

6. Permanent Reserves.
7. Reserves (Sale Authorisation).
8. Private Savings Banks.

*House adjourned at 10.15 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 10th December, 1924.*

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

### ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Trust Funds Investment.
- 2, General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act Amendment.
- 3, Bunbury Electric Lighting Act Amendment.
- 4, Carnarvon Electric Lighting.
- 5, Roads Closure.
- 6, Permanent Reserves.
- 7, Reserves (Sale Authorisation).
- 8, Private Savings Bank.

### BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Plant Diseases Act Amendment.
  - 2, Transfer of Land Act Amendment.
- Transmitted to the Council.

### BILL—MAIN ROADS.

*In Committee.*

Resumed from the previous day. Mr. Luty in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clause 11—agreed to.

Clause 12—Main roads may be proclaimed:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I understand the Minister proposes to take control of streets, provided they are highways, as well as of roads. For instance, St. George's-terrace might be included, and the main road from Northam to York would be controlled by the Minister.

The Minister for Works: No, by the board.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I wish that were stated in the Bill. If not, the Minister would be taking the license fees now collected by the local authorities, in addition to getting the revenue from the tax on land. I am not sure whether the Minister has taken sufficient power to spend money on such highways. The Minister should give an undertaking that such streets will be kept in good repair. As a rule they are the business streets of towns. The Northam municipality last year spent on the one road a little more than was received from license fees.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The clause provides that the board, in considering whether to recommend the proclamation of any road as a main road, shall take into account, amongst other things, the moneys available, or likely to be available, for main roads. Thus, finance is going to be a big factor in the deciding of main roads. That is right. To the extent of the money we have, we can do the work. I would like the Minister to state how he is going to view matters from a metropolitan aspect. It can be said that the main roads declared are being maintained out of the revenue now available. Under the Bill a considerably increased revenue will be available. Does the Minister propose to declare additional main roads in proportion to the increased revenue that will be obtained? Take the case of Maylands and Bayswater. There is in that locality one main road, which the Minister has been good enough to recognise as a class A main road. But, in addition, there is another road running parallel with the railway and giving access to the Midland district. That road carries a tremendous amount of traffic. I supported the Bill on the understanding that the intention is to declare more main roads.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The point raised by the Opposition Leader is whether streets through towns, such as St. George's-terrace and the main street of Northam, will come under the Bill and be declared main roads. That undoubtedly is the intention of the Bill. At present St. George's-terrace and Hay-street are both classed as main roads for the purpose of traffic fees, and the Perth City Council collect fees in respect of them. That, in fact, is the position as I found it. I have no doubt that all the roads now earning traffic fees will be the first to be declared main roads under the Bill. The board will be able to make the local authorities an allow-

ance for maintaining main roads. The point raised by the member for Guildford represents the essence of the Bill. I hope this is the last time I shall have to explain the matter. The hon. member wants to know whether it is my intention to declare additional main roads. Let me say emphatically that it is not my intention to declare any main roads. That will be the function of the board under the Bill. The measure distinctly provides that the Minister can declare main roads only on the recommendation of the board. The matter is entirely removed from political control. The Minister cannot act without the recommendation of the board. I am not asking that any such power should be given to the Minister. It is quite possible that under the Bill there will be additional revenue coming in, thus providing for a better class of road and enabling the board to extend the main roads. Under the measure road boards will be relieved of any charge for main roads. The local authorities of Maylands, Bayswater and Guildford collect no revenue from the heavy traffic that cuts their roads to pieces. Under the Bill those roads, together with the bridges and so forth, will be a charge on the board. The board will have the option of themselves looking after roads through towns, or making the local authorities an allowance for doing so.

Mr. GEORGE: When the original Traffic Bill was under consideration, I instructed the departmental officers to get out a list showing the roads controlled by each local body as first class roads, second class roads, and third class roads. Thereupon all the local authorities were called together in my office. The scheme was explained to the gathering, and with the exception of seven gentlemen, representing, I think, Fremantle, the meeting was in agreement; and on that basis the business was carried on for six years, giving fair satisfaction to the municipalities and road boards, with the exception of the City of Perth, which wanted the lot. The basis was that those who did the damage should pay for the repairs. The scheme requires revision now, because other roads have sprung into prominence, are being largely used, and therefore ought to have more consideration in the distribution of fees. For example, the traffic which used to go over Mount's Bay road to Fremantle has been diverted along Hay-street, through Subiaco, and thence along the Karrakatta Cemetery. That road, which was not regarded as a first class main road, for the last two or three years has necessarily received a good deal of consideration. It now requires more consideration, because it is carrying the bulk of the Fremantle traffic. In addition, motor vehicle and lorry traffic has increased enormously. As the lorries contemptuously disregard their speed limit of eight miles per hour, the road simply cannot carry the

traffic. Therefore the reconsideration of the question what roads should be main roads had better be undertaken by a board, who will have the time to go thoroughly into the matter, and who cannot be accused of partisanship in the distribution of the fees. The Midland Junction people have received a fair amount of consideration for their roads. Their principal thoroughfare was the main road to York. They spent their money wisely. Then again, I cannot make any complaint regarding the expenditure by the Bassendean board. When we pointed out to the boards that it was better to construct a short length of good road each year, they readily fell in with the proposal. The only exception was the Perth City Council. They merged their money into the general revenue instead of devoting it to the roads specified in the scheme. I believe that wiser counsels prevail now. When the board is constituted and they have fixed a scheme, I have no doubt they will consult representatives of the local governing authorities regarding the work to be done.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We know more about this question as the result of the Minister's statement. In the past the metropolitan area has paid about £31,000 by way of traffic fees, but under the Bill there will be another £31,000 by way of the special land tax proposed. That means that the revenue to be derived will be practically doubled under the Minister's scheme. The total new revenue available for main roads will be limited to not more than £150,000, so far as we can tell. If the Traffic Bill be amended, as I understand it will be, what hope will the people in the country have for some time to come? The Minister must know that it will be impossible to maintain all the roads he has mentioned in the city of Perth and still have enough to cope with the country requirements. I mentioned the position of Northam because I know that if the collections in that town are taken away from the municipality it will be almost impossible for them to keep their main street in order. If we are not informed that at any rate most of the money will be spent in the district where it is paid, we should hesitate to pass the Bill. The member for Guildford said that under the Bill it would be possible to expend money in road repairing. If that were possible we might have some hope. I admit that the Perth City Council have reconstructed St. George's-terrace, and that the upkeep is guaranteed, I understand, for seven years, so that the Minister will not be troubled regarding that thoroughfare.

The Minister for Works: And now someone wants to cut it up and put something across the road.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, I suppose some Government department is concerned in that.

The Minister for Works: And the City Council, too.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I suppose the Federal Government will want to tear up the street to put telephone lines underneath. They put down the road one day, and want to tear it up the next.

The Minister for Works: They make a hobby of it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is quite evident that the people of the State will have to pay all the traffic fees into the fund set up by the Bill, and all the people will have to pay the special land tax, without any exemption, into that fund. At the same time very few will benefit for some time to come, because the Minister cannot reach every part as the result of the board's work. We are buying a pig in a poke and I appeal to country members, seeing that this is a non-party measure, to reject the Bill unless we get some guarantee that the money will be spent, more or less, where it is collected.

The Minister for Works: If you inserted such a proposal in the Bill, the country people would be the losers.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The board will be practically under the control of the Minister. I am afraid the roads in the outer district will get into a greater state of disrepair than at present, because the money will not be enough to provide for all requirements.

Mr. THOMSON: We hope it is the intention of the Government to finish the work of Parliament before Christmas.

The CHAIRMAN: There is nothing about that in the clause.

Mr. THOMSON: I am aware of it, but I suggest to the Minister that if that is the position there are some Bills on the Notice Paper that must be dropped. I suggest that the Main Roads Bill be dropped, because the road boards are not satisfied with its provisions.

The CHAIRMAN: You are dealing with the question of dropping the Bill, and that does not come within the scope of the clause.

Mr. THOMSON: I wish to show why I am opposing the Bill and this clause. Road boards in my district want to know what is a main road. I am aware that the Governor may proclaim a main road on the recommendation of the board, but if the board be dissatisfied with the Governor's decision, there is no provision for an appeal. One board in my district has communicated with me to the following effect:—

My board instructs me to advise you that as far as we are concerned, if all traffic fees and the annual subsidy are taken away, it will mean at the very least £1,000, or almost one-third of the present revenue of the board, while, as far as can be seen, the Perth-Albany-road is the only one in this district that will be classed as a main road. This means that there is

every chance of our losing £1,000 and having only 36 miles of road taken off our hands, leaving well over 650 miles for us to attend to with two-thirds of the revenue that will be left. If there was a possibility of the main roads board taking over as declared main roads such roads as run parallel to the railway, such as the Katanning-road, ten miles, the Blackwood-road, 28 miles, the Collicie-road, 22 miles, and the Broomehill-road, ten miles, it would not be so bad, but is there the remotest possibility of the board doing that?

That is the opinion of one board; I could quote from each board in my district. A schedule should be prepared before we hand over to the Governor the right, on the recommendation of the board, to declare what are main roads. It would take considerable time to prepare the schedule, but if it were before us the local governing authorities would be given an opportunity to say what, in their opinion, is a main road. I have advocated a main roads Bill for years, but I am not satisfied with the one before us. If we take the department's figures alone we find that whereas it was officially stated that the traffic fees at Katanning represented £227, the amount will be over £1,000. That shows how the road boards are viewing the Bill which will give the Government power to say what is a main road. I suggest to the Minister that he drop the Bill and bring it up again next session.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 13—agreed to.

Clause 14—Main roads vested in Minister:

Mr. SAMPSON: The clause proposes to give the board control, not only of main roads, but of other things appurtenant thereto, such as ornamental trees and shrubs growing along the roads. Such trees and shrubs, mostly to be found in townships, could be better looked after by the local authority. And in addition, any timber growing on the roads is to become the property of the board. I move an amendment—

*That paragraph (b) be struck out.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no objection to the proposal that ornamental trees and shrubs should be put in charge of local authorities, but when it comes to timber on a new main road, it is essential that it shall be the property of the board. To-day, under the Public Works Act, when the Government step in and make a road, all the timber on the road belongs to the Government. The board must have the timber growing along a main road.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 15—Powers of Minister:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Subclause (1) provides that the Minister may, on the recommendation of the board, build and

make roads. I object to giving all this power to the Minister and I hope to re-shape Sub-clause (1) so as to make it read, "The board may, with the approval of the Minister." To begin with I move an amendment—

*That in line 1, "Minister" be struck out and "board" inserted in lieu.*

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** In the one instance "the Minister may on the recommendation of the board," and in the other "the board may with the approval of the Minister." I do not see any difference.

**Hon. Sir James Mitchell:** Then there can be no objection to the amendment.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** Hon. members opposite will not consider the financial aspect. All that they can see is that the Bill will mean a little increased taxation in order to provide for good roads. Members opposite want good roads without any increased taxation.

**Hon. Sir James Mitchell:** That is a very cheap sneer.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** If the board have their own way and declare main roads here, there and everywhere, in all probability a further increase in taxation will become necessary. The board might even declare a main road where a main road already exists, and the Minister on the other hand may think it better to extend the existing main road. The Minister must have some check on the activities of the board. We might have an agitation for an alternative main road in the metropolitan area, and the board might accede to it, notwithstanding that a main road is badly wanted in some part of the country where there are no main roads at all.

**Hon. Sir James Mitchell:** You are on the wrong clause.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** No, I am not. I am considering the making of a main road. On the group settlements to-day main roads are more badly wanted than in the metropolitan area. If the board had their own way they might expend the bulk of their money making roads up here, where they are not really required. The Minister will not allow that. The Bill has for its object the advancement of the State by the construction of necessary main roads. If the activities of the board were to be confined to the metropolitan area, I should be ready to throw the Bill into the waste paper basket. But the Bill is wanted, and I hope the amendment will not be agreed to.

**Hon. Sir James Mitchell:** The Minister for Lands, who knows more about the work of local authorities than does any of the rest of us, has been speaking on the wrong clause. If we decide that the Minister shall construct the roads, we do not need the board. It would be better that the work should be left in the hands of the board. If the clause stands, the Public Works De-

partment will, no doubt, do the work. The Minister for Lands ought not to deceive the Committee, although he did not mean to.

**The Minister for Works:** This clause is taken from the South Australian Act.

**Hon. Sir James Mitchell:** The power of the board under this Bill is hardly worth a scrap of paper. The money that the people will contribute will go into general revenue, and will be spent by the department. If the Government are determined in this matter, it is no use saying anything more about it.

Amendment put and negatived.

**Mr. Withers:** I am not at all sure of the position of Bunbury under Subclause 3. A sum of £6,000 has been borrowed for the construction of two main roads to the town, and the contract has been let. The interest and sinking fund will amount to £600 a year. The traffic fees are about £700 a year. If Bunbury loses the traffic fees, it will have nothing with which to pay the interest and sinking fund.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** The board can arrange with the local authorities to carry out any work on main roads and pay them out of the trust account. It is not expected that the Perth City Council would, under this Bill, claim to be reimbursed for their expenditure upon the reconstruction of St. George's-terrace. The local governing bodies will be relieved of any further obligations regarding the upkeep of their main roads.

**Mr. Hughes:** Would not St. George's-terrace be regarded as a main road?

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** That would be for the board to decide, but I do not think there would be any doubt about it.

**Hon. W. D. JOHNSON:** Bunbury would be in a difficult position. It would be saddled with a liability for interest and sinking fund on these two roads, which the Minister would take over in excellent order. Special circumstances such as these should be taken into consideration by the board. If the Bill does not provide for that sort of thing, it should be amended accordingly.

**Hon. Sir James Mitchell:** The upkeep of St. George's-terrace is guaranteed for seven years. The hardship that may fall upon Bunbury is inseparable from the introduction of a new system like this. The responsibility for interest will remain with Bunbury, but the means by which that interest could be met will be taken from it. I do not know how the situation can be overcome.

**Mr. Withers:** We have not yet spent the money, although the contract has been let.

**Hon. Sir James Mitchell:** I advise Bunbury not to spend it. It is more than ever apparent that this Bill should have been referred to a select committee.

**Mr. Withers:** Two main roads that lead into Bunbury carry the whole of the

traffic into the town and the condition of those roads has been such that following on an outcry the municipality of Bunbury raised a loan of £6,000 for the purpose of reconstructing the roads. When that was done it was not known that the Main Roads Bill would be introduced. The surface is to be of bitumen, and when the work is completed it will be free from cost of maintenance to the municipality for five years. The annual interest works out at £420 and the sinking fund at £180, making an annual liability of nearly £600. The traffic fees for the past year were in the vicinity of £700, and with increased traffic fees Bunbury should get more revenue. The Municipal Council have written to me to find out exactly where they stand. The council is committed to the expenditure, having entered into a contract for the construction of the road and they will be liable for breach of contract if they do not go on with the work. Some consideration should be given the municipal council. If it cannot be done under the Main Roads Bill, as it is, I suggest that an amendment should be submitted to relieve the position in which the Bunbury Council finds itself.

Mr. HUGHES: The Bunbury Council has raised the money and can divert it as the work of road construction has not yet been commenced. The Perth municipality, however, has already spent its money in constructing St. George's-terrace and Adelaide-terrace. Under the contract entered into with the Municipal Roads Company, the company are obliged to maintain the newly constructed road for a period of seven years. The cost of maintenance was included in the contract price, so that the Perth City Council has really paid for the seven years' maintenance. There should be provision in the Bill to recoup a municipality when the circumstances are such as I have related. I suggest that the Minister agree to the inclusion of a new clause providing that where the municipality has spent a sum of money on road construction the Minister should have the power to make a recoup.

The Minister for Lands: For the full amount?

Mr. HUGHES: Not necessarily. I do not suggest that it should be 100 per cent. recoup. The fact remains that the City Council have paid for a first class road which the people from Bunbury and elsewhere will help to destroy with their vehicles. The Main Roads Bill will be under no liability in respect of St. George's-terrace and Adelaide-terrace for seven years. I hope the Minister will accept the suggestion I have made.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The local authorities at Osborne Park have reached their limit and they too would like a recoup from the Government for money spent on roads recently constructed. The roads in that locality are used to a great extent by tour-

ists as well as by local people, and if claims are to be pressed it will then be a question of degree. Not only will those bodies that have built new roads be entitled to consideration, but it may also be that a liability still exists in connection with some roads that are being worn out. Of course once a start is made in claiming recoups, there will be no end to it.

Mr. Hughes: Let us put in a time limit of 12 months.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Any local body that put in its claim for a recoup would be as much entitled to it as the Bunbury or the Perth Municipal Council, but once we start that kind of thing we shall be inviting claims from everywhere.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 16—Chief Engineer to conduct experiments:

Mr. THOMSON: Under this clause we shall employ a chief engineer and pay him a big salary. What for? Under the clause, to conduct experiments with different materials, to test their relative durability and suitability, for the construction and maintenance of roads, etc. The officers of the department should be in the position to advise the Minister as to the particular class of road to be constructed.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I think this is the best clause in the Bill.

Mr. THOMSON: If we are to employ a properly qualified engineer we do not want a clause of this description in the Bill. On many occasions road board members and supervisors have been able to tell the Works Department officials how to do their jobs. In the South-West last week I was shown a small culvert that had been put in under the supervision of a cocky for £50 though the engineer had said it would cost £250.

The Minister for Lands: The engineer might have been providing for a permanent structure and the other man for a temporary affair.

Mr. THOMSON: It was a very creditable job that will last as long as the bridge the engineer wished to build.

Mr. Millington: Is there any chance of getting that cocky to act as chief engineer under this Bill?

Mr. THOMSON: A qualified man ought to know what is required without making experiments.

Mr. SAMPSON: I disagree with the member for Katanning. Recently the Works Department notified the road boards that arrangements had been made to have road material tested. It is necessary to test the material used for road construction; otherwise roads would be made without the authorities having any real knowledge of the wearing qualities of the material used.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is the only decent clause in the Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: The road board with which I am associated has had work done by the department and by contract and, so far as I can judge, the engineers of the Works Department have done their work thoroughly. The work on the Belmont-road was done reasonably well considering the money available. It would be possible to put that road in order by the expenditure of a few pounds. The engineers cannot be blamed for its present condition. A 6-ton lorry carrying an 8-ton load was permitted to run over the road, and damage was done. No road could stand such traffic. The life and cost of the roads depend upon the material used. Road boards often use material that is quite unsuitable.

Mr. CHESSON: All local authorities make experiments with the material at hand. Portions of roads are constructed with certain material, and the results are compared with sections constructed with other material. The engineer will be able to get a lot of information from road boards as to the most durable material. The chief engineer should be able to experiment to ascertain the best material.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I think the member for Katanning misunderstood the clause. It is not intended to put a load of stone on a section of road and see how it wears. The idea is to conduct tests with a proper plant at the University for the benefit of the whole State.

The Minister for Works: I propose to do that regardless of whether this Bill is passed.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Last year an amount of £1,000 was provided for plant for those experiments. Trouble has arisen through getting bars of soft and hard material in a road. Unless there is uniformity, the road will not stand. The chief engineer will not make the experiments.

The Minister for Works: He will authorise them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and I take it any road board will be able to forward samples of local material and have them tested. The use of the word "experiment" is rather unfortunate. Had "investigation" or "scientific testing" been used, the misunderstanding would not have arisen.

Mr. Thomson: That is a totally different proposition.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If I had not discussed the matter with the authorities, I would have put on the clause the same construction as has the member for Katanning. It is the most important of all the work to be done. I hope the Minister will take steps to locate suitable deposits of stone and gravel.

Mr. THOMSON: If the clause is designed to cover laboratory work, it is totally different from giving the engineer a free hand to make any costly experi-

ments he thinks fit. Still the clause is not satisfactory.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Will not paragraph (a) cover your objection?

Mr. THOMSON: Even that is liable to be abused. I suggest that the clause be redrafted.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. THOMSON: I understand that the clause is intended to provide for experiments to be conducted at the University. Accordingly, I move an amendment—

*That after the word "experiments," in line 2, there be inserted "at the University laboratory."*

Otherwise the Chief Engineer might conduct costly experiments without any reference to the local authorities.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The amendment expresses what is undoubtedly the intention of the clause. Numerous local authorities have urged that experiments of this nature should be undertaken. I have gone into the matter with the University authorities, and they inform me that if they get £1,000 to set up the necessary machinery and appliances, they will be prepared to carry out the experiments free. Whether the Bill goes through or not, I intend to have the necessary plant for road-making experiments established at the University. Further, certain materials will be tried on various roads. The amendment, however, would restrict the operation of the clause to the University, thus preventing practical tests on the roads. It has been suggested to me that I should arrange for a visit to this State by the Victorian main roads engineer, who was sent by his Government on a tour of the world to study road construction. If I can manage it, I should like to have the officer here in order that we may have the benefit of his advice. Members will have seen the cabled report of a statement made by him in America. He found that in some States of the Union roads were being made from material alongside them, which material had been discarded as useless. By the application of chemistry, however, that material made first-class roads very cheaply. The engineer said it had been a revelation to him. Doubtless it would pay us well to bring him over here for a week or two. In this State there are, of course, some engineers who say they have nothing to learn.

Mr. Thomson: They are wrong.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of course they are wrong. There are numerous materials alongside our roads to be tested. Whatever information is obtained from the University experiments will be published for the benefit of all local authorities in the State. We would do well to pass the clause as printed.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 17, 18, 19—agreed to.

Clause 20—Power to lay tramways for transporting materials:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I presume this clause is intended to refer only to temporary lines for transport of materials.

The Minister for Works: Only lines for construction purposes.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 21—Developmental roads may be proclaimed or provided:

Mr. THOMSON: Can the Minister indicate what in his mind, or in the department's mind, is developmental?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The phrase "developmental roads" is very important. Roads are being constructed to group settlements throughout the South-West. A large amount of money has been expended on roads from which the road boards will never receive a penny of revenue, as there are no rates forthcoming. Under this Bill road boards can be called upon to maintain such roads, which produce no revenue.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: A developmental road is a road that must comply with the conditions of the Commonwealth grant. Developmental roads will be made with the Commonwealth grant and with State money. At the end of 12 months they will be handed over to the local authorities, who will get them for nothing. At present such roads are constructed either by the local authority or by the Public Works Department, and in the latter case the roads are handed over to the local authorities immediately on completion. The only difference proposed here is that the control of construction of developmental roads shall vest in the board under the Bill. The board will practically control the roads and bridges branch of the Public Works Department. That branch now supervises the construction of these roads. The branch has to satisfy the Engineer-in-Chief, who certifies that the construction is in accordance with the conditions of the Commonwealth grant. At present it comes under the roads and bridges department. The clause means that the board will have authority to control the construction.

Mr. Taylor: Will they decide where the roads are to be constructed?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, that is governed by the Commonwealth law at present. The arrangements now are that a conference is held between the departmental engineers and the local authorities to decide where roads shall be constructed. If there is any dispute the matter comes to me as Minister. In practically every instance what the road boards desire is carried out. The clause really provides that the board shall

act as supervisor as regards the construction of the roads. At present the roads and bridges department has control of the expenditure, but that will pass to the board.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If the developmental roads are to be handed over to the local authorities after 12 months or so, it will make the position impossible for the road boards. The road from Pemberton to Northcliffe is a developmental road.

The Minister for Lands: You were lucky to get that road built.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There is no settlement whatever along that road, and the board gets no rates which can be devoted to maintenance. The Minister will realise the difficulty facing the Warren Road Board, seeing that they will get no revenue from group settlers until groups are disbanded. It would be a criminal shame and a waste of money if that road were allowed to deteriorate.

Mr. THOMSON: It will be an excellent move if the Commonwealth Government and the State Government construct what may be termed developmental roads. While the present Minister for Works is in charge and gives effect to his decision to consult local authorities in the districts concerned, it will be all right.

Mr. J. H. Smith: In the instance I quoted the road has been constructed and the money expended.

Mr. THOMSON: The clause refers to roads to be constructed under the provisions of the Bill. If a road has been constructed to a group, it is now handed over under the existing conditions.

Mr. J. H. Smith: No, not until after 12 months.

The Minister for Lands: There are about 40 farms along that road.

Mr. J. H. Smith: That is an exaggeration.

Mr. THOMSON: If it were possible to provide in the Bill that the local authorities shall be consulted when consideration is being given to the construction of developmental roads some safeguard would be provided. When the decision is arrived at to build developmental roads, is it intended to collect all the fees and retain them for the purposes of this measure?

The Minister for Works: No.

Mr. THOMSON: That is not made clear in the Bill.

Mr. Pantton: It will all depend upon whether the district has been declared under the Act.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The proviso to Clause 29 sets out what money shall not be applied in connection with any road that is not a main road or a developmental road. It is possible that there will be developmental roads constructed in districts not proclaimed under the Main Roads Bill. I will consult with the officers of the Crown Law Department and if there is any question regarding the collection of fees, all of which would be affected by the Bill, I will undertake to have the position made per-

fectly clear. It is not intended to do as suggested by the member for Katanning.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The clause does not compel the local authorities to maintain the roads after they have been handed over. We would not be justified in instructing the local authorities to maintain them. As a matter of fact we are including Government work under the Bill. Developmental roads have nothing to do with main roads. The clause does not mean that the maintenance of the roads by local authorities can be insisted upon by the Minister. The Government will have to maintain roads built to group areas, for instance, for some time. The Minister does not wish the local authorities to have control over the roads beyond the extent they now have control. I move an amendment—

*That in line 2 of Subclause 3 the words "for maintenance" be struck out.*

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Minister recognises the difficulties regarding roads built to group settlements. I desire to assist the Minister because I welcome a Main Roads Bill, but the clause as it stands would be unfair to newly settled areas. The Minister for Lands said there were 40 farms along the road in the Warren Road Board district to which I have referred. There are only four or five farms in that area, not 40 as the Minister said.

The Minister for Lands: There are two groups there.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: But they are not disbanded, and that makes all the difference. If this clause applied merely to settled areas, it would be all right.

Mr. Thomson: Can you not get anything out of the Forests Department for the maintenance of the roads?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Unfortunately we cannot. We can get revenue from leases held by Millars or other companies, but not from Crown Lands held for forestry purposes. The amendment will get over the difficulty.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I remind the Committee that we have obtained the Commonwealth's permission to charge to the vote the cost of maintaining these roads for the first 12 months. Under that arrangement the local authorities will have no responsibility in respect of maintenance until the first year has elapsed. We are building better roads to-day than were ever built in the past, notwithstanding which there are in the South-West new roads already badly cut up. Of course there is provision here for controlling that sort of thing. Relieved of the main roads, the local authorities will have to attend to only the subsidiary roads, and I am convinced that before long the Commonwealth will be assisting us in the construction of all roads.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I hope the amendment will not be agreed to. Without the last two words, proposed to be struck out, all that the Government have to do in

respect of a developmental road is to lay it out. The last two words alone carry the implication that the road has to be formed, graded, levelled, and made, after which the local authorities will take over the maintenance. In some of our well settled districts to-day, since the group settlers have come, the local authorities are refusing to spend anything at all on the maintenance of old established roads. The coming of the group settlers is increasing the value of surrounding property 100 per cent. But the rates have not been increased accordingly, and the local authorities are refusing to maintain the roads. The Pemberton-Northcliffe road is one of the best in the State. It will be years before that road requires repairs. Along that road there are two groups, or 40 farms in all. Is not that of distinct advantage to the district?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: At the end of the road there are 40 groups.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But I am referring to the groups along the road. The settling of those groups has largely increased the value of property in the district. Yet the local authorities would refuse to spend anything on the maintenance of that road!

Mr. Teasdale: Do the local authorities get any subsidy from the Government?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Of course they do.

Mr. J. H. Smith: To spend on main roads!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Every township in the South-West is begging us to put group settlers in the immediate district. In my opinion they ought first to provide roads for the group settlers they are so anxious to get.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: What I intend is that these roads to be made by the Minister should be handed over to the local authority in the same way as any other road, without reference to special maintenance. The lands adjacent to those roads will not contribute rates for two years after the group settlers get their leases.

The Minister for Lands: They have all necessary roads made for them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: So too, in other parts of the State. It is not the farmers, but the sleeper carters, that cut up the roads. It is the responsibility of the Minister for Forests. The Minister for Works builds roads, the Minister for Forests destroys them, and the Minister for Lands says, "Let the local authorities repair them."

Mr. Taylor: The big threes!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The local authorities cannot afford to maintain these roads. The roads are destroyed by heavy traffic which brings in a big revenue to the Government. The Minister for Works ought to hand to the Minister for Lands the £50,000 for repairing the roads.



The Premier: I have not got it yet.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Government have to find money for the maintenance of roads not serving taxpaying areas.

Mr. J. E. SMITH: It is unfair to pass the clause as printed. The Minister for Lands is endeavouring to cloud the issue. He has a happy knack of influencing members to vote in a certain direction. He knows that between Northcliffe and the last group settlement there are 13 miles of forest country from which no revenue is collected, and there will be no revenue from the groups for four or five years after disbandment. If the Minister for Works will agree to strike out these words, I shall be satisfied.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: He has agreed.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Between Northcliffe and Pemberton there is a large amount of traffic on the road, but the local road board receive no revenue from it.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Minister for Lands has given no valid reason why there should be any distinction between this Bill and the Road Board Act in handing over the roads to local authorities.

The Minister for Lands: Under the Act they have to make their own roads.

Mr. TAYLOR: Since 1908 Governments have made roads in the agricultural areas and handed them over to the local authorities without any conditions. This Bill, however, says that the local authorities must maintain them.

The Minister for Lands: No.

Mr. CHESSON: I hope the Minister will not agree to the amendment.

Mr. Taylor: He has done so.

Mr. CHESSON: Road boards in the South West will be on a good wicket if they have their development roads constructed for them and maintained for 12 months. The establishment of a group in the district will represent a good asset for it. The roads will be so well constructed that they will not need to be repaired for a long time to come.

Mr. J. H. Smith: The carting of group material will quickly destroy them.

Amendment put, and a division taken, with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	22
Noes	..	..	14

Majority for .. .. 8

#### AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Brown	Mr. North
Mr. Davy	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Denton	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. George	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. Taylor
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Latham	Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Mr. Maley	Mr. Withers
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Richardson

(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Lamond
Mr. Collier	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Millington
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Pantou
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Heron	Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

#### PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES
Mr. Teesdale	Mr. Lambert
Mr. Stubbs	Mr. Troy

Amendment thus passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 22—Board to investigate before making recommendation:

Mr. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

*That in line 2 after the word "board" the words "in consultation with the local authorities" be inserted.*

I want to embody in the Bill the principle laid down by the Minister when moving the second reading, namely, that of consulting with the local authorities.

The Minister for Lands: Except in the case of groups.

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

Clauses 23 to 25—agreed to.

Clause 26—Protection to board and officers:

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It seems to me that too much protection is afforded to the officers under this clause. No matter what an officer may do, he is protected.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If action is to be taken it will be taken against the Minister. The officer must be protected. It is the Minister who accepts responsibility. It was suggested that the Minister also should be protected, but I am not asking the House to do that.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I do not know why an officer should not be responsible for wrong-doing.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The first part of the clause provides that officers shall be exempt for the purpose of executing duties and the second part refers to actions outside of that.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 27—agreed to.

Clause 28—Main Roads Trust Account:

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It appears to me that there is a serious omission here. At the present time the Federal grant is paid in, together with a pound for pound subsidy by the State. Last year that grant was £95,000 and the Government supplemented it with a similar amount. Therefore we have had spent on our roads the Federal

grant, the pound for pound subsidy, the local rates and the fees obtained from licenses. Now we are going to create a board to spend the licensing fees and the Federal grant, but the pound for pound subsidy that the State has to pay apparently is to be omitted. I hope the Minister will make it clear that the State will continue to subsidise the Federal grant, though not from the licensing fees or from new taxation, but from revenue or loan funds in the ordinary manner that obtains to-day.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** The money to be raised under the Bill is to be spent on main roads whilst the Commonwealth grant is to be used on developmental roads.

**Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL:** Into this fund it is intended to pay the petrol tax and license fees. They have nothing to do with main roads and should not appear in the Bill. A land tax is to be imposed and the Bill to be brought down to-morrow will probably contain a provision to that effect. We have been told that this tax will be at the rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound and we have got to that stage when every Monday morning the tax gatherer will be calling on all for the payment of taxes. I do not know how many land taxes we have passed this session. Several, surely. The proposed  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. tax will apply to the whole of the State. The smallest area, every workman's block worth £20 will be included. In fact, every inch of land in the State will be taxed. It would have been well to take a round sum from the general revenue to finance the board.

**Hon. W. D. Johnson:** Out of the deficiency?

**Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL:** I do not think there will be any deficiency this year. The hon. member took a good deal from the revenue—

**Hon. W. D. Johnson:** To make up for your neglect.

**Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL:** That is a cowardly statement made by a cowardly member who cannot ever be decent. It is easy to insinuate that a previous Government starved various things and neglected their duty, and that the hon. member, with the great knowledge he acquired as a Trades Hill secretary, was able to come here and clear things up. I have had enough of this nonsense. The hon. member has no more corrected the bad work of a previous Government than have the present Government corrected the work he did.

**Mr. Teesdale:** Why take him seriously?

**Hon. W. D. Johnson:** We know the bills we had to pay.

**Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL:** We know the Labour Government inherited a nice State in a solid position, and left it in an unsatisfactory position.

**Hon. W. D. Johnson:** We left it with £300,000 and you left it with £700,000.

**Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL:** The hon. member's administration was not such as to justify him in insinuating that he straightened out the work of other people. He never did so, and is not capable of doing so. He can vote for this tax against the small cottage holder to make main roads in the State. It is unfair and unsound to apply the tax against lands generally when the money is to be spent over a limited area. I know that members opposite believe in the land tax. They think it should apply to everyone and for all purposes, and that there should be no other tax.

**The Minister for Lands:** We think nothing of the sort.

**Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL:** Of course you do. This is not a fair proposition. When it comes to the wheel tax, the amount contributed within the declared area is to go into the fund. The wheel tax paid in Roebourne or Esperance is not to be taken into the fund.

**The Minister for Works:** You took money from the workers of the city to finance the men on the land.

**Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL:** I did not. I took workers from the city and put them on the land.

**The Minister for Works:** You took their money from the Savings Bank and used it to put men on the land, and would not build homes for the city workers.

**Mr. Teesdale:** He took out-of-work men and put them on the land.

**Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL:** The Minister is badly informed. We financed from the Savings Bank the settlement of moneyless workers, but that was before there was a Workers' Homes Board at all.

**The Minister for Works:** The workers' money was used to settle other people on the land, and the workers could not get workers' homes.

**Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL:** I am not going to have the Minister asserting that we did something we did not do. We took men from the ranks of the workers, put them on the land with money from the Savings Bank, and made independent men of them. In those days there was no Workers' Homes Board in existence. I am going to let members record their votes on this occasion. I object to this multiplicity of taxes. In the long list of Bills that have been brought down this session, there is hardly one that is not a taxation measure, and each has been cheerfully submitted to the House and as cheerfully passed by the majority. I move an amendment—

*That paragraph (a) be struck out.*

**THE PREMIER:** I am afraid that land taxation is the King Charles's head of the Leader of the Opposition. Ever since the session opened he has been referring to it, first on the Supply Bill, then on the Address-in-reply, then on the second Supply Bill, and on innumerable other

occasions, and to-morrow no doubt he will be at it again when he speaks on the Loan Estimates. The hon. member has been endeavouring to create an atmosphere hostile to any increase in the land tax, preparatory to the discussion of the Land Tax and Income Tax Bill, the second reading of which I propose to move to-morrow. He has been endeavouring to create a hostile atmosphere to any attempt to increase land taxation. He has had in mind for months past the Land Tax and Income Tax Bill that is now on the Notice Paper.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I do not know anything about that Bill, but I shall know to-morrow.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has dragged it in—if I may, with all respect to the Chair, say so—with extraordinary irrelevancy on every possible occasion. It is not correct to assert, as the Leader of the Opposition has just stated, that every Monday morning the Government are bringing down Bills to increase taxation.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I said we shall have the tax gatherer around every Monday morning.

The PREMIER: That is not correct. It is just a little propaganda, but it goes forth to the newspapers, and I wish to deny it at once so that my denial will go forth with his statement. It is not a fact to say that every Monday morning the tax gatherer is at the door, the inference being that he is there as the result of the legislation introduced by the present Government. Taxation Bills have not been brought down this session, except such as are absolutely justified.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: From your point of view.

The PREMIER: Will the Leader of the Opposition contend there is anything unjust in making those people, who are smashing up the roads, contribute something towards the construction and maintenance of the roads?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The land owners contribute now.

The PREMIER: I am speaking of those who will pay the petrol tax. Is there anything unjust in taxation of that kind?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You are out of order.

The PREMIER: It is possible to have taxation that is desirable and will equitably place the burden upon the shoulders of those entitled to carry it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Do it.

The PREMIER: That is what we are doing, and that is the whole burden of the hon. member's complaint, because we are endeavouring to adjust taxation in a fair and equitable manner. That is the only taxation that has been proposed this session.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No.

The PREMIER: Let us now consider the halfpenny land tax and the amend-

ment, the King Charles's head of the hon. member. Who makes greater use of the roads than do the land owners of this country, great and small? The Government are expected to construct and maintain roads that are essential to the development of the State and the everyday life of the community, and they must have money. They cannot make bricks without straw. There is nothing unfair in asking the land owners to pay, and even the small cottage holder. He will gladly pay.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, he will not.

The PREMIER: He will gladly pay.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You see!

The PREMIER: He is not found in opposition to this tax so far.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Is he not?

The PREMIER: Not through members who are supposed to be his special representatives.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But they are not.

The PREMIER: I suppose the small cottage holder will have his opposition voiced by his true representatives in another place. Those are the gentlemen whom he will ask to voice his opposition, and so we shall have them raising their voices, not on account of the man who holds broad acres or is possessed of high values in the city, but purely to protect the small cottage holder from the rapacity of the Government! The small cottage holder, who will pay 4s. 2d. or 4s. 8d. a year under this measure, is not complaining. He is quite prepared to pay his extra halfpenny in the pound that he may thereby have better roads and footpaths, and better facilities generally. With regard to this awful land tax, let me remind the Leader of the Opposition that this State is the lightest taxed of any State of the Commonwealth in regard to land taxation.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is not.

The PREMIER: I shall prove it to-morrow. It is absolutely the lightest taxed State in Australia in the matter of land tax, and even after the staggering burden I shall endeavour to impose by this Bill, it will still be the second lightest taxed State in Australia as regards land taxation.

Mr. Teesdale: Up to a certain figure.

The PREMIER: Up to any figure; from the bottom right up to the top. The land tax in this State is not worth a snap of the fingers. There is no State in Australia where the landowners have been so lightly taxed for generations past, and more particularly during recent years, when, as I have frequently stated in this House, every form of taxation has been increased. When wealth, income and property has been taxed, and the rate has been doubled and trebled because of the necessities consequent on the war and for other reasons, why should the gentlemen in possession of real estate and

wealth in the form of land values be the only persons to escape?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They are not. They pay every tax.

The PREMIER: I suppose they do; they pay a fair share. The money raised under this paragraph will not go into Consolidated Revenue. When the taxpayer pays his land tax now, he does not know for what specific purpose it will be used. He only knows the money will be used for the general carrying on of the affairs of the State. But in regard to this Bill he will have the satisfaction of knowing that every pound he pays will be returned to him in the form of constructed and maintained roads. That is the distinction, and I think it will be a very good bargain for the landowner. Instead of bad roads costing him infinitely more than he will be called upon to pay by this halfpenny tax, he will have good roads to facilitate the carrying on of his business.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The farmer does not use main roads very much.

The PREMIER: The only persons who might complain about this tax are those engaged in the aeroplane business. The farmer uses roads of all descriptions.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The farmers have made the roads.

The PREMIER: With Government assistance. It is because the farmers have been unable to make all the roads required, that this Bill is before the House.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is because of motor traffic.

The PREMIER: The farmers have had difficulty in making and maintaining feeder roads.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Feeder roads do not come under this Bill.

The PREMIER: But so far as the farmers are relieved from expenditure on other roads, they will be in a better position to find money for feeder roads. The taxpayer, even the small cottage holder, will have the satisfaction of knowing that this taxation will go towards the maintenance of his roads. Therefore I beg the Opposition Leader not to worry himself further about the small cottage holder. The small cottage holder accepts this Bill in a proper spirit, and will pay the tax cheerfully.

Mr. THOMSON: I support the Leader of the Opposition. Paragraph (c) gives the Government ample power to raise funds for the construction and maintenance of roads. Thus there is duplication. Further, I object to embodying in a Bill dealing with roads a tax on the unimproved value of land. I am strongly opposed to the imposition of extra taxation, even to the extent of a halfpenny in the pound. We know it is the intention to increase taxation. From the 16th annual report of the Commissioner of Taxation it appears that in the Bruce Rock district the valuation of land has been increased from £277,000 to £318,000, an increase of over £1 per acre. In the Broome-

hill district the valuation has been raised from £180,000 to £247,000. In the case of Katanning the increase is from £152,000 to £259,000. Many country residents will have to pay considerably increased taxation. This is supposed to be a non-party Bill, and I appeal to members to carry the amendment, which will not in any way impair the effectiveness of the measure. We are not now discussing a measure to impose a land tax, but in that connection I would like to move an amendment that a man who derives his income purely from the product of land, should pay only income tax. He is not in a position to pass taxation on. Some South-Western men are anxious to sell their land because, they say, although dairying is a very good proposition, yet the labour difficulties are too great. Another South-Western man will say that fruit is a very good proposition, but that the labour difficulties are making it impossible for him to pay his way.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What do you mean by "labour difficulties"?

Mr. THOMSON: The difficulty of getting labour for one thing. Another thing is the conditions imposed by the Arbitration Court.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is wandering a little from the question before the Chamber.

Mr. THOMSON: By the Bill we are asked to affirm an unimproved land tax, and thus the whole question is opened up. I am strongly opposed to this particular form of taxation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The clause simply means that whatever proportion of land tax Parliament may appropriate for the purpose shall be applied to the construction of roads. The clause does not impose a tax. The carrying of the amendment would mean that whether there was an increase in land tax or not, no money derived from land taxation was to be used for road construction. Certainly the clause does not impose taxation.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It merely paves the way for taxation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Even if no further land taxation were imposed, under this clause all the money derived from the present land tax could be used for roads. However, without this clause there would be no provision for paying the money into the trust account. The carrying of the amendment would not prevent an increase of land taxation. If the amendment is carried, the next complaint will probably be that the man in the country pays land tax and gets no roads.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That would be a pretty well-founded complaint.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The complaint is one which, if made at all, should come from residents of the metropolitan area, because thousands of them will pay

land tax without ever using a main road, except when travelling in a tram car. Does the Opposition Leader want to declare to the people of the country districts that he is against any money derived from land taxation being spent on roads? The Chairman has a right to tie the discussion down to that point. Hon. members opposite should not be permitted to wander all over the wide range of the principle of land taxation. The Opposition Leader, by his amendment, says in effect, "Use the money in any way you like, so long as you do not spend it on roads."

Mr. Latham: Let us know what we are going to have in the way of land tax, and then we will say what we will do.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Members have no right to discuss that on this Bill. The present clause merely involves the question whether any proportion of money derived from land tax shall be spent on road construction. I cannot understand the opposition coming from people who boast that they represent the people in the country.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You look after Tom Walsh!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have tried to do that. If you have anything to complain about concerning the way I have done it, you had better say so.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You did it well, much better than you are doing this.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not want the Leader of the Opposition to camouflage the position. It may be that this will concern some of the land tax already provided for.

Mr. Thomson: If we were to have some assurance from you on the point, it would be all right.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We now have from the Leader of the Opposition that he is opposed to some of the land tax being devoted to the construction of roads in the country.

The Premier: He wants me to get it as Treasurer.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am quite able to answer for myself to the farmers. I do not know that the Minister will be able to answer for himself so well when he meets the men who will have to pay this special land tax, remembering that they have been exempt in the past. The Minister told us distinctly that a special land tax of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound was to be struck for the purposes of the Bill, quite apart from the land tax collected for ordinary revenue purposes.

The Minister for Works: The striking out of this clause will not interfere with that position.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I would be willing to take the whole of the land tax for the purposes of this Bill. The Minister indicated that he would get £60,000 additional because of this special land tax. The Bill provides that the warrant of the Minister shall be sufficient for the Treasurer

to make any payment provided for under the Bill. The Treasurer himself will have no control over those funds.

The Minister for Works: You are against any land tax.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is no good the Minister saying I am against money received from the land tax being devoted to road construction.

The Minister for Works: Your amendment is against any land tax.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The farmer is taxed heavily now in respect of the roads in his district. He has to pay a wheel tax for the privilege of running his vehicles over the roads he has paid for. I understand there is no wheel tax in Victoria.

Mr. Latham: There is no wheel tax in New South Wales.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: When the road board levy a tax they spend the money for the benefit of the people within the comparatively small area where the tax is collected.

Mr. Thomson: And it is spent for the benefit of those who pay.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Under the Bill the whole State will contribute land taxation for the benefit of those in a small area where roads will be constructed under the provisions of the Bill. That is an entirely different proposition. The Premier supplied figures to the member for Toodyay showing that £83,000 would be collected in this way, of which £51,000 would be paid by the people outside the metropolitan area. There should be some better means provided of raising the necessary funds. If, as the result of the Bill, the local authorities were to be granted relief regarding main roads it would be different. Several taxes are proposed in order to procure the money necessary for the purposes of the Bill, but so far as I can see it will mean only about £150,000 of money to be spent on those roads more than is spent to-day.

Mr. LATHAM: I oppose the clause. It is unfair to use the Bill for the purposes of a taxation measure. I will put a proposition before the Minister. He told us that he expected to raise £75,000 by way of traffic fees. I suggest that he should borrow £1,000,000 and use the £75,000 to provide interest and sinking fund. If he were to do that, we would have decent roads.

The Minister for Works: Where are we to get the money from?

Mr. LATHAM: I do not think Western Australia is in such a bad state that we cannot raise the money. If we raised £1,000,000 it would take us at least two years to spend it, and the people would be provided with roads that would be worth having. The money proposed under the Bill will represent £240,000 at the outside. After spending that, a considerable sum will be required to maintain the roads that will be constructed. If the loan were floated, and the traffic fees were used as

I suggest, we would have really good roads and then the people could be asked to maintain them.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Where will the local governing bodies get the money with which to maintain the roads?

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Where do they get it now?

Mr. LATHAM: I cannot understand the member for Guildford, who is a landowner, making such an interjection! He knows there is an unimproved land values tax.

Mr. Teesdale: Don't call him a proprietor of land; he is a worker.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: How would you deal with the Pemberton-Northcliffe-road?

Mr. LATHAM: How many miles of road are to be constructed and maintained with the £240,000 available? If we were to spend a million on the roads, we should have something to show for it.

The Premier: But £240,000 per annum would amount to a million in four years. And if you were to borrow the million, you could not spend it in less than four years.

Mr. LATHAM: But this £240,000 that the Minister proposes to spend in one year will not do the job thoroughly. Moreover, a man paying tax on income derived from the land should not be called upon to pay land tax as well. The people have not agreed to all this increased taxation. The Minister is to get £61,000 from this additional land tax. Then the Treasurer is to get £60,000 under the repeal of the relief to farmers.

The Premier: It will come in very handy.

Mr. LATHAM: And there are wild rumours that we shall find considerably greater increases in taxation when the Bill comes down to-morrow.

The Premier: I suggest you have a good sleep to-night, for you will not get any to-morrow night.

Mr. LATHAM: We ought to defer further consideration on this Bill until we see what is in the taxing Bill to-morrow. However, my suggestion that we borrow a million of money for the building of main roads is a thoroughly sound one and well worth the consideration of the Premier.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister for Works told us that thousands of workers in the metropolitan area would be paying taxation for the construction and maintenance of roads they would never use. Also he said that possibly the only money available would be the amount raised by the increased land taxation. Let me quote from the Commissioner of Taxation to show what amount of money, over and above the land tax, will be contributed from beyond the metropolitan area. The total valuation in the metropolitan area is £10,506,766.

The Premier: Nonsense! The latest valuation is 15½ million, with 19 million for agricultural lands, three million for country and goldfields towns and 2½ million for leaseholds.

Mr. THOMSON: Those figures only strengthen my argument. The figures given in the latest report of the Commissioner of Taxation show £10,506,766 for the metropolitan area, £11,974,274 for goldfields and country towns, and £4,855,210 for Crown leases, or a total of £16,829,482. Subtracting the metropolitan values we find that the country areas represent £6,322,716. On the Premier's figures probably the country districts will be called upon to pay £13,172 more than will be paid by the metropolitan area.

Mr. Marshall: Oh, bunkum!

Mr. THOMSON: It is not bunkum.

The Premier: But practically all the contributions from the metropolitan area will be spent on country roads, for in the metropolitan area there are practically no main roads requiring to be made.

Mr. THOMSON: If we must have the Bill, I should prefer to see the money collected in a district earmarked and spent in that district until it is proclaimed.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	16
Noes	..	..	..	21

Majority against .. 5

#### AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. James Mitchell
Mr. Barnard	Mr. North
Mr. Brown	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Davy	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Thomson
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Mr. Latham	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Maley	(Teller.)
Mr. Mann	

#### NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Chesson	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Collier	Mr. Millington
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Panton
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Heron	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Willcock
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. Withers
Mr. Kennedy	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Lamond	(Teller.)

#### PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Denton	Mr. Holman
Mr. Teesdale	Mr. Lambert
Mr. Stubbs	Mr. Troy
Mr. J. M. Smith	Mr. Munroe

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 29—agreed to

Clause 30—Licenses required for sale of petrol:

Mr. THOMSON: Would the Minister agree to exempt petrol that is used for stationary engines on farms, and for aeroplanes, which also use a considerable amount?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The clause says that after a certain date no person shall sell any petrol by wholesale, but we do not know the meaning of the words "by wholesale." Surely the Minister does not mean that co-operative stores, for instance, in the country shall take out a license.

The Minister for Works: I have an amendment covering that point.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: There is a flaw in the Bill under which a group of garages, or other people, might import petrol for their own use and not for sale, and so evade the tax of 3d.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You will have to find some other means of overcoming that.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Federal authorities already collect about £2,000,000 a year in duties from the petrol people. Benzoline is not used as a spirit for road vehicles, but one firm I know of is using large quantities of it for distillation purposes. Then there are motor launches, and cleaners and dyers who will use petrol but not on the roads.

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask members to stop conversing round the Chamber. The member for Avon cannot be heard, and "Hansard" has no chance of hearing.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Tractors for ploughing, aeroplanes and other machinery use petrol but do not use the roads. All those things I have mentioned should be exempt. Some months ago the New South Wales Government proposed to put a duty on petrol. The proposition was considered for some time but the Government eventually decided to drop the idea, mainly for the reason that the petrol tax would penalise the primary producer, who used large supplies in stationary engines and in other ways. In place of a petrol tax the Government of that State recently introduced a Bill imposing a certain tax on motor vehicles, which it was calculated would return £600,000. In Great Britain a committee was appointed by the Minister for Transportation to consider the question of a tax on motor vehicles. The committee announced that it had reluctantly come to the conclusion that no method of administering a motor spirit duty could be contrived which would not inflict grave inconvenience and additional expense upon a large number of consumers of motor spirits, or which could be relied upon to yield a certain revenue at a certain cost. There are certain classes of industry in this State which will not use petrol for road vehicles, and which should be exempt.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

*That in Subclause 3, after "days" in line 1, the following words be inserted:*

*"or within such extended time as may be prescribed."*

The subclause provides for a return of petrol sold to be furnished to the Treasury. It has been pointed out to me that 14 days, the period set out in the subclause, is hardly sufficient.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. SAMPSON: I move a further amendment to the same subclause—

*That the following words be added: "subject, however, to an exemption in respect of the consumption of petrol so far as stationary engines, farm tractors, marine engines and aerial engines, are concerned."*

Everyone will appreciate the fact that stationary engines should not be included because they do not use the roads. The same argument applies to farm tractors and to engines and motor launches. Again, aerial engines use a good deal of petrol and if they are taxed, a blow will be struck at this method of travelling.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I wish I could make these exemptions in the same light-hearted way as the hon. member suggests them. A committee of officers of the department was appointed to investigate this subject of taxation and they went very closely into the question of the imposition of a petrol tax. Conferences were held with merchants before the Bill was framed, and also after the Bill was drafted. Everyone agreed that the moment we started to make exemptions, the whole chance of collecting the tax would collapse. No one could suggest any system of exemption. I have tried to exempt stationary engines on farms, but I have been confronted with the fact that in nearly every instance the owner of a stationary engine also runs a motor car and that it would not be possible to tell how much petrol was used in the car and how much in the stationary engine. The companies tried to help us in this respect, but found it impossible to do so. The same position happened in England and also in New South Wales, where petrol is used for so many different purposes. In the Old Country enormous quantities of petrol are used in the dyeing and cleaning industry. After all, the tax is to be only a shilling a tin.

Mr. Latham: That is very heavy.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is a light tax, considering too, that the price has been reduced 50 per cent. recently, and only a week or so ago it came down again another 1s. a tin.

Mr. Latham: That does not apply to the country districts.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It applies all over the State. The points raised by the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) were also considered by the committee to which I have referred. Regarding the air-

ways I am hopeful of being able to find a means of doing something for them.

Mr. Teesdale: They get a very fair bonus.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have told the company that if it is at all possible to exempt them I will do so, and if I can see my way to assist them I shall have the amendment made in the Legislative Council.

Mr. Sampson: What about the motor launch owners.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There again most owners of launches own motor cars.

Mr. Corboy: And the bulk of marine engines run on kerosene. They are merely started with petrol.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: With regard to those people who buy petrol at wholesale rates and resell I shall have an amendment to deal with that aspect. The motor bus proprietors tried to import petrol for their own use. The four companies operating informed me that they attempted it once and that there was no fear of their attempting it again.

Mr. HUGHES: I feel inclined to support the amendment, but I would sooner it were worded to provide that where petrol is used for a stationary engine, the consumer "may" be entitled to a rebate. It is not fair to tax people who use aeroplanes, marine engines, and stationary engines and who do not use the roads. I see no difficulty in giving such people a rebate. I take it the wholesalers would add the 3d. per gallon tax, and where the consumer had used sufficient to entitle him to a rebate, he would make a statutory declaration. I see no danger of fraud. No extensive frauds have been discovered in regard to Customs drawbacks, which are really refunds of duty paid. When a rebate was applied for under this measure, an expert could judge whether it was approximately correct. I suggest the word "may" instead of "shall," because if there was any doubt, the Minister could withhold payment pending investigation. We should not ask people to pay for services they do not receive.

Mr. Millington: If there is any fraud, put the offender under the "Dog" Act and cut off his supply of petrol.

Mr. HUGHES: Anyone guilty of fraud would be liable to a penalty.

Mr. Sampson: I am agreeable to substituting "may" for "shall."

Mr. CORBOY: I hope the amendment will not be accepted. If it is agreed to, most of the money collected will be absorbed in paying an army of inspectors to ascertain whether the declarations are true or otherwise. Many of the owners of stationary engines on farms, lighting plants in hotels, and motor boats, also own motor cars, and so the Minister would be inundated with declarations for rebates.

Mr. Hughes: How is it there is not an army of inspectors to examine the Customs drawbacks?

Mr. CORBOY: The Customs are dealing with definite commodities for which specific duties are provided. Under the amendment, petrol used in a motor car would be liable to taxation but not if used in a stationary engine.

Mr. Thomson: Do you think anyone would make a false declaration?

Mr. CORBOY: I think many people would do so. Much has been said of the hardship that will be inflicted upon the owners of such engines. The bulk of the engines, especially modern types of stationary and marine engines, are merely started on petrol and are run on kerosene or crude oil.

Mr. Latham: What about the Delco plants? They are run with petrol.

Mr. CORBOY: It is impossible to legislate for individual cases. Another system of lighting, known I believe as the Night Light system, is also run on petrol. There would be some hardship in those cases.

The Minister for Works: Petrol goes a long way for such purposes.

Mr. CORBOY: If the amendment be carried it will destroy the value of the whole proposition to improve the roads. I am glad the Minister is investigating the position regarding the aeroplanes, because in that instance a great injustice would be done.

Mr. Thomson: The same principle applies to marine engines.

Mr. CORBOY: I defy the hon. member to name one boat on the river with anything like a modern engine that is run entirely on petrol.

Mr. Sampson: I can.

Mr. CORBOY: Probably a boat with a motor car engine installed.

Mr. Sampson: There are several like that.

Mr. CORBOY: It is not a marine engine in the technical sense. If a man can afford to instal a motor car engine in a pleasure boat for his own amusement, he will not suffer heavily if he has to pay a few shillings a year in petrol tax. We cannot overcome that difficulty without destroying the value of the Bill. The aerial service uses a large quantity of petrol. The mileage obtained per gallon is comparatively small, and I am assured that the tax under this Bill would at present cost the service no less than £5 per week. I believe that injustice can be remedied, but if it cannot, I would sooner have good roads and the aerial service taxed than have the Bill destroyed by the amendment.

Mr. HUGHES: I cannot understand why an army of men would be necessary to examine the claims for rebates. The hon. member must anticipate the lodging of an enormous number of claims. I and an as-



sistant used to do 70,000 invoices a year as part of our duty.

Mr. Corboy: You must have gone slow on the job.

Mr. HUGHES: There would be no need to examine all the claims. One officer would be sufficient for that work, and he would become so expert in time that it would not occupy the whole of his day's work. No man would take the risk of making a false declaration for the sake of £5.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for East Perth thinks that all we would have to do would be to examine vouchers and claims. If the amendment were carried it would be no use doing that.

Mr. Hughes: It is done in the Taxation Department.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is no comparison between the two things. The hon. member imagines that an officer could be put on to checking vouchers, and would know from them whether petrol was used on a farm implement or on a motor car.

Mr. Hughes: I did not say that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would be impossible to make a check in the case of a motor boat, because it would not be known how much petrol was used in that way. If we grant exemptions we might as well wipe out the whole scheme. It would become a farce. The companies looked into the question of granting exemptions, and they all agreed that if they were granted the scheme could not be put through.

Mr. SAMPSON: It would be easy to ascertain whether a return was correct or not. The user of a vapour lamp could not put in a return that would be incorrect to any great extent. It would also be easy to ascertain how much spirit a motor launch owner used. People would not put forward sworn declarations for the purpose of saving a tax of 3d. a gallon. The amount of spirit used in the running of a Delco light plant could also be checked. Surely members do not desire to tax people for spirit that is not used in connection with our roads.

Mr. Corboy: Farm tractors are run on kerosene, or some other spirit, rather than on petrol.

Mr. SAMPSON: Many tractors run on benzine. Kerosene is a dirty fuel, and the carbon deposit is so great that it does not pay to use it. No carburettor has yet been invented that will overcome the difficulty. I do not oppose the petrol tax, nor, I think, does any member of the Chamber; but I do oppose the imposition of that tax on others than road-users. The Minister says an army of inspectors would be needed to check claims. That, however, is an exaggeration. Very little work would be involved.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Wickiepin Road Board have installed in connection with their lighting plant a couple of big Delco engines. To the best of my belief, the engines are run with petrol. To-day the Wickiepin people are paying 1s. 2d. per unit

for their light, which is a high charge; and yet the road board find difficulty in making the plant pay. The second engine was installed about six months ago, and now the Government wish to impose a tax of 3d. per gallon on the petrol used. However, I know that the Minister would not have any doubt about an application for refund made by a local governing body. Perhaps the Minister will postpone the clause so that he may look into cases of this kind. I shall support the amendment. The people of the Kalgarin district are forming a company to run motor tractors for the purpose of bringing in their wheat a distance of 20 or 30 miles; they are compelled to adopt this course owing to want of railway communication. Thus they will have to pay a heavy petrol tax simply because they have not a railway.

Mr. Corboy: The tax would work out at one-fifth of a penny per ton per mile on a motor lorry.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: There is a good deal of force in what has been stated by the member for Williams-Narrogin. In the Avon electorate there are various towns with lighting plants which, under this clause, would be taxed for the upkeep of roads. That principle is utterly wrong. The tax is designed to get at the man who uses the roads. Machinery which does not use petrol need not cause us any worry. I trust the Minister will heed the protests which have been made.

Mr. MANN: The Minister, when ridiculing the suggestions of the member for East Perth as to checking of claims, took a wrong view. The claims could be checked just as taxation returns are checked. In submitting a claim, the claimant would have to show what tonnage of chaff he had cut with his engine, or what acreage he had fallowed, or what else he had done. The officials would soon know whether a return was correct or not. If there was any doubt about it, the claim would be referred back for further investigation. A large staff of officers would not be required to go making inquiries outside.

Mr. HUGHES: The Minister has shown that he possesses no knowledge at all of what is required to check claims. Surely the hon. gentleman does not think that an officer of the Taxation Department has to go out on a farm for the purpose of checking every return sent in. In connection with the amusements tax, the Taxation Department have just one man in the city and one in the country. They have become experts at that particular branch of statistics, and can tell at a glance whether there is anything abnormal about a return. If a return has any abnormal feature, they investigate it. Similarly an official would become expert on the petrol tax. Any abnormal claim he would investigate. In the same way Customs officers make use of their knowledge of Customs statistics, and very few people in this

State get through without paying the proper duty. The same thing would apply here. If the Minister had had more experience he would not have spoken as he did.

Mr. CHESSON: The Minister is right in refusing to grant the exemptions suggested. Once he starts to grant exemptions respecting stationary engines, dishonest people will be tempted to put in false returns. It is impossible to estimate the consumption of petrol on stations where there may be two or three motor cars used in connection with various works.

Mr. Sampson: That can be estimated.

Mr. Angelo: The owner himself would not know.

Mr. CHESSON: The people who have to get the stationary engines out to mines or to stations must have good roads, and I do not think they will complain. There is a good argument regarding the petrol used in aeroplanes.

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

Ayes	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	22
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Majority against	..		7
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## AYES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. North
Mr. Denton	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Thomson
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Mr. Latham	Mr. Davy
Mr. Mann	
Mr. Marshall	(Teller.)

## NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Millington
Mr. Barnard	Mr. Munse
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Panton
Mr. Collier	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Corboy	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Coverley	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Heron	Mr. Withers
Mr. Holman	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Kennedy	(Teller.)
Mr. Lamond	

## PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Maley	Mr. W. D. Johnson
Mr. Teesdale	Mr. Lambert
Mr. J. H. Smith	Mr. Munse
Mr. Stubbs	Mr. Troy

Amendment thus negatived.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

*That the following new subclauses be added:—(9) A license shall not be required to be held by any person who authorised the sale by him of petrol which he has purchased from a licensee under the Act; if*

*no petrol is sold or offered or kept for sale by such person other than petrol which has been purchased by him from a licensed seller of petrol in this State.*

(10) This section shall apply throughout the State.

New subclauses put and passed.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am strongly hostile to the clause. I have supported the Minister in his desire to make those pay who damage the roads. I have supported him until we arrived at this clause which seeks to make people pay who do not use the roads. There are many people in my district whose motor cars do not proceed over the roads at all. The Minister states that only 1s. per tin extra will be charged, but he seems to forget that there are some parts of the State where petrol costs 6s. 6d. per gallon. With the extra tax it will, of course, be necessary for the profiteers in those parts of the State to bump up the price at least 1s. 6d., if not 2s., a tin. Wherever indirect taxation is imposed upon the necessities of life, it is always passed on and increased by 100 per cent. Many people using motor cars and motor cycles never go on the main roads, and yet they will be compelled to pay the tax. The owners of stationary engines in shearing sheds will have to pay the tax. Prospector will have to pay the tax because their machinery will be taken over the roads. They will have to pay taxation on the engines standing on their properties year after year. I do not feel disposed to support a clause that imposes taxation on such people to provide good roads for other people. I believe the Minister will endeavour to give the aerial service some redress. I know he is not likely to be called upon to put a silken lining on the milky way or to fill up the air pockets in the atmosphere. But the aerial service is no more entitled to redress than are other sections of the community who will be taxed and who do not use the roads. It is useless to divide the Committee, but I must enter my protest against a clause that will make people pay for something they will not be able to use.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 31, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

# BILL—PEARLING ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

*House adjourned at 11.5 p.m.*