

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There is provision in various Acts of Parliament for the laying of reports on the Table of the House. This is merely providing for laying on the Table of the House the determination of the court.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	..	4

Majority for .. .. 7

#### AYES.

Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. J. R. Brown	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Drew	(Teller.)
Hon. J. W. Hickey	

Amendment thus passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 9.27 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 5th November, 1925.

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

### QUESTION—WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

Mr. MANN asked the Minister for Justice: 1, When do the Government intend to proclaim the Weights and Measures Act passed in 1918? 2, Is it a fact that at present

traders are able to use defective scales without being prosecuted? 3, How long have the Police Department been in possession of the standards for putting the Act into operation? 4, When will traders be in a position to have their scales tested so as to know that they are giving correct weight? 5, Have the Railway Department at present any means of testing their scales so as to know that they are correct? 6, Is it a fact that at present the Railway Department's scales are not uniform throughout the different stations? 7, How long is it since the weighbridge at the Perth goods shed has been tested, and where do the department get their standard weights to prove its correctness? 8, Has a building been prepared to house the Traffic Department, and the Weights and Measures Department? 9, Is it a fact that at present there is no supervision over the sale of petrol from the petrol pumps to ensure that the public get correct measure?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Justice) replied: 1, Within a very short time. Before proclamation, however, some slight amendments are required to the Act. These have been shown by experience to be necessary. An amending Bill is being drafted. 2, No; as the 1899 Act is still in force and the Perth City Council has power to take action. 3, Since 1921. 4, They could have them tested now by the Perth City Council if that authority would continue to administer the present Act. 5, Yes. 6, Within reasonable limits all scales are correct. 7, Truck weighbridge at Perth was last tested 1st July, 1925. Standard Weighing Beam and Standard Weights stamped by the British Board of Trade, and supplied specifically for testing purposes by W. & T. Avery, of Birmingham, are used to check and establish standards for scale adjusters' use. These standards are compared and corrected, where necessary, once a year. 8, No. 9, See answer to No. 4.

### QUESTION—STATE SHIPS, VICTUALLING.

Hon. G. TAYLOR asked the Hon. S. W. Munsie (Honorary Minister): 1, What is the system of victualling the State ships? 2, Are tenders called for the supply of the various commodities? 3, If so, are those dealt with by the Government Tender Board?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE replied: 1, Victual-

ling on board State steamers is done by the Department, the preference being given to locally grown and locally manufactured goods. 2, Prices are obtained from those firms and companies who are prepared to quote—(a) monthly for perishable stores, (b) alternate months for dry stores. 3, No.

## **BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Report.*

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE** (Hon. M. F. Troy): Before moving that the report of the Committee be adopted, I wish to inform the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) that I conferred with the Crown Solicitor this morning and he advised me that the interest to be charged under the Bill applies only to the arrears of rates due to the vermin boards, and not to the rates payable to the Government as he suggested. I am sorry that it was not possible to meet the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) regarding his proposed amendment. I move—

That the report of the Committee be adopted.

Question put and passed; the Report adopted.

## **ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1925-26.**

### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Lutey in the Chair.

*Department of Public Works and Labour* (Hon. A. McCallum, Minister.)

*Vote—Public Works and Buildings, £87,528:*

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [4.35]: During the year we have strengthened the Public Works Department of the State by the appointment of additional officers. The new Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Stileman, has taken up his duties, and the new Engineer for Harbours and Rivers, Mr. Young, has also taken over the control of his branch. Both these officers have had wide experience in other countries and have undertaken extensive works throughout the world. I believe that they will prove to be a considerable acquisition to the Public Works Department. We have also given encouragement to young students at the University of West-

ern Australia. During the war period there were no young men coming on as prospective engineers. In consequence there has been a hiatus in the training of engineering students. Now that our professional men are growing old we have not got young men coming forward to take their places. We are endeavouring to overcome that difficulty by working in conjunction with the University. We have arranged for a number of the engineering students to work part time with the department and, during the balance of their time, to continue their studies at the University. Thus these young men will receive their academic training at the University and get practical experience with the department. By that means we shall be able to train competent young engineers. The University authorities readily agreed to the scheme, and the students have entered into an agreement with us to continue with the department for three years after they finish their cadetship. That, of course, throws upon the department an obligation to find employment for them. In addition we have also assisted other students at the University by finding work for them—although they are not actually cadets—during the period they are not engaged upon their University studies. They are in the field during the period when they are not at the University, engaged in work with the surveyors and engineers, and should thus gain considerable experience.

Mr. Davy: Are they paid?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. I think we are training them along sound lines and that within a few years the difficulty that arose as a result of the hiatus during the war period will be overcome.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We have always trained some in the department and they have proved to be good men.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so, and with the increased activities in this State the position will be better in the future. There have always been some young fellows coming on, but the difficulty we have experienced lately has been on account of the hiatus during the war period. We are only now feeling the effect of that period. The total amount expended in connection with the Public Works Department during the year 1924-25 was, from Consolidated Revenue, £88,847 13s. 9d.; from the Sale of Government Property Trust Account, £32,191 0s. 6d.; and from Loan

Funds, £952,582 5s. 2d.; making a grand total of £1,073,610 19s. 5d. In addition to that, £53,901 15s. 6d. was expended by the department on behalf of the Commonwealth Government on buildings. It will be remembered that the Commonwealth Government decided to set up a Federal Public Works Department and it has been staffed already. In consequence our activities in that direction are now confined to completing works we had in hand when the decision to establish the Commonwealth Department was arrived at. No new works are being given to us to carry out on behalf of the Commonwealth.

Hon. G. Taylor: Did the Commonwealth take over any of your staff?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, one or two. They endeavoured to get others. We had to offer special inducements to some of our officers whom we desired to retain.

Mr. Thomson: They decided to establish their own Works Department because our men were not competent, and they immediately started to take our men over!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so. Now the Commonwealth Government are finding out what we told them would be the position when we were discussing this question at an early stage. They are finding it very expensive to have supervisors throughout the State for the purpose of inspecting works. The Commonwealth have asked us to come to an agreement under which our supervisors will be able to do work for the Commonwealth authorities. They have asked us to put up a proposition so that the Federal and State Departments can work conjointly.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: As with the War Service Homes?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have told the Federal people that I am prepared to consider the matter on a strictly business basis with no concessions whatever in their favour. If they want our inspectors to go through the country and attend to their work they will get no concessions whatever.

Hon. G. Taylor: I should think not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Commonwealth Government have created a duplication of our own Public Works Department and they have extended to us no concessions. In the circumstances I will deal with the proposition merely on a business basis, purely and simply.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We must treat the local authorities as we would expect them to treat us.

Mr. Sampson: Is there any prospect of the work coming back to the Public Works Department?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have pointed out to the Commonwealth people as effectively as is possible, what the present position means. All our representations failed because they were determined to go on with the proposition. The Prime Minister stated when he was here that if it could be shown to him that the work could be carried out by the State without any additional cost, we would be allowed to carry out Federal works. After he returned to Melbourne we put up the case in favour of the State continuing to do the Federal work, but all that we got was a reply that the previous decision to establish the Federal department was to be adhered to.

Mr. Sampson: The Federal authorities had no special reason for dissatisfaction with the State work?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They had no complaint to make. They admitted that.

Hon. G. Taylor: The heads wanted to create another department.

Mr. Thomson: That is it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They wanted to create the department although they admitted that the work had been carried out by the State department efficiently and well.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We did some big works for them, including the G.P.O.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. Since I have been in office the Federal people have told me that so long as our Architectural branch was staffed as it was then, there would be no fear of the Commonwealth making any change in the arrangements in Western Australia. So satisfied were they with the way in which the Commonwealth works were carried out, that they had not a single complaint to make. Yet, in face of that they duplicate the service which means placing a further burden upon the people.

Mr. Sampson: It must result in waste.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, and they are finding it out now. Under the existing arrangement we find our inspectors and the Federal inspectors in the same train and in the same compartment, going to the same town and staying at the same

hotels in order to inspect small jobs in those towns. One man may be going to inspect work on a post office and the other to a police station or a school job. One man could easily do both. Simply because the Commonwealth had to be glorified by the creation of another department, we have this duplication. It is unfortunate for the State and for the people that this additional cost has to be borne by them owing to the attitude of the Commonwealth Government. It would be belittling the State if we said we were prepared to make concessions and give favourable terms to the Commonwealth in order that our inspectors might do work for them. Any arrangement will be made upon a strictly business basis. In addition to the amounts I have given, £134,156 was expended from the amount contributed by the Commonwealth for roads, or a grand total of £1,261,669. The distribution of that amount has been as follows: salaries, £11,261; general incidentals, £5,701; roads and bridges, £27,261; harbours and rivers, £2,812; buildings, £33,103; traffic expenses on railways under construction, £8,709; a total of £88,847 as compared with £87,219 expended in the previous year. From Property Trust Account the expenditure was: salaries, £2,454; general incidentals, £400; roads and bridges, £12,173; public buildings, £17,114; recoup, £50; a total of £32,191 as compared with £59,135 in the previous year. From Loan Funds the amounts were: salaries, £51,670; incidentals, £9,004; railways, £266,995; harbours and rivers, £163,321; water supplies, £92,614; development of agriculture, £31,669; land settlement, soldiers, £10,139; group settlement drainage, £23,599; group settlement roads, £96,421; roads and bridges, £88,386; public buildings, £102,521; State enterprises, £13,478; new dredge "Sir William Matthews," £9,763; a total of £952,582 as compared with £853,749 during the previous year. When the present Government took office the following railways were under construction: Narembeen-Merredin, Busselton-Margaret River, Margaret River-Flinders Bay, Piawaning-northwards (contract let on the 10th April, 1924, but work not actually commenced), Esperance-northwards and Bridgetown-Jarnadup extension. All of these railways, with the exception of the Jarnadup towards Denmark line, have been completed and handed over to the Working Railways Department. Partly owing to the shortage of funds and partly for the reason

that the Government considered other railway works of greater urgency than the Pemberton extension, we have not pushed on with that line. To the date of the cessation of operations, the expenditure on that work was £14,420.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I thought that was a timber line.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am referring to the extension to Northcliffe. Since the Government took office the following railways have been commenced: Lake Grace-Newdegate, 39 miles; Dwarda-Narrogin, 36 miles; Jarnadup-Pemberton, relaying, etc., 17 miles; Piawaning-northwards extension, 4 miles. The Jarnadup-Pemberton line was constructed for the State Sawmills Department, but it is now being relaid and reconditioned with a view to its being handed over to the Working Railways. It is expected that these lines will be completed during the present year. In addition, authority has been given to commence the Salmon Gums-Norseman line, and a depot is being established at Norseman to receive rails and fastenings and other material. We have ordered an additional 75 miles of 60-lb. rails. We are following the policy of buying new 60-lb. rails and putting them into existing lines, using the old and lighter rails for the new districts.

Hon. G. Taylor: Those are 48-lb. rails.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, mostly 45-lb.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We adopted that policy.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, the previous Government decided that 60-lb. rails should be used in all lines.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But we proposed to use the old 45-lb. rails.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We are not buying any new 45-lb. rails. We are taking the 45-lb. rails out of existing lines and thus are cheapening running costs. The old 45-lb. rails will be used in new districts.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That was the policy we decided on.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The policy of the previous Government was interpreted differently by the engineers. They were putting up estimates for new lines on the basis of 60-lb. rails. We had a conference of engineers and told them that if the lines to new settlements were to be laid with heavy rails, the high capital cost would preclude many districts from getting railways for a considerable time.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They could not interpret our policy in that way.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They did so, anyhow. The Minister for Railways and I met the officers and explained our policy. Their idea was that, when the 45-lb. rails were lifted, they were not to be used again.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That was not our idea.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: By putting the 60-lb. rails into existing lines, we are bringing them up to standard and lowering running costs. The Jarnadup-Pemberton line is estimated to cost £54,000. That line was reported to be a long way below standard. It was built as a timber line.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But the earth-works and cuttings are there and it should not cost more than £20,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The cost is set down at £54,850.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It has been carrying heavy loads for years.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But it cannot take the heavy engines. It is necessary to use a light locomotive from Jarnadup. The heavy engine that goes as far as Jarnadup cannot proceed farther on the existing track. When the track is improved, we shall save the expense of the light locomotive and the crew now kept at Jarnadup. We expect to hand over this line to the Working Railways in four or five months' time. Bearing in mind that the previous Government left us commitments for railway construction to the amount of £501,615 and that a big proportion had to be met during the last financial year, I consider we have done well in completing the programme and starting the new lines I have indicated.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We left the money as well.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is the worst part of it; you did not. We had to find the money.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, you did not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Under the heading of Harbours and Rivers, the amount expended at Fremantle last year in reconstructing the wharf on the south side and in dredging and other improvements was £88,283, compared with £63,819 in the previous year. The work of reconditioning the wharf is necessarily slow, because only

one berth-length can be opened up at a time. We tried to get the Harbour Trust to agree to open up two berths, but the accommodation in the harbour was so taxed that they would permit only one berth to be opened at a time. We have equipped the harbour particularly well. Four new cranes have been provided, one of which is in use. It was at first suggested that the new cranes should be imported from England, but we obtained drawings and paid a royalty to the patentee and had one made at the State Implement Works. Before that was completed the engineers were so satisfied with it that they agreed to the State Implement Works constructing the other three. The one in use has been the subject of considerable praise from all who have inspected it. It is a fine piece of work. The estimated cost of the four cranes is £24,000. That amount is less by a few thousand pounds than the cost would have been had we purchased the cranes in England, in addition to which the work of constructing them has been kept in the State. Owing to urgent representations having been made by the Fremantle Harbour Trust, we are now erecting a new grain shed at an estimated cost of £12,000. At Geraldton the harbour work is proceeding slower than we could wish, because there was not the money to work three shifts on the dredges as we should have liked. With the limited amount we are able to make available, the work is proceeding satisfactorily. At Bunbury dredging operations have been carried out continuously through the year. The dredge "Sir William Matthews," purchased from the Commonwealth Government, is now operating there. We made arrangements with the Commonwealth Government to let us have the services of Sir George Buchanan, who had come to Australia to report on the different harbours. At first it was doubtful whether his services would be available to us. After we appointed a new Engineer-in-Chief, the Commonwealth Government decided that Sir George Buchanan should not come to Western Australia, but on our making further representations, supported by our Federal members whose assistance I solicited, the Commonwealth agreed to his coming here and inspecting each of our ports. Sir George Buchanan is to submit a report on extensions at Fremantle, the scheme now being carried out at Geraldton, improvements at Albany, and the position at Bunbury.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I suppose we shall get those reports soon.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Sir George Buchanan has taken the details with him, and since leaving this State he has written for additional information. His reports will be forwarded from London. There was some doubt as to the scope of his engagement with the Commonwealth. It was queried whether his engagement included some of the work at one of the ports on which we asked him to advise. I have taken up that matter with the Commonwealth and am awaiting a reply.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I suppose you will not get the reports until you have agreed upon that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not suppose I shall. When the Prime Minister was in Perth, he declared on more than one occasion that the services of Sir George Buchanan would be made available to the State free of charge, and he imposed no limit at all upon us. On the question of roads and bridges I know some members have advocated that large sums of money should be spent from loan funds upon roads. I know that this view is held in regard to main roads. I do not think the majority of members know exactly the amount that the Government are at present expending from loan funds on road construction. During the year 1923-24, £148,000 was provided from loan and the Sale of Government Property Trust Account funds. The bulk of the money from Property Trust is loan money. This was made up as follows:—£23,494 represented grants to road boards for clearing feeder roads, and for the construction of other roads and bridges; £57,547 was expended by the department on roads and bridges generally; £24,475 on roads to group settlements; and in addition to all this the State had to find in that year £37,212, being pound for pound under the Commonwealth roads scheme, plus £4,281 for travelling and other incidental expenses incurred by the officers in carrying out the works under the Commonwealth roads scheme, plus a further considerable sum because of the fact that the Commonwealth does not contribute towards the salaries of the officers who carry out these works. This makes a grand total of £148,008. From Consolidated Revenue, subsidies were paid to road boards of £24,115, grants to the same local authorities £2,800, and there was

expended by the department on roads £2,710, a total of £29,625. The figures for the last year were—from loans and Property Trust Account £192,243, of which sum no less than £140,702 represents the State contribution on the pound for pound basis under the Commonwealth road scheme, and in addition £12,489 for travelling and incidental expenses, and a further considerable sum for salaries. This amount, when added to the grants made from loan funds to boards, and the additional expenditure by the department on road work throughout the State, and including group settlement roads, shows an increase of £44,235 from loan moneys, as compared with the previous year. It will be seen that we are doing considerable work now from loan account. To further illustrate what has been done in connection with roads since responsible government was established in 1890, I would point out that there has been expended from loan and property trust accounts, which are practically the same, £692,645 on roads up to the 30th June, 1924; whereas last year, to the 30th June, we expended from the same source £192,243.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And £150,000 the year before.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That means that during last year we spent over one quarter of the amount on roads that had been expended during all the years since responsible government.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: From loan funds?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, and the Sale of Government Property Trust Account.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You had the money out of revenue before.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have shown how the expenditure has grown from year to year.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It was mighty good value for our money years ago.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Roads are costing more to build now than they did then. We have been able to give the road boards in addition, by way of subsidies and grants, £27,262. That is a very creditable performance for one year, for it is equal to one-fourth of the expenditure since the days of responsible government.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You said the expenditure for the previous year was £150,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is an increase of £44,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You have not spent the £48,000 representing the Federal grant?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not all of it. We stood better at the end of the year than any other of the States. Not one other State has nearly approached us.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They have not used the money?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. We have actually expended all our money or had commitments for it. Not one of the States either had the work in hand, or completed the work as we have done.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Queensland ought to have spent their grant in providing work for their people.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I believe that Victoria showed the least progress, and that Tasmania would not agree to take any of the money under the conditions laid down. I do not want to say there was any undue delay in starting the work under the Commonwealth scheme. During the last 12 months we have had our machinery in fairly complete working order. I do want to show the improvement that has been made during the last year, and to emphasise the point that in this work I am at all times urging local bodies to take the job. I am asking the road boards to give prices for the work. Wherever the engineers are satisfied that they can do the work I am anxious that they should do it, rather than leave it to the Public Works Department. That is far more economical than shifting plant and men from place to place. Although the local authorities were a bit dubious about taking the contracts in the first year, there has been a considerable increase in the number of boards that were prepared to take the work on this year. I think the specifications scared them a lot when they first saw them, but when the engineers from the Works Department went out and did a length of road in their districts, this gave the local people more confidence, and many more boards are prepared to do the work this year.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They ought to be able to do it cheaper.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They are more satisfied now. I adopted the system this year of asking the boards to name those

roads in their order of preference that they desired to be submitted as coming under the Commonwealth Scheme. I said I would take those roads in the order of preference. If the first preference came under the conditions set out by the Commonwealth, the first preference was adopted. If the first preference was ruled out, the second was taken, and so on. In every instance I am trying to give the boards the work they want. Some of the boards want done a section of a road, and for the work then to be left and another road gone on with. The Commonwealth insist that when the expenditure is started on a given road, the work on that road shall be completed before any other road is approved. There has been considerable improvement in the relationship between the road boards and our department, and between our department and the Commonwealth during the past 12 months. On the 4th July, 1923, the Prime Minister advised the late Government that a Bill had been passed making £96,000 available for roads. More than six months elapsed before the schedule was sent to Melbourne for approval. It was not until June, 12 months later, that the work was actually started.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They raised so many objections and imposed so many conditions.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The actual expenditure, when we took over, on the 17th April, nine months after, was only £4,074. That is all that was charged up. During the 15 months up to June last, there had been expended £351,854 on roads. It has to be realised that the department was not equipped to start a big scheme like this. Big alterations had to be made, which naturally took some time to effect.

Mr. George: The Commonwealth did not know their own minds.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have just stated that during the last 12 months we have arrived at a better understanding. There was considerable misunderstanding. We did not know what each of us wanted, and the conditions laid down by the Commonwealth seemed to be foreign to what was desired here. I think we are now on a pretty fair basis and that we have got past most of that misunderstanding. I took the precaution to send over in July our programme for 1924-25. That was approved on the 4th August. We were then in a position to go ahead as soon as we were advised that the necessary money was in

land. During the 12 months ended June last we expended £281,404, exclusive of salaries and incidentals. We stood better here than any other State in Australia. I have had a statement from the Commonwealth engineer. I should have liked him to see more of the State, but he was unable to do so. He saw the roads that were in course of construction between here and Northcliffe. He said he was well satisfied with the class of work that was being done and the returns for the expenditure. He said that of all the work he had seen in Australia, no better results had been achieved than in connection with the roads he had inspected here. I wish he could have seen the drier areas and the wheat belt. The specifications that might suit the extreme South-West would not necessarily suit for the drier portions of the State, and I was anxious that he should see the drier parts. He was, however, unable to do so. We have now come to an arrangement by which our own engineers are allowed wider discretion and greater scope with respect to modifying the specifications. They are not now insisting upon the same specifications for the extreme and wetter portions of the State as for the drier parts. There is another way of expressing the progress that has been made and dealing with the work done. For the year ended June 30th, 1924, as compared with the year ended June 30th, 1925—I am talking of work done under the Commonwealth scheme—there were cleared 135.61 miles of road at the end of June, 1924, as against 434.8 miles for 1924/25. Other work was done as follows—Forming 84.14 miles for 1923/24, 262.5 miles for 1924/25; gravelling and metalling 34.21 miles for 1923/24; and 208.19 miles for 1924/25; drains 29.47 miles for 1923/24, 114.35 miles for 1924/25.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: For road drainage?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. Bridges and culverts, 150 for 1923/24; and 722 for 1924/25. This year 133,172 cubic yards of side cutting have been done—in previous years there was none. That makes a grand total, up to June last, of 570.41 miles of clearing, 346.64 miles of forming, 242.40 miles of gravelling and metalling, 143.82 miles of drains, 872 bridges and culverts, and, as I just mentioned, 133,172 cubic yards of side cutting. I think it will be agreed that that work must tell its tale, and must prove of great assistance to the

men outback, allowing them to get their produce to market.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You have two years of the Federal grant, you know.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. George: Has the Commonwealth modified the condition as to clearing in point of width?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. Our engineers support the Federal people there.

Mr. George: I am complaining, not of our engineers, but of the Commonwealth engineers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Commonwealth will not alter the condition as to width. However, the tale of road construction is a satisfactory record. If we go on from year to year making the same progress, the effect on the development of Western Australia must be material. As regards public buildings, in addition to the sum of £34,211 expended from Consolidated Revenue and from the Government Property Trust Fund, £95,429 was expended from loan funds. The principal buildings completed during the year were the University biology, geology, laboratory, and lecture hall blocks at Crawley, additions to the Claremont Hospital for Insane, and the Albany high school and Katanning hospital. Further, £15,756 was provided by way of loans for the erection of hospitals in country districts; and a sum of £31,048 was expended on additions to the Midland Junction abattoirs and the Narrogin and Wongan State farms. I believe that this year we shall live up to that expenditure, if we do not exceed it, in connection with public buildings. The new Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Stileman, has spent a good deal of his time since arriving here in travelling around inspecting works in hand and making himself acquainted with the country. The Public Works Department has been without a permanent professional head during the last year, but when the new Engineer-in-Chief has taken control I believe the department will be able to compare favourably with any other department of the kind in Australia.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [5.20]: I was glad to hear the Minister's statements regarding Mr. Stileman, the new Engineer-in-Chief, and Mr. Young, the new Engineer for Harbours. I hope those gentlemen will prove the right men in the right places. In the past we have



not treated our engineers too generously, particularly the younger men. This country depends for its development upon engineers, especially in the South-West, where drainage, road construction and railway construction remain to be done. I do not know any more valuable civil servant than the engineer. I have not yet had the opportunity of meeting the Engineer-in-Chief, but I am very pleased to hear what the Minister for Works says about him. To design a work is an easy matter, but we want a man who can have work carried out at the proper cost. Anyone can do £100 worth of work if given £200 to do it with.

Hon. G. Taylor: We want value for our money.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Work done is not always a question of pounds, shillings and pence. The Minister said that £600,000 odd had been spent on roads in Western Australia since the early days of settlement. I venture to say those figures are entirely wrong. No doubt the Minister has had them prepared for him. He said the expenditure on roads from loan funds, including revenue expenditure, amounted to £600,000 since the early days. But all the roads from Perth to Bunbury, Albany, Bridgetown and Geraldton, all the roads in the wheat belt, and all the roads in the South-West have not been built for £600,000.

The Minister for Works: I said, since responsible government.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Most of our roads, except main roads, have been built since responsible government, because when responsible government was granted we were only 44,000 people and had not done very much with our country. Most of our roads have been built since. If the matter were looked into, I am afraid it would be found that we got much better value for our money years ago, if the figure mentioned by the Minister represented all the money spent. However, it does not represent all the money spent, because in the early days of responsible government many works were done from revenue. That was due to our having control of our Customs at that time.

The Minister for Works: I was making a comparison with expenditure from loan, because of the criticism that we were not spending money from loan.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: When I was in charge of the Lands Department we did road construction work with money from

the Land Improvement Loan Fund. Quite apart from the Public Works Department, thousands of pounds were spent during four or five years; and when the Labour Government came into power they spent probably a couple of hundred thousand pounds. With the system of survey before selection, we cleared the roads. As our lands become settled, we shall have to go on clearing roads. The Minister's description of the road construction work that has been done is highly gratifying. Roads are, of course, vitally important. Without roads we could not have transport. As regards the so-called Federal grant, two years' contributions have been spent in one year. When the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) was Minister for Works, we could not come to any arrangement with the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth gave a generous grant all right, but when it came to doing the work the Federal officials set up conditions which for months prevented a definite arrangement being arrived at. I myself gave considerable time to the matter in correspondence between the Premier's office and the Prime Minister's Department. We were unable to get the thing arranged until just a little prior to our leaving office. Hence there was some delay in the construction of roads. However, the money was available for expenditure, and the present Minister for Works has now spent it. Last year's expenditure was inflated.

The Minister for Works: When I took over, the condition was that any money unexpended at the end of the year might be forfeited.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It did not lapse because of us. That condition applied to the whole of Australia. The money is available to be spent now.

The Minister for Works: It has been spent.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The present Minister for Works could not have spent the money he did spend on road construction had it not been for the Commonwealth grant. It was very creditable of the Commonwealth Government to give us far more than our share of the £500,000, by reason of the distribution being on an acreage basis instead of a population basis. It is the first time any Commonwealth Government have ever distributed money on that basis, and I wish to acknowledge the satisfaction that we feel, and that we will con-

tinue to feel they continue to make their disbursements on the basis of acreage as well as population. We have a third of the total acreage of the Commonwealth, and that fact helps us when Commonwealth grants are made on an acreage basis. I do not know that the Commonwealth Government ought to collect more money than they require for their own purposes and then return the surplus to the States, but I suppose we cannot complain so long as the basis of distribution is that which applies to this grant. The State Government, of course, have to find pound for pound with the Commonwealth grant. It is always known as the Federal grant, whereas the State finds half the amount.

The Minister for Works: The State finds more than that. It costs us £110 for every £100 of Commonwealth expenditure.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am not objecting to that, since we get the roads that our State requires. There is a Commonwealth grant of £96,000, and we have to spend more than £96,000 to get that grant; but at all events we have the Commonwealth's £96,000 to spend on roads which must be made. The Commonwealth Government gave £48,000 free, without conditions, or apart from the ordinary conditions applying to the £96,000. The £48,000 is really a Federal grant. The other expenditure is State and Federal expenditure, although in the country it is always spoken of as the "Federal grant." The State gets no credit for the money spent by it in this connection. If anyone asks me about the money for road construction, the phrase used is always "The Federal Grant." I have recently seen some of the roads constructed during the last two or three years, and the new roads are certainly very good. The Minister for Works knows that as far as possible roads in the South-West, where we had surveys before selection, were made straight. The same remark applies to the wheat belt. It is splendid to see miles of straight road running through forest. Straight roads are certainly more easy to keep up, particularly in wet country, than roads which wind in and out, with consequently much greater wear and tear. The work done during the last two or three years is highly creditable to the department. If the old roads were equal to the new, the position of the Government would be more comfortable than it is.

Good roads, once made, serve for all time if they are kept in order. The roads already constructed in the South-West would serve not only the present population there, but a population ten times as great. By the way, it is extraordinary how well some of the old roads are standing. I remember a small boy going by the road between Busselton and Wonnerup. At that time it had not long been put down. I doubt whether much has been done to it since; but although it is bumpy now, it carries heavy traffic. I suppose the moisture helps to preserve the limestone, and so the road has lasted all these years. Of course to-day, with these heavy motor lorries and the sleeper carting in the South-West, the roads get badly cut up before they have settled down. In the wheat belt, where the roads get but light traffic for a year or two, they stand up to the traffic very much better than if heavy traffic were put on to them from the beginning.

The Minister for Works: We are keeping back sufficient money for maintenance of those roads for the first 12 months.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. Where there is heavy timber traffic, as in the Margaret River and Augusta districts, we have to let the sleepers be carted away before the road is properly ready for such traffic. The road is there to be used, of course, and the sleepers must be got away.

The Minister for Works: I saw one road, just completed, a beautiful road, and a few months afterwards it was impassable.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I suppose the sleepers down there will be cut out before very long. After that occurs, the roads, with reasonable attention, should be very good roads indeed. Bridges, I think, ought to be a national work. Road boards ought not to be expected to contribute to the construction of such works, all of which ought to be undertaken by the Government. A good deal of money might be saved in the construction of bridges where timber is plentiful, and where a considerable water course can be spanned easily by the long balks of timber available. I have in mind several bridges in the South-West that were constructed at very low cost, and have given very high satisfaction. All this work depends upon the cost. If we can get a good road at a proper cost, well and good, but if we get a good road at twice the proper cost, it is not so good. That depends on—

tirely on the engineering. At the Peel Estate the roads have been put in very cheaply, because they pass over sand and limestone, and are fairly solid roads. Notwithstanding the Federal idea of a width of 33ft., those strips through the Peel Estate will be quite sufficient to carry all the traffic likely to pass over them. The Minister, I hope, will use the road boards as far as possible, particularly in the repairing and maintaining of roads under the Commonwealth grant. It is better that the local road board should do the work. They ought to be able to do it more cheaply than can the department, because in most instances they have the gear on the spot. On the other hand, the Minister may have drays and horses and men at Katanning, and the next job to be done may be at Northam or York, involving the transport of all the gear over a long distance.

The Minister for Works: We avoid that as far as possible.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister complained that we had left him £500,000 worth of railways to be built. I do not know why he should complain.

The Minister for Works: I did not complain.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Well, it sounded a little like a complaint. I should think the Minister would be glad to have authorisation for work to be done. He has started the line to Newdegate, and I hope it will soon be through. Lines that I referred to on the general discussion, Yorkrakine, Dale River, Albany-Nornalup, Jarnadup-South, ought to be in hand. Perhaps a great deal of money could not be spent on them straight away, but the work could go on without being pushed. As to the relaying of rails, it is necessary to replace the 45lb. rails between Northam and Wongan Hills with 60lb. rails, using of course the 45lb. rails for lines such as the Newdegate railway. That system has to be followed. We put in 80lb. rails between Perth and Northam, removing the 60lb. rails and using them to replace 45lb. rails in some instances, and in others for new construction. All who travel over that 80lb. railroad between Northam and Perth know that the heavier rail gives a much more comfortable ride. Of course, the cost is very much greater per mile, but bit by bit we shall supply the roads carrying heavy traffic with heavy rails. I was surprised to hear that the re-sleepering of the 18 miles be-

tween Jarnadup and Pemberton would cost £54,000. It is a terrific cost. The line has carried heavy traffic for a long time.

The Minister for Works: They have not been able to take heavy loads over it at all.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I myself have seen heavy loads of timber pass over it. Of course the locomotives used on the line are not of the heaviest class, but certainly heavy loads are drawn by those locomotives. The line was constructed during the Ministerial regime of the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) and has stood up to its work well. I cannot see why it should cost £54,000 to standardise.

The Minister for Works: The Railways would not take it over until it was standardised.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is a pity they did not have to do it themselves.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: It had to be largely re-graded.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There could not have been so very much regrading. In any event, the Railway Department are pretty well equipped for the work of re-sleepering and bringing the line up to standard. I think we ought to allow them to build the line. Of course we have always done the work through the Public Works Department.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Never mix your loan expenditure with expenditure from revenue if you can avoid it.

Mr. George: That axiom has never been proved.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Works Department merely carry out work at the request of other departments. It is a department with a penchant for taking the wrong turning, and its responsible officers are always ready to say, "We will do the work this way, not the way you want it done." It was suggested that we should bring our works under the various departments, and not vote the money direct to the Public Works Department. However, we found there were serious objections to that, and the other departments were instructed that if they had any complaint to make about the cost it must be made before the work was put in hand, when the estimate reached them, and not when the work was finished. I am glad to hear from the Minister that so much has been done. I merely rose to remind him of the fact that the money from the Commonwealth Government which

was not spent in the year ended 30th June, 1924, helped him over the past year.

The Minister for Works: I only wish it had been twice as much.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I think we would have got better value for it under the ex-Minister for Works if we could have spent it; but by the time we had finished negotiating with the Commonwealth over the thousand and one conditions they wanted to impose, we found great difficulty in getting the men necessary to carry out the work. It does not matter to the country so long as the money is wisely spent. The Minister should be grateful to the former Minister for Works for having left him so much money to spend. It was not the ex-Minister's fault; it was due to the fact that we could not get the conditions settled. I am hopeful that the work that has been done on the roads will last for years, and that not much more work will be needed on those roads. In the space of a few years our roads to Northam and Bunbury will be substantially built. In the past we have had to cover great distances with very little money. Now the Minister, with the Commonwealth grant at his disposal, and loan money as well, will be able to make all those roads that carry heavy traffic, substantially-built main arteries. The Minister has spent £200,000 of State money on the roads.

The Minister for Works: We spent £217,000 last year.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of our own money?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Commonwealth money spent, had accumulated for two years, and then it had to be spent on a pound for pound basis. The work done is satisfactory, but I am sorry that we have had to provide motor roads running parallel with existing railway lines. The railways were constructed to carry heavy traffic and we cannot afford to keep railways and roads side by side to carry heavy traffic.

Mr. Thomson: You cannot help that in some places.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The road from Perth to Bunbury runs parallel with the railway line for a considerable distance, and in places it is only 10 yards from the line. Motor vehicles are carrying heavy loads, which should be carried by the railway. I do not know how the country is going to maintain those roads. The amount of £200,000 annually will not go very far.

Mr. Lindsay: Motor lorries are taking the best of the traffic from the railways.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. The railways charge more for high-class goods than for the cheaper goods, and the high-class goods are now being carried by the lorries. I sympathise with the Minister in the work that he has to carry out on the roads. Not only do the lorries take heavy loads, but they travel at great speed and damage the roads. In a little time I think it will be found that the cost of running those motor vehicles will be so heavy that they will experience difficulty in competing with the railways.

The Minister for Works: Particularly they do not get good roads.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I will conclude by saying that I hope the young engineers who come to us will turn out as well as the men who have emerged from our own University, some of whom unfortunately have left the State. I am afraid we have not paid our engineers satisfactory salaries. With so much work to do now, they could be very actively employed. Engineers should be trained to control men as well as to carry out important works. Anyone could undertake a work at any cost. What is wanted is our work carried out at a proper cost.

MR. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington [5.52]): I was pleased to hear what the Minister had to say with regard to the engineers in the Public Works Department. All I can add is that in that department there is employed a staff with whom I was quite satisfied during my period of office. I was proud to be at the head of them, and working together, they should continue to maintain the high record established in the past. I say that, despite all the cheap sneers offered by people who do not know much about the work performed by those officers. I hope that the lately-appointed Engineer-in-Chief and Engineer for Harbours will be dealt with kindly by the Press. I hope that the gentlemen of the Press will remember that they are dealing with highly trained men who know their work, and who should be permitted to proceed quietly and not made to suffer in the manner experienced by other officers holding responsible positions. Much of the criticism that appears in the Press has its origin amongst perhaps discharged or disgruntled or discredited officers who get the ear of those who are or

too prone to listen to grievances. Things that are perfectly straight are often distorted by people of that description. I congratulate the Minister on having a large sum of Commonwealth money to deal with. Indeed, I might say I envy him. I should have been glad, had it been my lot, to deal with the money that has passed to him for expenditure on roads. I am glad that the Commonwealth Government have relaxed the conditions that they originally imposed. Those conditions might have been suitable theoretically to the older States, but in a pioneer State like Western Australia, conditions vary in different places. The method of constructing roads in the wheat areas cannot be followed in the wet areas of the South-West. Down there not only has a substantial foundation to be made, but there must be provision for the carrying away of water, which in the past has found its way below the road surface and, by undermining the road, has brought about its rapid destruction.

Mr. Thomson: Not sufficient attention has been given to that in the past.

Mr. GEORGE: In the past there was not sufficient money to permit of the proper construction of those roads. I know of one big road in the South, built in my time, which could have been made one of the best roads in the Commonwealth if only there had been available another £5,000 to spend on it. Constructed as they have been, the south-western roads will not stand the heavy strain put upon them. I understand that the Commonwealth are now leaving it to the engineers of the State to deal with their own problems. I do not know how the money has been allocated, but I urge the Minister to give his engineers the opportunity to get together a really good road-making plant. We started the nucleus of such a plant during my term, and if the Minister completes what was then begun, it will be possible to make very much better roads at a cheaper cost. Some of the road-making machines in use in the State now were constructed at the State Implement Works, and have proved a great success. The engineers of the department understand what is required and I trust the Minister will see his way clear to assist them to get a complete plant. If he does that, it will pay hands down. Regarding bridges, there is no doubt that in the south-western division, and in the Great Southern as well, many more than have been constructed are needed. The bridges should

also be constructed up to a standard that will carry a heavy load. Unfortunately many of those that were constructed in years gone by are too narrow for the present-day traffic. I agree that the cost of building bridges should be borne by the Government, but in my opinion the maintenance should be the responsibility of the road board. I believe that if they are made responsible for the maintenance, they will look after the bridges properly and see that the bolts are kept tightened up. The member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) will bear me out when I say that the disrepair into which bridges have been allowed to drift has been brought about largely by neglect in that direction. Under the Main Roads Bill the Government will take control of the bridges on the main roads. But many are urgently required on what we might call side roads. On the subject of road construction, I was sorry to see that the Roelands quarry had been closed. The previous Government installed a plant there for the purpose of supplying the metal as cheaply as possible. A lot of the metal required to be broken down to a smaller size. In the construction of roads in the South-West it is necessary to have a good foundation. If you can put in a good foundation of broken stone, and do that cheaply, and then bind it with gravel, the result will be a road that will last a considerable time. I hope the Minister in control will be able to visit the quarry with me in the near future, and I trust that if possible he will agree to reopen it. I will do everything possible to secure that end.

The CHAIRMAN: We are not dealing with the quarry. That can be dealt with on the item.

Mr. GEORGE: Broken metal for road construction is naturally connected with quarries which provide it. I have been interested in road board affairs for some time past, and my district has the distinction of having been the first board to impose a rate. I refer to the Drakesbrook Road Board. Prior to the advent of the heavy motor traffic, the Drakesbrook district roads were as good as any one could wish to see. When the heavy motor traffic developed, the roads were cut up, just as they have been elsewhere. References were made by the Minister to the manner in which the maintenance of roads has been dealt with, and the way the money has been spent. During Lord Forrest's regime in Western Australia, there

was plenty of money available and the Government practically supplied the road boards with funds for making and maintaining their thoroughfares. In those days the State was able to impose its own Customs duties and it was not difficult to put up a good case to the then Premier, and funds were readily available. Reference has been made to the regrading and relaying of the Pemberton railway. That work is necessary because the working railways have taken over the line. It was taken over because of the outcry of the people there, although, in my opinion, they were well served before. The work of regrading must be undertaken because it is not economical to pull a load to a certain point with a big locomotive, and then transfer the load to lighter locomotive stock in order that it may be hauled from that point to its destination. Originally, of course, light rails were laid down because it was purely a timber railway. It was intended that timber locomotives should pull the timber over the line and 45lb. rails were quite sufficient for that purpose. No timber company would think of constructing a timber line into the bush with 60lb. rails. When the working railways take over a line, they desire to use the heavier type of locomotives and rolling stock over the complete journey, and therefore it becomes necessary to regrade and relay the timber line with 60lb. rails. If a line is to be relaid, it would be foolish not to regrade it. Of course the Minister understands the position quite well. For my part, if I had been Minister and the relaying were to take place without regrading, I would want to know something about it. Generally I congratulate the Minister upon his statement. I have not indulged in any carping criticism. I can be broad-minded enough to be glad that he has money now, whereas I was very poor during the time I was Minister for Works. I usually got on well with other departments and as a rule got my own way. My difficulty was with the Treasurer, who was a most obstinate man when I made requests for funds. As I could not get money, I had to let things go. The Minister is able to go ahead with big water works which the Mitchell Government started. We were ready to proceed with those works in August, 1920, but we could not proceed with them because I could not get a penny from the Treasurer. I rejoice that funds are now available so that the Minister can push ahead with the works and carry them out. In the Public

Works Department and other departments as well, we have officers who know their task and are out to serve the best interests of the State. They are entitled to a fair deal from Parliament, the Press, and the people of the State, whom they serve faithfully and well.

**MR. THOMSON** (Katanning) [6.5]: If we may judge by the interest members are taking in the discussion, it is a good thing that the House is to adjourn for a week. I am not casting a reflection upon hon. members, a good many of whom are away from the city at present. The estimates of the Public Works Department play a very important part in the general administration of the State. I would have liked an opportunity to study the figures quoted by the Minister during the course of his speech. Not being a shorthand writer however, he was too fast for me and I will have to speak along general lines, for which, perhaps, the Minister will say, "the Lord be thanked." I wish to congratulate the Minister and his departmental officers upon the encouragement that is being given to our young men. It is satisfactory to know that the department is working hand in hand with the University, and that a number of young men have been afforded the opportunity to learn the theoretical side of engineering at the University and to gain practical experience with the Public Works Department. In that direction the department is performing a useful function. Unfortunately, our young men's ability have too often had to go elsewhere to secure recognition. It is a matter for regret that plenty of our young engineers who have served the State with great credit to themselves and advantage to Western Australia, have not been satisfied with the remuneration offered, with the result that they have had to go further afield. The most remarkable thing about it is this: whereas they received a few paltry hundreds here, they have gone elsewhere and been paid their thousands. That demonstrates that we have had men fully qualified to perform all the work required by the Public Works Department. As to the establishment of the Federal Public Works Department, I was hopeful that when the Minister for Works in the Commonwealth Government was in Perth, we would have been able to persuade him that the creation of that department was unnecessary and unwarranted. We did not mince matter

with him when we had our interview in the city. We told him that it was a gross waste of public money.

Mr. George: Hear, hear!

Mr. THOMSON: We told him that such an action on the part of the Federal Government placed upon the shoulders of the people the expense of the dual departments, a burden that was unnecessary and undesirable. However, like many other Ministers, he was put in the position of having to tell us that his predecessor in office, Mr. Stewart, had placed an item on the Estimates for the purpose, presumably on the advice of his engineers, and as the Estimates had been agreed to, it was too late.

The Minister for Lands: But the Prime Minister told me when he was here that if we could show him it was unnecessary, he would alter the arrangement. We showed him it was unnecessary and then he told us that the whole matter was settled and he would not take our representations into consideration.

Mr. THOMSON: I know that the Minister for Lands feels like I do and takes strong exception to the position that has been created. I think I am correct in saying that when we had our discussion with the Federal Minister, the Chief Engineer attached to the Federal Public Works Department stated that our men in some branches were not, perhaps, just as competent as they should be, thus rendering it necessary for the Federal department to secure their own officers.

The Minister for Lands: And then they took our men from us to do the work.

Mr. THOMSON: That is the amazing part of it. Their action in taking officers from the State Works Department and from the architectural branch of that department proved that the Chief Engineer's statement was not correct. That action showed that we had men fully competent to do the work required by the Commonwealth. The new General Post Office is, of course, a credit to the architectural branch of the Works Department.

Hon. G. Taylor: And to the contractor too.

The Minister for Lands: I am not losing hope; we may have a change of Government next year.

Mr. THOMSON: I have not lost hope that the position will be reviewed by the present Federal Government next year. At any rate we intend to make another effort

in that direction. More particularly should we be encouraged to do so by the statement of the Minister for Works that the Federal authorities are finding the cost of supervision unduly heavy. The Federal authorities must recognise that they cannot administer the department here as economically as would be possible through the State Works Department. As the Minister for Lands and I are both optimistic, we may be able to induce the Federal Government to revert to the old system. We have reason to be satisfied with the work of our architectural section. I have had many years of experience with that branch of the department, not so much with the men who sit in the office in Perth drafting plans and taking out estimates, but more with the field officers and supervisors in the country areas.

Mr. George: They are good men, too.

Mr. THOMSON: They are rendering excellent service to the State, and in my opinion their remuneration is not adequate in view of the responsibilities they have to shoulder. While plans and specifications are prepared at the head office, the field officers have to bear the responsibility of seeing that the works are constructed properly. How to overcome the difficulty rather puzzles me. Serious delays occur in connection with public works in the country districts, and in view of the responsibility thrust upon the supervisors, the department should accede to the request forwarded to the department by the officers in charge. I commend that question to the Minister for his consideration. He might discuss the position with the Chief Architect in order to see whether it is possible to overcome the delays that take place under the existing system. For instance, a slight alteration may be necessary in the construction of a building. The common-sense and practical experience of the man in charge of the work suggests that a certain course should be followed. Unfortunately, however, the work has to be held up because he has to communicate with the department and secure approval for the variation.

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

Mr. THOMSON: I was dealing with the Government supervisors. It seems to me that they should be given a little more authority. The Government should have sufficient con-

fidence in them to permit them to approve of variations instead of having to refer every little thing to Perth, especially as their recommendations are generally adopted. Such a system might result in a reduction of costs and the saving of considerable delay. I do not intend to deal with the figures in the Estimates. The statement before us is a bald one of the expenses incurred in administering the department. I was pleased to hear the Minister say that he was doing everything possible to encourage the local authorities to construct roads under the road grant. That is a sound policy. The departmental method might be beneficial in some instances, but the local authorities should be in a better position to do the work economically. The cost of administering the road grant appears to be somewhat high.

The Minister for Works: What, 8 per cent.?

Mr. THOMSON: Yes.

The Minister for Works: That compares favourably with the cost in all the Eastern States.

Mr. THOMSON: It seems to me to be on the high side.

The Minister for Works: It includes all our charges—engineering, surveys, expenses, and salaries.

Mr. THOMSON: Private engineers and architects undertake constructional work for a total of 6 per cent.

The Minister for Works: An engineer has to go through the district, inspect the roads, take levels and put up plans, and all those expenses are charged against the job.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister is in a position to know how the expenses are incurred.

The Minister for Works: It seemed to me to be high, but I am informed that it compares favourably with the percentages in the other States.

Mr. THOMSON: Private engineers and architects work on a basis of 5 per cent. plus 1 per cent. for plans. I should have thought that, with the enormous sum of money involved in the road grant, the percentage would have been lower. Still, the work is spread over a considerable area. If it is below the percentage in the Eastern States, there is no room for complaint. I agree with the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) that bridges should be a national charge. Some districts are fortunately situated in having rivers flowing through them, but that has necessitated the con-

struction of bridges, and it is not just to expect a road board to maintain bridges. I have always held that the railways could and should be constructed by the Railway Department instead of by the Public Works Department. From the point of view of administration, this would be advantageous. The Works Department make a survey and construct a railway, and then hand it over to the Railway Department. Very often the Railway Department at once proceed to bring it up to the standard of a working railway. The Railway Department should be able to construct the lines and save portion of the overhead costs. It might be a debatable point, but I think some saving could be effected.

The Minister for Works: If you were in the Treasury, you would hold a different opinion.

Mr. THOMSON: I admit that I am not in a position to judge, but it cannot be denied that often when railways are taken over by the Railway Department, a considerable amount is expended on them to bring them up to standard. Recently, I saw passing through Katanning five trucks each containing a small shed. I was informed that they were being sent to Esperance for use on the Esperance railway construction work. With all respect to the engineers, I do not think it economical to construct sheds in that way and transport them to Esperance. True, there might be a saving in cost at the point where they were constructed, but considering that they had to be railed to Albany in five trucks, and then provided with space on the State steamer "Eucla," I think it would have been better to pack the material into one large truck and transport it in that way. If that is an indication of the methods employed in constructing Esperance railway, it appears that a large sum of money could be saved on that work. When the Health Department or Education Department require new buildings or alterations to existing buildings, they have to approach the Works Department and practically get their consent. As a result, work has often been held up for a long time by the Works Department. Perhaps it was due to lack of funds.

The Minister for Works: That is not the position now. Not one job can be put in hand until the expenditure is approved by the particular department for whom the work is to be done.



**Mr. THOMSON:** The amount of money voted for a hospital should be placed on the Estimates of the Health Department, and the vote should be administered by the Minister in charge of the department. He should be able to say, "There is £10,000 to be spent on a hospital at Collie, or some other place. We want to proceed with the work."

**The Minister for Works:** That is what he does.

**Mr. THOMSON:** I do not think that is the system.

**The Minister for Works:** That is the system now. The Health Department tell the Works Department that they want a certain job done.

**Mr. THOMSON:** But the Health Department do not control the finance.

**The Minister for Works:** Absolutely. The Works Department cannot spend a shilling without the signature of the Minister for Health.

**Mr. THOMSON:** The point is that the Minister in control of the Health Department has no control over the funds for the erection of buildings.

**The Minister for Works:** Yes, he has. If a hospital was to be built at Katanning, an estimate would be submitted, and the department would have to approve of the expenditure before we could touch the work.

**Mr. THOMSON:** I do not deny that. The whole of the money to be allocated to the Health Department should be placed on the Estimates of the Health Department. They are the authorities who should control the money for their own particular purposes. They should be able to say to the Works Department, "We want you to prepare plans. Here is the amount of money provided; submit the plans to us and see to the work." The construction of quite a large number of country schools has been held up in the same way, though perhaps not recently. The work has had the approval of the Education Department, and yet has been delayed by the Works Department.

**The Minister for Works:** The vote might have been exhausted.

**Mr. THOMSON:** If the money to be expended were allocated to the Education Department, the department would know where they stood. The Minister's Estimates show a reduction of £392. As compared with last year, quite a lot of items have been cut out. On the Fremantle boat harbour a sum of £1,177 was expended last year. There is a decrease of £1,058 in salaries for the Archi-

tectural Branch. I know the policy of the Government is in favour of day labour. I do not approve of it. There is no check upon the work. When tenders are called for, there is a check upon the administration. When responsible officers have to submit an estimate, and they know that the work will be done departmentally, they make ample provision for all contingencies. I do not think the day labour question, therefore, is economically sound in the interests of the State. Some of our roads were constructed departmentally, and, according to reports, the costs were somewhat alarming. That no doubt was due to a great extent to the initial cost of the work. I know it is useless to appeal to the Minister.

**The Minister for Works:** I could quote instances showing that we have beaten contract work out of sight.

**Mr. THOMSON:** In road construction?

**The Minister for Works:** Yes.

**Mr. THOMSON:** No doubt. If the reports are correct there was a certain amount of deviation from the specifications.

**The Minister for Works:** Every work has to be certified to by the Engineer-in-Chief before payment is made.

**Mr. THOMSON:** There are many ways in which specifications can be altered. I will not, however, go further into that question.

**MR. NORTH (Claremont) [7.37]:** The Claremont authorities are as yet unable to take over their drainage scheme. They want to do so on the lines appertaining to Fremantle. I hope the Minister will give the matter his attention. I am anxious that the Minister should come to a decision regarding the Swanbourne Road Board. I refer to the appointment of a new board. The application was made some time ago, but the matter was postponed with a view to a conference being held. I am informed by the Mayor of Claremont that he is still anxious to deal with the loan schedule for the district, but in view of the position he is loth to spend funds there.

**The Minister for Works:** There will be no alteration this year.

**Mr. NORTH:** The sooner a decision is arrived at the better it will be for any future public works that may be started in Claremont. I am pleased to say that there is a great improvement in the water supply of Claremont and Cottesloe.

The CHAIRMAN: That question must be dealt with under another vote.

Mr. NORTH: I hope the Engineer-in-Chief will shortly be able to investigate the question of local sewerage installations in Claremont and Cottesloe. Fully half a million pounds would be saved if the residents of those areas were allowed to make their own private installations. Hundreds of people already use their own sewerage plants, which are giving great satisfaction. The installations cost about £30 and no deep sewerage is required.

The CHAIRMAN: That matter comes under another vote.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [7.40]: The Minister referred to certain commitments that had been handed on to him by the previous Government. He stated what had been done with regard to some of these commitments. No reference, however, has been made to the railway, which is called the railway of deputations, namely, the Yarramony-Eastward line.

The Minister for Lands: That is a loan matter.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It comes into the same class as the Busselton-Margaret River-Flinanders Bay railway, as the Brookton-Dale railway, and the Lake Grace railway. These were all assented to on the 22nd December, 1923.

The Minister for Lands: Can we discuss Loan Estimates on the Revenue Estimates?

The CHAIRMAN: No.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Minister for Works has referred to certain railways that were handed on to him for construction. As he has mentioned the matter, surely I have a right to do so. I thought the Minister would have stated what was intended to be done with regard to the Yarramony-Eastward line. The Minister has made big efforts to remove some of the anomalies that grew up with regard to road construction and the use of the Federal road grant. It is ridiculous that such petty things as have cropped up should have been allowed to crop up. The Merredin road board, for instance, started work on a road which was divided by a railway. As the road crossed the railway payment was held up for the work that had been done. I do not know whether this matter has been put right. Money out of the Federal grant had been spent on the road, but because one side of it was called east

and the other was called west, the paymaster held up payment for the time being. I should like to know what has been done. The member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) referred to day labour. That is an expensive way of making roads, when it involves sending gangs of men from one district to another and probably mounting up the cost by fully 50 per cent. Work of this nature could well be done by the local authorities.

The Minister for Works: That is the fault of the local authorities. If they would do the work we would give it to them.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: In many cases they have not been able to do it.

Mr. Sampson: They can put in a tender.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: They are doing so, now that they understand the conditions. The position is very much the same as that in which the Federal authorities appoint men here to supervise work. The Minister himself has referred to this duplication of staff. It is an expensive method to send gangs of men into different districts when the local authorities could carry out the work more economically.

Item--Salaries generally, £2,532:

Mr. THOMSON: Will the Minister explain why a decrease of £1,058 is shown?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Two or three officers of the Architectural Branch have gone over to the Commonwealth authorities, and this has meant a saving. We will not now have to supervise Commonwealth work.

Item--Roads and bridges throughout the State, including subsidies to road boards for maintenance of roads, bridges, dams, wells, and general public conveniences which have been provided by the State, £29,000:

Mr. THOMSON: I have lately had to travel at night over the Albany-road at the southern end. It is one of the roughest journeys I have ever experienced. Many tourists use that road, which ought to be put in order.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Has any provision been made for reconditioning the Dwarda River bridge?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Many claims have to be met out of this vote. The Albany road will be considered amongst others. The claim must come under the amount that is made available by the Commonwealth. Had I listened to all the re-

quests that have been made I would have nothing to show for the expenditure. The money must be spent on substantial roads, and roads of a decent length. There is no comparison between the traffic on this end of the Albany road and that on the other end. The traffic on one end of the road consists largely of tourists; on the other end of the road it is heavy traffic coming from the South-West and the South to the city. I hope to do something for the road out of next year's vote, but this end of it must be attended to first. As regards the matter mentioned by the member for Albany, I cannot say offhand whether the item has been provided for or not. With the additional expenditure under the Commonwealth grant the local authorities have nothing to complain of now; a tremendous amount of work is being done for them that they could not do out of their own funds. Little jobs they should do for themselves.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister has misunderstood me. I had no intention of referring to the Commonwealth grant, which cannot be discussed on these Estimates. I was perfectly in order, having regard to the title of the item. If the Minister had travelled over the road, as I did recently, with a sick person, he would have been sorry for the invalid. Can the Minister state how the amount of £29,000 has been allocated or spent? If the Government can provide £800 for the maintenance of the road to the Caves and £400 for the maintenance of the Karrakatta-road, I am justified in pressing the claims of the Albany-road, which should be made at least passable.

Item—Maintenance and reconstruction, main road, Caves, £800:

Mr. WITHERS: The pivot of the South-West is from Picton Junction to Boyanup. An amount of £800 for roads will not go far. At least £2,000 should have been allotted to the roads in that area. I hope additional money will be provided later for the roads of the South-West.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am making absolutely no provision for money to be expended on main roads pending a decision on the Main Roads Bill. I made that statement last year, and it has repeatedly been made by the Treasurer.

Mr. Thomson: The Treasurer also said he would allocate part of the land tax to main roads.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But he got only 50 per cent. of the land tax.

Mr. George: I know I had to pay double.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The percentage suggested by the Treasurer was intended to supplement the petrol tax.

Item—Maintenance of Karrakatta-road, £400:

Mr. GEORGE: A certain sum towards the maintenance of the Karrakatta-road was agreed to be paid by the Cemetery Board and the local road board. Is that money still being paid?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Mr. GEORGE: My idea was to include the Karrakatta-road in the allocation of traffic fees. If the Minister looks into the matter, he will find urgent reasons for that course, because the traffic on the road is almost equal in volume to the traffic on the Perth-Fremantle-road.

The Minister for Works: That was so until the Mounts Bay-road was put in order.

Mr. GEORGE: I throw out the suggestion to the Minister.

Item—Other maintenance works as may be required, £1,750:

Mr. THOMSON: Can the Minister give an explanation of this item?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The item is intended to cover unforeseen expenditure. Last year £422 was expended for repairs of jetties on the Swan River. The expenditure for the current year is due mainly to damage caused by winter storms along the sea front.

Item—Traffic expenses, railways under construction, £1,700:

Mr. THOMSON: Last year the expenditure under this item was £8,700. What is the reason for the drop?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: While a line is being constructed by the Public Works Department, traffic is carried over it by that department to meet the convenience of settlers. The item is intended to cover the cost of that traffic. Last year we had a number of lines under construction, and consequently the expenses were heavier than they are expected to be this year. The traffic does not pay: it represents a loss. Really it is carried only to meet the convenience of the settlers.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Labour, £6,869:*

Mr. THOMSON: There is an increase of £769 in salaries generally. Is that due to the appointment of additional inspectors of factories?

The Minister for Works: Yes. There are two new inspectors.

Mr. THOMSON: What proportion is represented by inspection of scaffolding?

The Minister for Works: There is only one scaffolding inspector.

Mr. THOMSON: There is a reference to "Preparation of rolls and law costs," estimated at £500. What does that represent?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When there is a petition for the alteration of the closing day of shops from Saturday to Wednesday, a poll must be taken under the Factories Act.

Vote put and passed.

*Department of Chief Secretary (Hon. J. M. Drew, Minister); Hon. S. W. Munsie (Honorary Minister) in charge of the Votes.*

*Vote—Chief Secretary, £16,282:*

Mr. THOMSON: I think we should have some explanation with regard to this vote.

Progress reported.

## **BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT.**

*In Committee.*

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

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 6:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This is intended to be used only for the protection of stacks and houses.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, it is really done now, but there is no authority for it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: One can understand that the owner or occupier of a property does not want to see it go up in smoke if, by taking advantage of this provision, he can save his property. Of course it is necessary that people should exercise the greatest care. Even under this provision I take it the owner is not relieved of any of his responsibility to his neighbours.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, that is provided in the Act. Even to-day, of course, people take these precautions in order to protect their property against fire,

but there is nothing in the existing Act to allow them to do so.

Mr. GEORGE: This provision may be all right on plain country, but in the hills it would be of no value whatever. When we had that dreadful fire three years ago down near my place, it swept five miles of country, and the people in the district lost everything they had. What is provided here would have been of no avail at all. The only way to check such a fire coming along in the hills is to make a break along the ridges and hill-tops, so as to prevent the fire sweeping right down the valley. Again, in timbered country the fire will go right up to the tops of the jarrah trees and travel from one tree to another. The only way of checking such a fire is to attack it on the top of a hill.

The Minister for Lands: Under the existing Act these precautions cannot legally be taken at all.

Mr. GEORGE: Still the Minister himself would do it if he were faced with a disastrous fire. He should see whether this clause could not be amended to meet fire contingencies in hilly country.

Mr. BROWN: I can see a danger in the clause. It allows any person at any period of the year to burn to the extent of providing breaks to save houses and stacks from fire. The burning must be done by night. But along the Great Southern a strong breeze springs up every night, and it would then be very dangerous to have a fire going. Much better would it be to restrict the period for burning breaks. All breaks could be burnt by the 15th December. To attempt such work in the middle of January would be exceedingly dangerous to the countryside.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Even to-day people are burning these breaks without any legal authority. The whole purpose of the clause is to give them authority to do what they have been doing for years past.

Mr. George: Strike out the second proviso, and it will be all right.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, we cannot legislate for individual cases.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: The owner would not be permitted to burn these breaks unless a fire was approaching his property?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This is merely to authorise him to protect his stacks and dwelling.

Mr. GEORGE: Whoever framed this clause did so on a knowledge restricted to

plain country. A break 10 chains from a dwelling on flat country is ample provision, but in the hills, or even in undulating country, it would be of no use whatever. In such a country the fire can be checked only on the top of the ridges. If the Minister will agree to strike out the proviso, that will meet the situation.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Protected areas:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Will the Minister explain the reason for the first paragraph? It seems to me that the Governor will be able, at the request of the Conservator of Forests, to declare any portion of the State a fire protected area.

The Minister for Lands: We can strike out "Conservator of Forests" and insert "Minister for Lands."

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It means that the Conservator will say, "I have jarrah and karri areas down there and I wish to protect them. Therefore I want you to declare an area on which no fire can be started except by my permission." No man within that area will then be permitted to burn a tree without the permission of the Conservator.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is necessary that the Conservator should protect his forests. He is spending thousands yearly on reforestation and therefore he should have some power to protect those particular areas.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: He is in the same position as the owner of a crop.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, because he is not insured. This will apply only to where reforestation is going on.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Oh, no fear.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. In any case, I intend to substitute "Minister for Lands" for "Conservator of Forests." Having spent thousands of pounds on these plantations, it is necessary that we should do our utmost to protect them. It is useless to allow the Conservator to have three-fifths of the forestry revenue for reforestation if we do not afford him some protection from fire.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is not what he wants to do.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is. He wishes to protect his forests. Of course

he will have a much larger area protected than the actual forest area. The proposal will not interfere with anybody. It sets out that in a particular area permission must be obtained before a fire can be started.

Mr. GEORGE: There is hardly any portion of the forest country on which a number of people have not been permitted to settle and where work has not been done. Consequently the clause may inflict a hardship. Most of our bush fires are the work of persons who may be kangarooing, or tramps who may be careless.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move an amendment—

That in line four of Subclause (2), "Conservator of Forests" and "of the Forests Department" be struck out, and "Minister for Lands" inserted in lieu.

The sentence will then read, "Without the permission of the Minister for Lands or an officer acting with his authority."

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move an amendment—

That Subclause (4) be struck out.

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

Clause 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Amendment of Section 2 of No. 36 of 1908:

Mr. THOMSON: Before the clause is agreed to I would like to point out that the Minister has power to declare when burning off shall be allowed in different districts. There is a general desire that there shall be a uniform starting time for burning off in a number of districts adjoining each other where the climatic conditions are similar. If the Minister or his officers would consult with the boards placed in that position it would be of advantage. It could be done by way of regulations.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think it is done now.

Mr. Thomson: The boards are merely consulted singly, not in groups.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Of course we have to declare the time in the several districts. It would be possible to do as suggested.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

**ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.**

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. W. C. Angwin): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to Tuesday, the 17th November.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What is the object?

Hon. G. Taylor: I will be pleased to support the motion if the Minister will give us the slightest indication of the necessity for it.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: I did not think it was necessary to do so.

Hon. G. Taylor: I would like to have some reason for the request that the House should adjourn for eight days.

Mr. Panton: We have had a strenuous time.

Hon. G. Taylor: The hon. member does not have a rest.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: I do.

Hon. G. Taylor: I do not desire to oppose the motion, but I think we should have some explanation.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: I am not afraid to give the reason for the adjournment. During the last week or two it has been recognised that many members have been absent from both sides of the House. If hon. members insist on coming back they may do so, and perhaps I shall get my Estimates through without any debate. However, as the Federal elections are in progress, it was thought an opportunity might be afforded members to participate during the forthcoming week, and then be able to deal properly with the business before the House, after the poll.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is a pity we did not know you intended to adjourn.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: You knew about it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, we did not.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: Irrespective of what the member for Mt. Margaret (Hon. G. Taylor) may require, I feel the need for a rest.

Hon. G. Taylor: You will, after a week on the hustings.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 8.50 p.m.*

**Legislative Council,**

*Tuesday, 10th November, 1925.*

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

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE.**

On motion by Hon. E. H. Harris, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. H. Seddon (North-East) on the ground of urgent private business.

**BILL—DAY BAKING.***Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 4th November.

**HON. A. LOVEKIN** (Metropolitan) [4.44]: When this Bill came from another place, passed as it was by an overwhelming majority, I thought there was little in it that might cause controversy in this Chamber. It is a simple measure to provide that baking shall not take place between 8 o'clock in the evening and 5 o'clock in the morning. Therefore it is a Bill which, on the face of it, this House might have passed without much difficulty and without much debate. But those who have sponsored it have, for some reason which is unaccountable to me, taken up considerable time in trying to press it upon the House; and consequently I thought, as Mr. Holmes often puts it, that perhaps there was a nigger in the wood pile. Feeling that, I have looked through the Bill again, and have traversed the speeches of Mr. Hickey, who moved the second reading, of Mr. Gray, who spoke to it, and of Dr. Saw, who also supported the measure. Hon. J. Nicholson: Were you looking for the nigger?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I was looking for the imp in the wood pile.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You will have a job to find one there.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Curiously enough, all who have spoken have put up the strong-