that is if a society does not become registered under the Building Societies Act of 1920. Clearly, the registration is not affected. Unless the societies register, and obtain a certificate of incorporation under the Act which was passed last session, the Act will not apply. Up to the present time, not one of the existing building societies has applied for registration under the Act. Provision is made in this Bill for this to be extended to the societies which remain under the old Act until February, 1922. There has been no reason communicated to the registrar as to why these societies have not registered. Under Clause 2 the application for the registration will apply up till February, 1922. This will give the societies an opportunity to register, and also to make the necessary alterations in their rules as provided under this clause of the Bill. Under the ordinance of 1863 provision was made for the vesting of the properties of the societies in trustees. Since this Act was passed no registrations have been made, and there have been no transfers of properties. When the societies apply for a certificate of ordinance or registration of incorporation under the new Bill they will naturally have to

transfer the properties that are vested in trustees in the usual way, with the result that it will cost them a large sum of money. This Bill makes provision for this to be done without fees being charged. In making the transfers of the properties the Registrar of Titles will have to do a considerable amount of work, and this work will have to be paid for by the societies concerned. It is only fair that this should be done. We have also a new subsection to Section 4 making it compulsory for the societies to register under the new Act. Under the principal Act we could not do this. There is also an amendment to Section 35. The principal Act under Sections 34 and 35 provides that the accounts of the societies must be certified to by two auditors, one of whom shall be a person who carries on the business of an accountant. This provision means that the societies will have to incur a certain amount of unnecessary expense. The Bill requires that the auditor shall be a public auditor appointed under the provisions of the Friendly Societies Act of 1894, and the Co-operative and Provident Societies Act of 1903. Before appointing an auditor careful inquiry must be made regarding him and only a fully qualified auditor will be allowed to audit the public accounts.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This does not provide for a fully qualified man to be appointed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, it does.

Mr. Pickering: What is the idea of making that provision regarding a man who is not fully qualified?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Bill provides that the auditor shall be fully qualified. Instead of there being two fully qualified auditors the Bill makes it necessary for one qualified auditor to be appointed. It would be all right in Perth to have it otherwise, but in country centres it means hardship.

Mr. Pickering: All building societies should employ a certificated auditor.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That will be done under the Bill. The auditors will be appointed only after careful inquiry and upon recommendation by the registrar with the approval of the Minister.

Mr. Pickering: Some of the biggest swindles in the world have been worked under this sort of thing.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: They are all under the supervision of the Registrar of Friendly Societies, and it is on his recommendation that this provision is being made. He assures me that the provision is all right and will avoid hardships being created in the cases I have mentioned.

Mr. Pickering: It is better to have a hardship conferred upon the societies than upon the public.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If the hon. member desires it to be laid down specifically that the auditors shall be fully

qualified or certificated, then he can move an amendment in Committee. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin, debate adjourned.

BILL—LAND AGENTS.

Second reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [5.58] in moving the second reading said: This is a measure new to Western Australia and is based largely on the New Zealand Act. It has been introduced as a result of a deputation which waited on the Government asking that land agents should be registered. It is right that people who are land agents and obtain a license should have some inquiry made as to their suitability for the work before being allowed to practice. There ought to be some protection for their clients. The Bill makes provision to protect the proceeds of sales made by land agents. The operation of the Bill will be confined to the metropolitan and metropolitan-suburban area as well as to the west electoral province.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why not make it apply to some of the other parts of the State?

The PREMIER: It will apply between Jandakot, Gosnells, Leederville, and Midland Junction.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: All they would have to do would be to start just outside Fremantle to be exempt from the Act.

The PREMIER: They will be a long way from Fremantle. Under this Bill they will not be allowed to practice just outside the boundary.

Mr. McCallum: You are not going to leave Northam unprotected, are you?

The PREMIER: Northam is all right. If legislation is necessary it should be brought in by easy stages. The great bulk of the land agents' business is certainly done in the metropolitan area. In the small country centres it is usually the local storekeeper who acts as land agent in the interchange of properties, and if the small amount of business that such a man does was taken away from him it would probably be doing a hardship to the people of the district.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is a possibility of collusion between the town man and some man in the country.

The PREMIER: There will be no chance of that under this Bill. For every pound that passes in connection with land sales in the country there are probably hundreds if not thousands passed in Perth.

Mr. Pickering: What about the goldfields? Is there not big business done there?

The PREMIER: Very little. They are handing land back to the Crown in many cases in order to escape the payment of rates and taxes. I know of one case on the gold-

fields in which a man sold a house for £300, which had cost him £2,000. From the 1st January next land agents in the metropolitan area will require to obtain an annual license from the Court of Petty Sessions. This means that they must obtain their license from the resident magistrate.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is the best way of handling all these licenses, instead of through private societies.

The PREMIER: I did not know that this was done. The applicant for a license must be supported by a testimonial as to his character signed by at least three reputable persons. The license can be transferred by permission of the same court on payment of a fee of 10s. The licensee will be required to enter into a fidelity bond for £500 and pay a fee of £5. For a man who is making his living as a land agent the fee is a small one.

Mr. Pickering: That is what it is now, I think.

The PREMIER: A license may be held on behalf of an incorporated company and it will then be sufficient for one of the staff in the business to be licensed on behalf of the firm. In the case of a registered company one of the officials may be licensed. He is first appointed in writing by the company, and will have to produce his written authority to the resident magistrate before a license is issued in their name.

Mr. Pickering: This will take a lot of business away from the country. Northam will suffer badly.

The PREMIER: The country agents will not come under this Bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Suppose a person is registered as an employee. He has to do what the boss tells him; if he does anything wrong he must take the onus of it and the boss will go scot-free. It should be the person responsible who should be licensed.

The PREMIER: Who would be responsible in the case of Dalgety's?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The manager would be. Let him take the responsibility.

The PREMIER: He is only an employee himself.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He will see that he is secured for his part.

The PREMIER: I am sure that these big firms will see that only men in a trustworthy position get the license. They will be responsible people.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You picked out an extraordinary firm.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member had named the firm himself I would have answered him.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Prevention is better than cure.

The PREMIER: I had a perfect right to mention Dalgety's or Elder Smith & Co., or any other firm. The penalty would be imposed upon the man committing the offence.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Some of these big firms have high-salaried managers. They should carry the responsibility. If there is

to be imprisonment, let the manager undergo it, and not the man who is getting £4 a week.

The PREMIER: A man cannot place himself in the position of having to go to prison unless he does something to warrant his conviction.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The employee has to do what he is told sometimes.

The PREMIER: A man cannot get himself into prison by deputy. If the manager of a firm compelled an employee to do something contrary to the law, it would not be the man who committed the offence who would have to go to prison, but it would be the manager who would have to accept the responsibility.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I know of a case of a plumber who got into trouble because he had to carry out the instructions of his employer.

The PREMIER: I know the managers will have control of the licensed person.

Mr. Teesdale: The manager gets the salary, and the other man does the business.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That about sizes it up.

The PREMIER: I know that it very often happens that a man suffers for the sins of others, but under this measure, the licensed person can protect himself. No one can compel him to get into trouble. If anyone forces another individual to do something which will get him into trouble, the man who will have to suffer the penalty will be, not the licensed person, but the individual who compels him to take the action I have indicated. It is provided that the money received by a land agent in respect of the sale of land must be treated as trust money, and until that money is paid to the principal, it must be paid into a bank to the credit of a general trust account or to the credit of a separate trust account. That is a wise provision. It will afford some measure of protection. It is also provided that the money so paid into any trust account shall not be available for the payment of the debt of any other creditor of the land agent or be liable to be attached or taken in execution under an order or process of any court at the instance of any such creditor. It is right that we should have some such provision in this Bill. As a matter of fact, speaking generally, we do not afford very much protection to the public.

Hon. T. Walker: Is this workable?

The PREMIER: We protect the seller of the land under this Bill by making it imperative for the agent to apply for a license. That application will be made in open court, and it can be opposed. To that extent we protect all concerned. We protect the individual with regard to his money. We all know that at times hard cases come under our notice. Within the last week or so, I heard of a couple of particularly hard cases. Properties had been sold to people who recently arrived in the State. They were prevented from completing the sale and, in the circumstances, they were compelled to forfeit very

considerable deposits. They were unwisely advised, probably not by the land agent, but the fact remains that they were not well advised in connection with the properties they bought.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is the case of one immigrant who paid out £900 for a property which your department valued at £320.

The PREMIER: I do not know exactly how we can protect everyone under this measure. If we begin to protect a man against himself, I do not know how far we will have to go and what the results will be. Under this Bill we will see, as far as we can, that the land agent is a man of good repute. If a person has a grievance against a land agent and feels that he has been injured by the actions of such a person, he can go to the licensing court and protest against the renewal of the agent's license. It must be remembered that the licenses are for 12 months only and have to be renewed annually.

Mr. Teesdale: Some people have been ruined, and have had to clear out of the country. Some of them have been swindled out of thousands of pounds.

The PREMIER: That may be so. I have already stated that I know of two very hard cases. If, however, an agent indulges in that sort of business, I should think there would be a sufficient number of people with grievances, to satisfy the court, presuming that the people would go to court to give evidence against the granting of a license, that the agent's license should not be renewed. We do protect the people so far as we can.

Mr. Pickering: Is there anything to prevent a country land agent registering under this Bill, if he desires to do so?

The PREMIER: Anyone can register under this Bill if he desires to do so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A country land agent would only register under this Bill if he desires to do business in the metropolitan area.

The PREMIER: Certainly; that is the position. Anyone can apply for registration. It is provided in the Bill that a person's license can be cancelled if he is convicted of certain offences, such as the misappropriation of money and so on. He is also liable to the cancellation of his license at the discretion of the court if he is convicted twice during a period of 12 months.

Hon. T. Walker: It has to come to the point of conviction.

The PREMIER: The cancellation can take place at any time during the 12 months.

Hon. T. Walker: But the weakness is that there must be a conviction first.

The PREMIER: Yes, but if such a person who has committed some offence applies for the renewal of his license, surely there will be persons who will give evidence against him.

Mr. Teesdale: His license can be taken from him at any time within the 12 months.

The PREMIER: Certainly. If a person, who is a licensed agent, is proved by his conduct to be unsuitable as such, the court will listen to evidence placed before it and will be guided by such instances as those which have been referred to. At any rate, I should think any court would be so guided. If a land agent deliberately misrepresents a position to anyone, and particularly to a newcomer from overseas, any court, I should think, would declare that such an individual was not a fit and proper person to be licensed. At the same time, however, it must be realised that people have to look after themselves to a great extent in this world. It is provided that this Bill shall come into force on the 1st January, 1922. No person will be able to recover commission in respect of any land transaction after that date unless he is licensed.

Mr. Pickering: It prevents private trafficking in this business.

The PREMIER: Yes, it will mean that a man who sells land on commission will have to be licensed.

Hon. T. Walker: Another monopoly?

The PREMIER: The member for Kanowna belongs to a profession which enjoys a monopoly.

Hon. T. Walker: My profession is one which has been invaded to a certain extent by these land agents.

The PREMIER: The lawyers have a monopoly and the architects have a monopoly.

Mr. Pickering: And the architects deserve it, too.

The PREMIER: I do not know about that.

Mr. Pickering: I hope you will be enthusiastic in support of their Bill when it comes before the House.

The PREMIER: Perhaps so. Under the Bill, it is not intended to set up a monopoly but all that we ask is that a man who is a licensed land agent shall be certified as of good repute. The Bill does not provide for an examination of any description. The licensing magistrate will require that the person to receive the license is one of good repute who will act honestly with his clients. If the licensed person does not act honestly his license will not be renewed. This is a simple Bill, but a good one.

Mr. Pickering: It sets out to protect the public.

The PREMIER: Yes, that is so. I do not propose to apply this Bill to the country districts for the reasons I have outlined.

Mr. Pickering: I want it to be quite clear that the country agents can come under it. It will be a big thing for the land agent if it stands.

The PREMIER: It will not benefit a country agent to register under this Bill. Having regard to the scattered nature of this country and the small settlement existing throughout,

the fact that one land agent is sufficient to meet the convenience of the people in the several areas should make it clear that, even if the Bill were applied to them, it would be seldom used. It is obvious that if we are to promote legislation of this sort, it should be first applied to that area where the business is very largely done.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It would be better for the revenue if you levied a license fee of £5 per office.

The PREMIER: If the member for North-East Fremantle intends to apply this principle to the licensing of all classes of business—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I was speaking of the land agent business.

Mr. Teesdale: They make big fees out of their transactions.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If a man has more than one office, he could pay an extra fee.

The PREMIER: The Bill is not brought forward from the standpoint of increasing the revenue, but in order to protect the public.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Revenue is pretty handy, too.

The PREMIER: That is not the first object of this Act. I do not know that we would be right in imposing a very stiff tax on these people, in the shape of higher fees.

Mr. Pickering: Do they not desire it?

The PREMIER: Yes, but they do not want more than they can help.

Mr. Pickering: I have heard it stated that the agents are prepared to pay a much greater sum.

The PREMIER: If we fixed the fee at, say, £500, it would simply result in a monopoly.

Mr. Teesdale: There is a tin-pot sum provided for as the license fee.

The PREMIER: If a man opened offices in both Perth and Fremantle under the one license, no great harm would be done because he would be a man of good repute.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But a man who opens an office in East Fremantle has to pay his fee of £5, because he cannot go elsewhere.

The PREMIER: There is nothing to prevent him going to another place as well.

Hon. T. Walker: It will work into the hands of the wealthy people.

Mr. Pickering: Five pounds is not very much.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The man I refer to would not be able to go to another district as well as East Fremantle because he would not be able to afford the extra money for employees and so on.

The PREMIER: Would the member for North-East Fremantle desire to see the fees increased?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If a man has three offices, I would suggest that he should pay three fees.

The PREMIER: I will always listen to suggestions so long as they are not harsh. The object of this Bill is to protect the

public, and the amount of the licensing fee that has been provided is not great. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin, debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL—AUCTIONEERS.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [7.30] in moving the second reading said: This Bill repeals the Auctioneers Acts of 1873, 1881, and 1897, and re-enacts the law in a consolidated form with some few amendments. Members are aware that under the Auctioneers Act there are several classes of licenses, a general license, a country license, and a district license. The fees for these licenses are £25, £15, and £5 per year respectively. The general license covers the whole State, the country license applies to the whole State with the exception of Perth and Fremantle, and the district license has effect only within the magisterial district named therein, any part of the city of Perth and the municipal district of Fremantle being excluded. Under the Act of 1873 an auctioneer's license was granted as a matter of course. The main amendment now proposed is that a person wishing to obtain a license must apply for a certificate to the resident magistrate of the magisterial district in which he resides. He must satisfy the magistrate that he is a fit and proper person to hold such a license. The application is to be heard in public and may be opposed by any objector, but the objector must give notice of his intention. The magistrate has power to award costs to either the applicant or the objector. On the certificate being granted, the license will be issued by the Treasury on payment of the prescribed fee. The license is to be an annual one expiring on the 31st December, but the auctioneer may take out a license for the second half or the last three months of the year on payment of the proportion of the yearly fee. If he took out a license in July, he would pay £12 10s. for the half-year in respect of a general license, and £7 10s. in respect of a country license. Provision is made for the transfer of licenses by endorsement on application to the resident magistrate and payment of a fee of £1, and for the issue of temporary licenses to enable an auctioneer to act by his deputy in case of illness or other sufficient cause. It will be realised that in such a contingency it may be necessary for the auctioneer to have a deputy for a day. To require him to take out a license for the whole year would not be fair, but it is thought that a fee of £1 is sufficient for a temporary license. The other provisions of the Bill merely reproduce the existing law without any substantial amendments. It is

a simple measure and one that is very easily understood. The main point is that a man applying for an auctioneer's license must satisfy the magistrate of the district that he is a fit and proper person to hold such license. I would stress the point that the applicant must apply to the magistrate of the district in which he lives. This will be a safeguard. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin, debate adjourned.

BILL—STAMP.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell, Northam) [7.35] in moving the second reading said: This is a consolidating measure. Members will understand that the law at present is inconvenient and confusing. The Act was passed in 1882 since when there have been nine amendments so that a consolidating measure is not only necessary but very considerably overdue. The Imperial Stamp laws were consolidated in 1891 and most of the Eastern States have consolidated their Stamp Acts. It is important that the public should be able to ascertain readily what is required of them in connection with the stamping of documents. There is very little alteration in principle, practically none. The only increase of revenue provided really is the stamp of £1 on deeds of assignment under the Bankruptcy Act. At the present time these documents are exempt under that Act. There is provision to empower the Government to appoint a Commissioner of Stamps under the Colonial Treasurer. Mr. Owen has been appointed and has acted since the 20th May last, and this appointment I am asking the House to ratify. Mr. Owen was appointed before we had the power to make the appointment, but it was necessary to do this because the Commissioner of Taxation who administered this Act ceased to be Commissioner for Stamps. Part II. of the Act reproduces all the existing provisions. Provision is made for the communication of information between the Taxation and Stamping Departments. This is necessary owing to the amalgamation of the State and Federal Taxation Departments. I have already said it is not intended under this Bill to alter the rates or impose fresh duties except the £1 stamp duty on deeds of assignment under the Bankruptcy Act.

Mr. Pickering: Will the Commissioner get extra pay for this appointment?

The PREMIER: He may or he may not. It depends on who acts, and what is his position and his salary. It does not entail a great deal of work. Annuities are specially dealt with in this Bill instead of depending on the schedule relating to mortgages, but the duty is practically the same. There is

no idea of increasing the revenue from this source. The English provisions have largely been adopted. Part III. of the Bill reproduces the existing Act, and Part IV. reproduces the existing law without very much alteration. Machinery clauses for the collection of duty on contract notes have been inserted but the rate again is not affected. Charter parties and hire purchase agreements have been provided for. This measure will make it very much simpler for those who are called upon to pay stamp duty to understand just what they are expected to pay and just what the law is as affecting each particular case. Members will recognise that we are not imposing fresh taxation except in the one instance I have mentioned. This is really a Committee Bill.

Mr. Pickering: It is rather a long Bill.

The PREMIER: Yes, but we need not take long over it. As we go through each clause in Committee, members will have an opportunity to express their views.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: Hon. members will take it as read?

The PREMIER: I think they will. It is really a consolidating measure and does not impose fresh taxation. It states clearly the duty of those who are called upon to stamp documents, and it should be welcomed by the House. It is most confusing to people to have to deal with the principal Act and nine amendments. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin, debate adjourned.

BILL—GRAIN.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [7.45] in moving the second reading said: This Bill will no doubt provoke a considerable amount of discussion. I can quite believe that the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) will be in his element when the debate on the second reading takes place on Tuesday next. This is much the same Bill as was before Parliament last year.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is much larger.

The PREMIER: The paper is a little thicker, but I do not think there is much more in it. There are some provisions which were not in the Bill before us last year. One could discuss the question of bulk handling at considerable length. I do not quite agree with all that has been said about the advantages of bulk handling by those who support the system, but I do say that it is worth while applying the system to this State. I do not agree with those who say that the farmer will be saved the cost of bags. It will be necessary for the company to charge the farmer sufficient to cover working expenses and interest on the enormous amount of capital which will have to be invested. There may be some saving; I do not know, but I do say that it is worth while adopting this system because it will be a great trade convenience. It would

be a very simple matter to handle the wheat harvest if we had this system in operation. This is the age of combinations and people are forced to come to understandings because they have had evidence of the success of combinations. Almost, I think, in every trade, there is a form of combination. I told my friend the member for Kimberley to-day that the law of supply and demand had been set aside. He did not agree with me; it did not suit him to agree with me, but I repeat that the law of supply and demand has largely been set aside. If there are to be a few people engaged in the industry they can combine so much more easily. What we want is competition; we want world wide competition for the purchase of anything that we can ship overseas. My friends opposite will agree with that. It is essential that we bring every penny we can into this State for what we sell abroad, and it is essential that that money should go into the pockets of the people. Having said that, I will proceed to describe the main features of the Bill. It is a co-operative company by the way, and any time while the company exists the State may buy shares at the original cost. That is provided for. It is purely co-operative and is open to everybody; there is to be no favouritism.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The proviso of Clause 3 puts that out.

The PREMIER: It is open to everybody and anybody who cares to buy shares. I will leave it to the chairman of the company, the member for North Perth (Mr. MacCallum Smith) to defend the Bill and explain what it all means.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am sorry for him if he has many shares in it.

The PREMIER: The main features of the Bill are to be found in a clause which gives the company a monopoly for 25 years. The Bill authorises the company to construct four terminal elevators, one at Fremantle to be built within four years, and the others at Geraldton, Bunbury, and Albany to be built within five years.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Provided so-and-so.

The PREMIER: I have said that grain is to be handled for the shareholders and non-shareholders at the same rate. Dividends too are to be limited to 8 per cent. on the paid up capital.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You need not worry about that; there will be no dividends.

The PREMIER: Eight per cent. on the paid up capital.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If you made it 20 per cent. the position would be no different.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is a pessimist.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes, on this.

The PREMIER: A reserve fund may be built up.

Mr. Pickering: May be.

The PREMIER: And should be, too.

Mr. Pickering: Not according to the member for North-East Fremantle.

The PREMIER: The profit on all the wheat delivered to the company is to be distributed on a pro rata basis. The people most concerned of course are the growers of wheat.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I think the persons most concerned will be the consumers of the State.

Mr. Teesdale: The lumpers will be concerned too.

The PREMIER: I am judging the attitude of hon. members by their interjections. The proposal will not interfere very much with the lumpers. There will have to be payment for handling just the same; there will be a good deal of work in connection with the storage of wheat, the erecting of silos, etc.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You will lose about £20,000 a year.

The PREMIER: I have already told the House that a person may acquire shares at any time during the currency of the 25 years. There is a provision in the Bill which was not in the previous one and which will be approved by the member for North-East Fremantle. Power is given to appoint a board to control the operations of the company. Two members of the board will be nominated by the wheat growers, and the wheat growers after all are the people mostly concerned. They have to pay for the scheme and pay for using it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I hope that will be true.

The PREMIER: Two members will be nominated, as I said, by the wheat growers, one by the Perth Chamber of Commerce on behalf of the millers and grain dealers.

Mr. Pickering: Why should they have a nominee?

The PREMIER: One by the directors of the company and one by the Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: All you require is a Government inspector to see that the grain is up to standard; you do not want a board.

The PREMIER: The board will be a much better system. The board will do the work and advise the Minister. By this system the company will pay the whole cost of the control which is exercised by the board.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You know there have been complaints about such a board in the past, about fixing the quality of the wheat.

The PREMIER: What the hon. member really refers to is the f.a.q. standard. It has made no difference. We never have been paid for high quality wheat.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is because you have been in the pool.

The PREMIER: Before the pool the f.a.q. standard was fixed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Minister reduced the quality once before.

The PREMIER: I should never have the slightest hesitation in reducing the standard of wheat which was fixed too high, because when you sell f.a.q. wheat, if the standard be fixed at say 64, it might be that the purchaser could cause considerable trouble if the wheat was delivered at 63. That weight, namely 63, is quite good enough for ordinary purposes and there never was any need to fix f.a.q. wheat as high as it was fixed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Once the Minister reduced it to 58.

The PREMIER: But there was some consideration there.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: None at all.

The PREMIER: It will be agreed that there is absolutely no need unless you get some material advantage by it in fixing the standard at too high a weight.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It was done in consequence of the pool and the lower standard in the Eastern States.

The PREMIER: Let me return to the board. What is proposed will prove very good.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The farmers will have three and you will have one.

The PREMIER: The farmers will have two, and the directors one.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The directors are the farmers.

The PREMIER: They are not the same people. At any rate I hope the House will realise that the money is the farmers' money, that the wheat is the farmers' wheat, and that the charge for handling will be the farmers' and the taxpayers will not be called upon to pay anything.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This money belongs to the people of the country.

The PREMIER: The only reason why the Bill is before the House at all is because the company must have a monopoly otherwise its assets will soon be attacked and will go by the board. It is the farmers' money, and it must be protected. Did not we hear something about the Fremantle Tramway Board some little time ago? And what control has Parliament over the Fremantle Tramway Board? None. This Bill is required because the wheat standards, and the care of the wheat, and the quality of the wheat to be handled by the company will have to be accepted by the people who live in London.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I hope I may not prove a good prophet, but I say that within three years the company will want you to take the concern over.

The PREMIER: I hope I shall be here to take it over. There are various charges connected with the administration of the board, all of which will be borne by the company. Let me say that whatever we are doing in this connection is being done at the suggestion of the company itself. The cost of the board is to be appropriated by Parliament, and the cost will be under the control of Parliament. The charges will be met by vote of Parliament, and the Consolidated Revenue will be recouped the amount which Parliament may allot.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I see; it is to be a joint concern.

The PREMIER: I should never have thought of putting this clause in myself, but finding that Parliament desires some control the company themselves suggested the insertion of this provision. It gives control over the board so far as costs are concerned. I do not know that I shall fight very strenuously for the retention of the clause if my friend opposite wants it knocked out. The measure is quite clear as to the power of Parliament in regard to expenditure. Now, this next provision will please my friend the member for North-East Fremantle: the board will control the expense connected with the handling, care, and disposal of the grain, and the board will advise the Minister.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is very good, three to one. It is easy to advise under such conditions.

The PREMIER: The board will investigate and determine disputes between the company and the company's clients. Again my friend opposite will say, "Very good." However,

I should think that as the company are not the board, and as the farmers on the board are not the company either—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If you had examined as many farmers as I examined on that Royal Commission, you would know what their feelings are about this matter.

The PREMIER: Yes; but some hon. members have a way of preparing answers to questions to be submitted on Royal Commissions.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No fear.

The PREMIER: The company will fulfil all their obligations under this measure. The board will fix the grain standards—which is necessary because the sale of wheat will be made in accordance with standards fixed. Of course all wheat is not of equal value; there will be different grades of wheat. The company will have to see to it that the grades are kept in accordance with the standards fixed by the board. Through their inspectors they will supervise the weighing of grain. That is very desirable, and indeed very necessary. Someone should control the quantity of grain going into the elevators and silos. It is necessary for the protection of more than one person. The farmer who delivers the grain has to be protected, and those who hold the warehouse warrants for the grain must also be protected, because if the grain is not available when the warrants are presented the position will be very serious indeed. And it is only towards the end of delivery that one would ascertain whether there was a shortage. Therefore the position needs watching all the time. The board, too, must report direct to Parliament. If the grain becomes out of condition, the board must approve the regulations made by the company to deal with it. The company act merely as storage agents for the farmers, and if the wheat of the farmers remains unsold for, say, a year or two, as was the case during the war, then it might easily become less than first grade wheat; it might easily fall into bad condition through no fault of the company. In that case the board would determine whether the regulations proposed by the company for settling the difference, for apportioning the loss, were right or wrong. But it certainly could happen at some time that there would be a loss of quality, and that would be a matter for the board to determine. Again the member for North-East Fremantle will say that is a very fair arrangement. Again, I ask, is it not better to appoint such a board than to have a Ministerial responsibility? The responsibility should not be a Ministerial one at all, of course.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Don't you think buyers would have more confidence in Government officials than in this board?

The PREMIER: Possibly; but the hon. member need have no fear whatever, because Australian wheat is all of good quality. Apart from special reasons, such as drought or rust or flood, all Australian wheat is good. During the war all the wheats of the world were tested, and the only wheat equal to Australian was a little choice Bombay wheat. Flour extractions varied from 40 per cent. to 74 per cent., the latter being the Australian average. Regulations are to be made for the better administration of this measure, and those regulations must be laid before Parliament within 30 days of their being

made, and either House may disallow a regulation. So, if my friend opposite does not approve of the regulations made by the board or by the company, he will have an opportunity of disapproving of them. He knows, of course, that the regulations will only be made with the approval of the Governor-in-Council. There is no need to labour the question further. The House has dealt with it before. Last session we passed a Bill in this connection.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This Bill is an entirely different thing.

The PREMIER: There are some additions.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Some improvements.

The PREMIER: Yes, considerable improvements; and I am very glad to hear my friend say so. There is an improvement especially as regards the appointment of the board. The farmers of this State have shown their desire for the measure. The Commonwealth Government, as hon. members know, are advancing a considerable portion of the money necessary for installing the system. Our farmers are subscribing a good deal of money for the same purpose; they have applied for a large number of shares in the company.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And they have also applied to be relieved of their obligations in that respect.

The PREMIER: I am not able to speak as to that; I do not know what has happened in that regard. However, people do sometimes change their minds. I dare say some of the farmers who applied for shares have changed their minds. But if the system is to be installed—and I think it should be—it certainly ought to be on a co-operative basis. It is very much better that a country silo should be worked by the farmers themselves in the district. I do not know just how far the money will go, or whether it will suffice to furnish the farmers with many country depots; but I do know that to have a co-operative company to manage and work the silos will be very much better than having that work done by the Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The farmers ought to be thankful that Parliament postponed the matter, in view of the decrease since in the cost of material.

The PREMIER: Yes; I think the farmers may well thank their lucky stars that they did not try to build at the cost of cement and steel as it was 12 months ago.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If they waited another year, they would do better still.

The PREMIER: I do not know that. The farmers are satisfied with the reductions which have already taken place, and they want to get to work.

Mr. Pickering: Is the company registered yet?

The PREMIER: If my friend will apply to the chairman of the company, no doubt that information will be furnished. I know that this Bill will be discussed at considerable length. I believe it will be approved by this House, and I think the House will be very wise indeed in approving of it. In New South Wales the Government erected silos—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And they are sorry they ever did it.

The PREMIER—at much greater cost. Here the farmers ask Parliament to permit them to

do the work themselves. There is a vast difference in the two positions. The expenditure in New South Wales was Government expenditure; here the expenditure is to be expenditure by the men who grow the grain and who own the grain. I shall be much surprised if the House hesitates to pass the measure. I hope hon. members will not listen to any of the objections which evidently are going to be raised by my friend opposite.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I will not raise objections but will give the House the truth.

The PREMIER: Sometimes the truth may be objectionable. At any rate, I hope hon. members will not listen to the objector. I know that hon. gentlemen is looking forward to the opportunity which this Bill will give him of explaining just exactly what bulk handling means. I admit that he has had more experience of it than I myself have had, because he sat on a select committee which inquired into the subject. In connection with that select committee's proceedings, he borrowed papers from myself and from others which we have never seen since. Thus I am deprived of the opportunity of looking up the records.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You had better refer to the secretary of the select committee for those papers.

The PREMIER: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin, debate adjourned.

BILL—FREMANTLE MUNICIPAL TRAMWAYS AND ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second reading.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [8:15] in moving the second reading said: No doubt hon. members will be rather surprised at the necessity for such a Bill. The Act, when passed, put the powers of management into the hands of a board elected by the ratepayers of Fremantle and of East Fremantle. The trams are owned by the two municipalities in the proportion of Fremantle six-sevenths and East Fremantle one-seventh. There are two members elected in each district, one by the owners of property and one by the occupiers, with the Mayor of Fremantle an ex-officio member of the board. The Act gives no power to the board of management to have an overdraft.

Mr. Pickering: Have you got one?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. In a large business undertaking like this it is sometimes necessary that the board should have an overdraft, more particularly under abnormal conditions, such as obtain at present. In the ordinary running of the concern there would be no necessity for an overdraft. It devolves on the local authorities to raise money for capital expenditure required. The board cannot borrow a shilling for capital expenditure. When necessary, the local authorities propose to raise a loan under the Municipalities Act, and the ratepayers have a say in the proposition. Since the war it has been found necessary to make certain alterations in the Fremantle tramways. In the first place we took electricity from the

Government supply. They changed over their system, and the cost to us of the change-over was between £40,000 and £50,000. That has been provided principally out of our depreciation fund. Since then, owing to the increased traffic, it has been found imperative to provide new cars, and also another converter to be used as a stand-by in case of a break down, to avert the possibility of the town being left in darkness. Under the abnormal conditions the councils have been unable to raise the necessary loans for the provision of the new stock required. During the last 12 months the board has been handicapped in getting money to meet Customs duties on the goods as they arrive—for the Customs duty must be paid cash down. We could not get one shilling from the bank, because under the Act we had no power to do so. Both municipal councils have been consulted, and they agree that the board should be able to secure an overdraft not exceeding £5,000. It is anticipated that, this year, we shall receive in revenue approximately £100,000, while our expenditure will be between £80,000 and £90,000. So £5,000 is but a small amount in relation to our revenue.

Mr. Pickering: How will this year's revenue compare with that of last year?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I cannot say, because our year ended only yesterday, but I can give the figures for 10 months of the year. During the 10 months there has been a gross profit of £17,710 19s. That will be allotted as follows:—Interest on loans £5,717, sinking fund and loan redemptions £2,708, depreciation—averaging a little over four per cent. on the lot—£6,667. Surplus on working £2,618. There is plenty of security for the proposed overdraft of £5,000. The total loans raised amount to £150,000.

Mr. Pickering: Under Government guarantee?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, under the Municipalities Act. During the 15 years of our running we have made approximately a gross profit of over £200,000.

The Premier: You have overcharged somebody.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. Our charges on the average per passenger do not exceed those of Perth. After paying preliminary expenses of £3,353, we have set aside in depreciation—actual cash, not written down—£57,000. That has been used principally in providing for taking the supply from the Government, and also in extending reticulation. That money has been used in actual work. We have provided a sinking fund, a redemption fund, with interest, amounting to £45,135. In other words, we have in the hands of the Colonial Treasurer and in the Commonwealth Bank £45,000 towards the redemption of £150,000 when it comes due. We have paid to the municipal councils a surplus of £7,672, and we have paid dividends, interest on debentures, £97,000 during 15 years. So, although the Fremantle tramways have a loan of £150,000, our actual indebtedness is about £100,000, and our concern is worth from £225,000 to £250,000 to-day. Yet while we have those assets there, we cannot secure a small overdraft from the bank. In the ordinary management of the undertaking there is no necessity for an overdraft. It is only under the existing abnormal conditions that we require it. A few weeks ago it was necessary to raise £2,500

for the payment of Customs duties. We had to make special arrangements outside for the raising of that money, because we had no power to secure an overdraft. The section I wish to amend reads:—

To open an account or accounts at any bank in the name of the board, and to draw and endorse cheques thereon.

I wish to add, "whether the account is in credit or overdrawn." And later in the clause I wish to insert, "And to obtain advances by overdraft on current account not exceeding at any time £5,000." It is necessary that proper facilities should be given to the management for the carrying on of the concern.

Mr. Pickering: Does it mean that the whole sum shall be limited to £5,000?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, that is to be the total overdraft. We have never previously wanted it. It is only under abnormal conditions that we are likely to require it. We have a splendid undertaking, and we are carrying our passengers on a par with Perth. As a matter of fact, for many years we carried them more cheaply than they were carried in Perth, and during that time they were able to save £80,000 in fares alone.

The Premier: You had more accidents.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, we had not.

The Premier: What about the lady you ran into?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: She was killed, poor soul.

The Premier: No, the other one.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not know which one you mean. The undertaking is quite prosperous, and has been highly beneficial to the district. If the trams had been built many years earlier than they were, Fremantle would have been much larger than it is to-day. The trouble was that the enterprise was handed over to a private company and, unfortunately, the attempt to float the company failed, and so several years were wasted before the municipality took up the proposition. The undertaking belongs to the people. Since the three-penny rate which was struck at the time of the construction, there has never been any charge whatever to the ratepayers for expenditure in connection with the trams.

Mr. Pickering: How does the permanent way compare with that of Perth?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: A considerable portion of the Perth tracks has been relaid during the past few months. Ours are not quite as good as those new ones, but they are satisfactory. We have always provided proper depreciation. Unfortunately, owing to war conditions it was found necessary to use that depreciation in taking current from the Government. The single phase system had to be transferred to the three phase system, new machinery had to be installed, and new sub-stations built, and the whole electric light system had to be changed. This cost between £40,000 and £50,000, most of which was paid out of the depreciation funds provided by the concern itself. We have assets worth about £225,000 and there is only about £100,000 owing on them. I think I can safely ask the House to give the board permission to over-draw to the extent of £5,000 if necessary. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. GIBSON (Fremantle) [8-31]: I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill. As a fellow member of the member for North-East Fremantle on the Fremantle Tramways Board, I am aware of the need for the provisions contained in this Bill. If the Bill is passed, it will be of great assistance to us. I am going to ask the House to support it, as requested by the hon. member.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [8-32]: I am going to return good for evil, and ask the House to pass this Bill. I anticipate that the hon. member will return the compliment when the Grain Elevators Bill comes along. I welcome this Bill. As things stand at present when a company finds it cannot borrow from anyone else it comes to the Treasury to raise a temporary loan. I know it is not convenient for a company because it cannot raise money from a bank by way of an overdraft. It is right that when people run a business like this they should be able to get some credit, otherwise they must keep a credit balance of their own. When a concern like the Fremantle tramways is being run, it is necessary to make considerable payments, and some credit is necessary. I suppose the banks are willing to advance the money to this concern, as it is so rich. I believe that the Government tramways are run at a much cheaper rate than the Fremantle tramways. I am convinced they must be, when I have regard to the profit we have made as against that made by the Fremantle tramways.

Mr. Pickering: They do not extend much courtesy to members of Parliament.

The PREMIER: Doubtless they ought to have considered that matter before getting this Bill brought down. I am glad there are five members on the Fremantle Tramways Board representing owners and occupiers, as well as the mayor of that port. It is just the sort of board I propose to discuss in another Bill. The House need not hesitate to pass this measure. There is no reason why we should not do so. The people are not responsible for the overdraft that it is desired to raise, for the responsibility must attach to the Tramways Board. If the House thinks it desirable that the board should be allowed to raise this money, there is no reason why authority should not be given. The board can already borrow money but not by way of an overdraft.

Mr. Corboy: This will be the better method for them.

The PREMIER: Yes. The overdraft may be wanted from time to time and I hope the House will support the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

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

House adjourned at 8-37 p.m.