

a petrol bowser. It was said that £30 or £40 a week could be made out of the bowser. Whether that is so, I do not know. It occurred to the board that it would be a good thing if, instead of having to pay out money for the purchase of kerosene to appease the health authorities, we could turn the land to profit. The block is of no use for garden purposes. The Chinaman who had it would not stay there for nothing, though we begged him to do so. However, we thought we could do something with the land and in order that we might have the power, we agreed to put up a Bill authorising us to lease the land. I assure members that we are not bound to lease the land to Mr. Bradley or to anyone else. When the board get this power, tenders will probably be called for the lease of the block and purposes to which it may be applied will be mentioned. If we can get a satisfactory offer, a lease will be drawn up and no one will be able to object to anything that is carried on in that portion of the park. The Chief Secretary suggested that it might be used for a jazz hall site or a tin hare course.

The Honorary Minister: A cabaret.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Whatever it may be called, can anyone imagine Mr. Nicholson, Sir William Lathlain, Dr. Saw, Mr. Poole, myself and others consenting for a moment to a cabaret, a jazz hall, or anything of the kind? So that we cannot go astray, it is provided in the Bill that the board may make a lease only after it has been approved by the Government, thus providing two strings to the bow, so that it would then be necessary to get rid of the present board and secure one agreeable to a cabaret, and also get rid of the present Government and secure a new one that would let things run riot in such a direction.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: A Government that can swallow the White City would not strain at a cabaret.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Perhaps not. I have been rather long in my reply, but I considered it only right to explain the matter fully. I hope members will agree to the Bill.

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

Ayes	19
Noes	3
				—
Majority for				16
				—

AYES.

Hon. J. R. Brown	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. W. T. Glasheen	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. Sir W. Lathlain	Hon. E. H. Harris
Hon. A. Lovekin	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. W. H. Kitson	(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 6.13 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 19th September, 1928.

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

QUESTION—FRUIT EXPORT.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Premier: In view of the good work done in Europe by the London representative of the Fruit Export Board of New Zealand in assisting growers and shippers of fruit to organise and expand their markets by essential in-

formation and necessary powers, and the successful efforts of the representative of California in organisation and advice, is it the intention of the Government to take action to ensure similar assistance in respect to the export of Western Australian fruit?

The PREMIER replied: The matter will receive consideration.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. North, leave of absence for two weeks granted to the member for North Perth (Mr. J. MacCallum Smith) on the ground of urgent private business.

BILL—RAILWAYS DISCONTINUANCE.

Introduced by the Minister for Railways and read a first time.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Electoral Act Amendment.
- 2, Kulja Eastward Railway.

Transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (2)—REPORTS OF COMMITTEE.

- 1, Dried Fruits Act Amendment.
- 2, Abattoirs Act Amendment.

Adopted.

MOTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR DEVELOPMENT.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

Debate resumed from the 12th September on the following motion by Mr. Thomson (Katanning):—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the scheme proposed by the Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Stileman, for the development of the Fremantle Harbour, and that in the opinion of this House no further expenditure should be incurred on the Leighton-Robb's Jetty railway, including the bridge over the Swan River, until such time as this House shall have an opportunity to discuss the report of such committee.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [4.40]: I cannot help being struck by the disadvantage under which a private member of this House labours, as compared with the position of a Minister, who has the

benefit of the professional assistance of his expert officers. The Minister for Works in the preparation of his speech on the motion moved by the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson), had the advice of the Engineer-in-Chief to help him. Every Minister will naturally take full advantage of his staff on occasions of that sort. So it was that the Minister for Works was able to make a statement which was in effect an exposition of the views held by Mr. Stileman. I suggest that it was rather an unfair advantage to take of the member for Katanning. It was a perfectly legitimate advantage, and is usually availed of, but the Minister will appreciate the difficulty in which the member for Katanning was placed.

The Premier: He was backed by advice, too.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not think so, at all events not by such advice as was available to the Minister. The extension of the Fremantle harbour is an important work. We have to decide sooner or later what shall be done. It is of no use talking about commencing an undertaking in a small way, for we have to look ahead and make provision for the future. Even if extensions were begun immediately, years would elapse before any part of the scheme would be available for shipping. The Minister was careful to explain that, in expressing technical views on this question, he was using the words of the Engineer-in-Chief. No doubt he was able by that means to give the House better advice than if he used his own words. He was, however, wrong when he said laymen could not decide these questions. In the end laymen always decide. I do not mean they would decide the actual engineering proposal, but this House has to decide where the harbour has to be. We also have to find the money before the work can be undertaken. I think it was Phillip Gibbs who said, that the man in the street has to watch the scientist. We must all agree with that view. We have to watch the professional man, the engineer, no matter how capable he may be. When it comes to the actual carrying out of the work, there is no question about a professional man being required, but, as to many other factors incidental to a situation such as this, the layman is quite as important as is the expert. The Minister has told us that the Engineer-in-Chief had the

advice of many other engineers. I am sure he would avail himself of all the advice he could get from members of the Government staff. When we have in the service younger men who are probably very capable, their opinions in association with those of the more experienced Engineer-in-Chief must be very valuable. I agree that this work has not been submitted to us by the Engineer-in-Chief without his being fortified by all the advice he could get. What the Minister did not touch upon was as to whether all the engineers agreed with Mr. Stileman. Important work of this kind is not carried out after an interchange of opinion between junior and senior officers, and between members of the senior staff also. No doubt they discuss matters, but there is no record of the result of these discussions. I should like to know whether all the engineers did agree with Mr. Stileman. Perhaps we should have a Royal Commission to find that out. We have had Sir George Buchanan's report, and also the report of our own Engineer-in-Chief, supplemented by his further explanation of the scheme, as furnished in the Minister's speech. I repeat that all that is very useful. The more discussion we have and the more information we get about this problem, the better it will be for the State. We must keep our eyes on the question because of the big expenditure involved, to which we shall be definitely committed once we make a start. The Government intend to seek further advice, and I believe they are quite right in adopting that attitude. Not only have we two prominent engineers, Sir George Buchanan and Mr. Stileman, in disagreement, but we have reports from other engineers, including that of the late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor. Their reports, however, were furnished years ago, and the position has changed. What we want now are the views of engineers based on the altered situation, such as we have in the reports of Mr. Stileman and Sir George Buchanan. I presume the Government are looking for an engineer to advise us as between the reports of those two engineers. I do not think Mr. Stileman would wish it otherwise. I take it the Government realise it would be perfectly useless to requisition the services of a third engineer unless he be a man of great ability, and, if possible, of greater experience than either of the two engineers upon whose reports he is to express an

opinion. Should the third engineer be such a man, then his report will carry weight. That would not be the position if he were not such a man.

The Premier: He must be an outstanding man.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, a man of vast experience in this class of work. I daresay it will be a troublesome matter to find such a man. If the Federal Government had such an engineer in their service, it would be of advantage.

The Minister for Works: The Federal Government have no harbour man.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They had one.

The Minister for Works: Yes, but he went back to England.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: For a time the Federal Government appeared to be anxious to lend a hand by having a highly capable engineer who could assist in connection with harbour works. Had the Government persisted in that attitude, it would have been of advantage to Australia. If the Federal engineer were a man of sufficient standing, he could become a consulting engineer to the State Governments on matters such as that under discussion. If such a man were available, many of our difficulties would be solved. Not only would that engineer be of service to the Commonwealth, but to the States as well. We do not often construct harbours anywhere in Australia in these days, although we do at times extend existing ones. If Australia is to develop as rapidly as we hope, and if Western Australia in particular is to progress as we desire, there will be a good deal of important work to be undertaken. Shortly after the war there was an idea that the harbours of Australia should be enlarged and standardised as far as possible. I do not know whether anything became of that scheme which, I think, originated with the British Government. However, in considering the Fremantle harbour problem we should not lightly set aside the opinion of the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners, nor should we treat them other than as men of considerable experience. Certainly the Commissioners have had more experience than anyone else in the State in the real work of the harbour. I do not refer to the engineering side, but to the handling of cargo and ships. When they speak on those points, naturally we

must listen to them. I was glad to hear the Minister say at Fremantle that he hoped the Commissioners and others would be perfectly frank. That was a very proper attitude to adopt. Anyone who has anything to say that will be of value in the consideration of such a big problem, should have the right to speak frankly. The pilots are master mariners and as such, have a right to be heard. They are the men who have to handle the ships that come to Fremantle. They have spoken, and when it comes to questions relating to the handling of steamers, they know much more about it than the Harbour Trust Commissioners, the Engineer-in-Chief, or anyone else. Then again, the newspapers have published letters and articles, including sometimes illustrations of proposed harbour extensions, and for doing that the newspapers deserve the commendation of the people of Western Australia. All that is for the good of the State, although some of the letters and articles may not have been of much value. On the other hand, the publication of those letters and articles shows that the people are interested in this problem. As I am in favour of an up-river scheme, Mr. Harwood's suggestions seem to me to be well worthy of the consideration of the Engineer-in-Chief. When I express that opinion, I do so from the point of view of a layman and that is the position in which the Minister finds himself as well. If it is to be an outer harbour scheme that we shall ultimately go in for, and if it should be found possible to construct the outer harbour on the south side of the existing moles, I would prefer an outer harbour there to one on the northern side. I suppose there are difficulties regarding an outer harbour on the southern side, but there seems to be more protection there and that locality seems to be a more natural one, if it is essential that a harbour shall be constructed outside. I hope we shall not find it necessary to look outside the river for additional harbour space for many years to come. In the end, Parliament will have to vote the money necessary for the construction of the harbour scheme, and we shall have to decide upon the scheme to be adopted. In those circumstances we require not only all the information we can gather, but the best advice we can get. This, I am glad to say, will be supplied by the third engineer for whom the Minister is now searching. A harbour consists of more than

mere dredging and wharf construction. When at Fremantle recently I was struck with the improvements Mr. Stileman is carrying out there. He pointed out that the added conveniences would do much in the way of quicker despatch of vessels. If that is accomplished, the available accommodation will do more than it is capable of doing to-day. The Minister for Works also told us that the introduction of a bulk handling scheme would facilitate the despatch of vessels, particularly if a terminal elevator were erected to enable that work to be carried out. When I was in Manchester some years ago, I saw the bulk handling of our wheat in operation. The bags were emptied on the wharf and the wheat pumped into the elevator, cleansed, and re-bagged for despatch by canal boats.

The Minister for Works: The wheat goes up by suction.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, it can be taken as far and as high as desired. I think they told me that the works cost about £12 a ton of storage capacity. It will be seen that it is a fairly costly matter.

The Minister for Works: Did you see the reinforced concrete one? There are several in operation there now.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I cannot remember for the moment. They told me that the cost of building was £12 for every ton of storage capacity.

The Minister for Works: I had a look at one in Manchester and the wheat was being unloaded when I was there.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: While such a system would be of decided advantage in connection with unloading, it would be of much greater advantage for loading operations. I understand that in Newfoundland iron ore is put into the ships by means of bulk handling. I think Sir Newton Moore told me that 10,000 tons had been loaded into a ship in less than 12 hours. I think the time was six or eight hours. The ore went into bins and the operation was carried out with great despatch. If we could introduce bulk handling here with a terminal elevator, the bags could be used again after they had been emptied, and that would be of considerable advantage. It would be enormously costly to provide a scheme to cover the whole State. We could do as they did at Manchester and have an elevator at the port. If that were done, it should be a State undertaking, for the convenience of the port.

The Minister for Works: Some of the bulk handling plants in England are owned by private enterprise, but at some centres they are the property of the port authority.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the system is installed in Western Australia, I hope it will be a port convenience owned by the State. The wheat growers will have to pay interest and the cost of operating the plant. The Government would make charges that would cover those costs; that would be natural. It would be better if all such conveniences at the port were owned by the State. We control the gantries and cranes, and so we should own and control the bulk handling plant, particularly as the charges made will cover working costs and interest. That being so, there is not much reason why we should not own and control our own elevators. In Western Australia the principal wheat that would be handled through the elevators would be pool wheat. I am sorry that the Minister for Works made an attack upon Sir George Buchanan. I do not think that was at all necessary. It will not enhance the value of Mr. Stileman's advice for it does not make any difference in our consideration of the position. We will think no more, or no less, of Mr. Stileman because of what was said regarding Sir George Buchanan. I do not think we should be encouraged to think badly of either Sir George Buchanan or Mr. Stileman, unless there is some fact in connection with the report of either and with that phase the Minister had a perfect right to deal. In this House a few months ago some hard things were said about Sir George Buchanan and he replied to them. In his statement the other day the Minister made it appear that Sir George Buchanan had attacked us.

The Minister for Works: Did he not throw his hat into the ring?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, the Minister did that.

The Minister for Works: I was away.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I know that when the Minister does throw his hat in the ring, it generally means a fight.

The Minister for Works: But I was away at that time.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: At any rate, the Minister was the moving spirit, so that it did not matter much whether he was here or away. There is no doubt that Sir George Buchanan is a man of wide engineering experience. I met him on one occasion only and that was for a few minutes.

He has a world-wide reputation; he is a man of wide experience. Of that there can be no doubt. I understand he was selected by the British Government at the request of the Federal Government to come out to Australia. Anyhow, it does not alter the man, nor the fact that he was here, and that we asked the Federal Government to let him come to Western Australia. We may say he was wrong and that we do not agree with him, but we are not likely to encourage other engineers to come here if we treat them all in the way the Minister for Works treated Sir George Buchanan the other night.

The Minister for Works: He had not been in the country more than a few hours before he started attacking people.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I know he made remarks that the Minister resented, those remarks referring to labour conditions in Australia. I myself thought he was unwise. Anyhow, it does not matter a jot. If we were to trouble ourselves with everything visitors say of us, we should be always troubling.

The Premier: Sir George Buchanan was only three days in Australia when he pronounced judgment on the whole of the Queensland railways—something quite outside his sphere.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But the Premier will realise that the professional gentlemen who come here and have been connected with this kind of work everywhere, have read all the reports issued in this and every other State. So when Sir George Buchanan came here he knew a good deal about the Australian railways. All the same, he did not come here with the object of inquiring into railways, and so it was unwise in him to say anything about them.

The Premier: He attacked the White Australia Policy, and the railways, and everything else as soon as he came here.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But that is not the point.

Mr. Thomson: It is as well that occasionally we should see ourselves as others see us.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister for Works made many speeches when he was in England. I saw what he had to say about Western Australia. That was all right, but no doubt he gave some advice to Englishmen while he was there.

The Premier: The wisest man that ever lived would not be justified in making criti-

cisms of other countries when passing through them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, but they all do it. I agree that Sir George Buchanan was not quite wise in some of his remarks. However, I am sure that some of the published remarks ascribed to him were not uttered by him.

The Minister for Works: Some of the things published about me were quite unfounded. One paper said I had given an order for a bridge to cost £2,000,000.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, I saw that. The Minister, when in London, felt, of course, that he was of some importance. We all do when we find ourselves there. We feel that we are representing an enormous territory, and of course we feel quite bucked at the thought that we do represent so much. So we are inclined to say things that sound fairly big. The Premier himself is no exception to the rule.

The Premier: You do not remember what I said in England.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, I remember all that you said.

Mr. Griffiths: We all remember what he said about the park at Windsor.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Sometimes statements attributed to men like the Minister for Works and Sir George Buchanan scarcely represent what was said. But apart from that, Sir George Buchanan did have a good deal to say about the conditions in Australia. Probably we could have told him a good deal more than he could tell us. But, after all, what does it matter? If we were to allow ourselves to be concerned about all the things that all our visitors say of us, we should be very much worried indeed. Of course we should be. If the Minister for Works had to shoulder the load of all that has been said about him, he would feel the weight of it.

The Minister for Works: I would have been dead years ago.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course so. But do not let us discount Sir George Buchanan's work as a harbour engineer in consequence of what he said about the Queensland railways. And they are not of a pattern we should like to follow, losing as they do so many thousands of pounds every year. In that connection, a man coming to Australia must find difficulty in understanding the Queensland railways, since so many of them run through sparsely populated pastoral districts.

The Premier: I do not think any man coming from a thickly populated country in the Old World can understand our railway system, which is largely devoted to development purposes and the opening up of the country.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, in this country we have so many miles of railway built exclusively for development purposes in a sparse population. The position must be difficult to understand for anybody coming from the Old Land. Yet by some strange, fortunate chance our railways do pay, and render wonderful service, too. The position is that we do need greater harbour accommodation now, and that we shall need much greater accommodation in time to come. The Minister for Works drew a comparison between Fremantle and Sydney. Fremantle is the first Australian port of call, and one day may be the only Australian port of call, for certain boats. But Sydney is the centre of several thickly populated States, whilst we are entirely isolated. Therefore, whilst Sydney harbour for some years to come may be used by the people of several States, our harbour at Fremantle will depend more or less upon the people of this one State whose work it does. So the position as between those two harbours is not quite the same to-day, although it may be more nearly comparable in years to come. To-day we are faced with the need for increasing our harbour accommodation. We knew what money we are likely to have available for the work. If we get expenditure well ahead of production, taxation necessarily becomes so great that we are only impoverishing ourselves. So there are many considerations for this House to face in discussing this question. There seem to be three ways, the east, the north and the south. Somewhere in the Scriptures we get a reference to three ways, the way of the eagle, the way of the snake and the way of a man with a maid, whatever that may mean. But I think we ought to prefer the way of the eagle, and take the straight way, and encourage everybody who can say anything about this question to say what is in their minds. It can do no harm, at all events. I have already said that in the end Ministers will decide to accept some scheme and will then come down here and submit that scheme. They did, of course, submit a scheme in the Bill we dealt with last year, and I suppose the next proposition under that scheme that we shall have before us will be for the construction of the

bridge of which we have heard. That, I suppose, will mean a Bill, for the bridge will touch certain streets that will require to be legally closed. That Bill will decide whether we are to have a river scheme or the outer harbour scheme. I am sure the Premier will agree that the expenditure of a few thousand pounds before we make a start, if it will suffice to produce an engineer who can advise us and whose advice will be acceptable, will be a few thousands well spent. In the Railways the amount we used to allocate for surveys a few years ago was a mere trifle. The result was that the cost was considerably increased before we finished. We are regrading all the time, one railway or another. Naturally, with the increase in traffic we have to improve the railways. But a great deal of subsequent expenditure would have been saved had we spent more upon the railways in the first place. Between here and Northam, it is wonderful to see how many times we have changed the track. And I do not know that we have finished yet. Coming along from Woorloo down the river, we are told, we can get a one in 80 grade. So in the end I suppose we shall desert all the tracks we have built between here and Clackline. Again I regret that the Minister for Works should have thought it necessary to attack Sir George Buchanan. The position now is that when we do bring out another engineer or ask for one to be sent, we may find difficulty in getting him. It is a pity to attack officials of any sort in this House. It cannot result in any good. In that respect, our words uttered here probably carry more weight than they should. Sir George Buchanan is a consulting engineer and a specialist in harbour, dock and river work and economics of transport. He is a member of the firm of C. S. Meik and Buchanan, consulting engineers, Westminster. He was educated for the profession of a civil engineer on harbour and dock works on the River Tyne, 1882-1886. He was employed on railways, harbours, docks and river works in Venezuela, Canada, the Argentine Republic, Spain, Jamaica, and England during the period 1886-1896. He was Engineer-in-Chief, Dundee Harbour Trust, from 1896-1901. He was chairman and chief engineer, Rangoon Port Trust, from 1901-1915. He reorganised the Port and carried out at a cost of one million sterling the Rangoon River Training Works. He served with the Mesopotamian

Expeditionary Force from 1915 to 1917. He reorganised the Port of Basra. He was a member of the Indian Munitions Board in control of Indian ordnance factories from 1917 to 1919 and he is a member of the Institute of Transport. I did not get that information from Sir George Buchanan; I got it from a publication.

The Premier: But it came from him. I am not reflecting upon it, but those things are supplied by the individuals themselves.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Premier does not know where it came from.

The Premier: You said it came from a publication.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There are several hundred publications in the library.

The Premier: It came from "Who's Who."

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: At any rate, I did not bring the book into the Chamber.

The Premier: All those particulars are supplied by the men themselves. I remember the member for Murray-Wellington (Hon. W. J. George), in giving his biography, showed as his recreation, "work."

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Then he was a very brave man. At any rate those are Sir George Buchanan's qualifications. We had great faith in him and in the work he had done. The Federal Government would not have consulted him if he had not been capable of giving advice; neither would the State Government have brought him here to report on our harbours. It is true that he was here for only a short space of time, while Mr. Stileman has been here much longer and that is in Mr. Stileman's favour. For all I know, both those gentlemen might be equally capable of advising the Government. I cannot decide between the merits of Mr. Stileman and the merits of Sir George Buchanan. It is not my business to do so. While I have great respect for Mr. Stileman's advice. I have no disrespect for the advice of Sir George Buchanan. The member for Katanning has moved this motion with the idea of letting all people concerned express their views on the proposed work, not so much on the actual engineering features as on the work itself. A select committee would at least give all the engineers in the State, who knew anything about harbours and who cared to express an opinion, an opportunity

to give evidence, and it would also give all other people specially concerned the right to be heard. There is no other way in which they may be heard; they cannot come to the bar of the House. The member for Katanning has elected to move his motion at the present stage. I should have thought it would be better to move it when the Bill for the construction of the bridge came down, but we are not quite certain that it will be necessary for the Government to submit a Bill to authorise the construction of the bridge. If it be necessary, then the hon. member could withdraw his motion and move it when the Bill comes down, but unless we are perfectly certain that that will be the first step taken, I think his motion might be approved by the House. I do not consider that a select committee appointed from this House would be qualified to express an opinion, but it would provide an opportunity for those who possess the knowledge to come forward and give evidence.

Mr. Thomson: That is the intention.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I confess that in my experience of Parliament, such reports, as a rule, have not carried very much weight, but in an important matter of this kind, particularly as there is apparently no hurry, the inquiry might well be held. I understand that another engineer is being sought by the Government and, if his services are secured, then all the work, except that inside the river and not including the bridge, will be held in abeyance. I assume that whatever is decided for the future extension of the harbour within the river would be proceeded with. If that is the position, it alters the case somewhat. Perhaps before we vote upon this motion, we shall be informed whether the services of the other engineer can be obtained, when he is likely to come here, and whether we shall be asked to go any further in the matter of voting money for the work before we get his advice. I know that Ministers are anxious to have the old railway bridge replaced as soon as possible. We have all been anxious about the old bridge for the last 20 years, I suppose, but that notwithstanding, it is important that we should do the right thing and should not make the mistake of erecting a barrier across the river at the wrong place. We might well pause and await the coming of the other engineer. Meanwhile, if the House approves of the motion, we shall have a select committee inquiring, although the in-

quiry would be far more helpful after the report of the third engineer had been received. I congratulate—no, I cannot congratulate the Government on anything—I commend the Government for their decision to seek further advice. The Minister for Works was at first inclined to resent the suggestion that further advice should be obtained, but he has melted a bit since his trip abroad and has come back broadened in mind. We are told that everyone who goes abroad does so to broaden his mind, but I think most people succeed in broadening their bodies a bit!

The Minister for Works: I was never asked to express an opinion on it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But the Minister did express an opinion; as I have already told him, he did not wait to be asked. The Minister naturally gained experience during his trip and now he realises there is need for obtaining additional advice. I hope that the engineer whom the Government expect to secure will be available, and I trust that when we get his report, it will enable us to decide the question, fortified by the best advice possible.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [5.22]: This question was before the House prior to the close of the 1927 session. Since then there has been additional criticism of the schemes; as a matter of fact the criticism has been widespread. The magnitude of the work is full justification for giving the proposals the utmost consideration. The proposed work will be undertaken for all time and accordingly the fullest information obtainable is desirable. Experts differ on many subjects, but a select committee could make the fullest inquiries, sift the evidence, and bring down a recommendation that I believe would be of great value. If the Government approve of the motion, I feel that their action would be a great relief to themselves as well as to most of the people in the State. The Government have been urged on many sides to secure additional advice and go more fully into the matter. If that is done, we shall all feel better satisfied than we do feel in existing circumstances. The matter certainly justifies the fullest inquiry and the widest possible consideration. I suggest that scarcely any public work undertaken in Western Australia has been fraught with greater importance to the State. I should not for a moment presume

to condemn the report of Mr. Stileman or that of Sir George Buchanan—we realise that we are laymen—but since their reports vary so greatly, and since both those gentlemen stand so high in their profession, it behoves us, seeing that the amount and the issues involved are so tremendous, to carry the motion. I am unable to say whether Sir George Buchanan was justified in passing any of the remarks he may have made about Australia. There is a tendency amounting almost to a temptation to criticise the industrial difficulties with which the Commonwealth is faced, but I do not know that that has anything to do with the motion. Really, it is beside the question. Sir George Buchanan has a high reputation as a harbour engineer and his opinions should be considered with respect. As I understand the motion, however, there is no intention to set Sir George Buchanan against Mr. Stileman. The object is to give such consideration to the evidence obtained by the select committee as will enable the Government to go ahead with the scheme or with such variation or alteration of the scheme as circumstances may justify. Apropos of remarks made by visitors, when I was in London a few weeks ago, the optimism of Sir James Mitchell and of Mr. Collier was mentioned to me by a certain gentleman and I think the optimism was well justified. Then I had the pleasure of hearing the Minister for Works make a very fine speech at the Western Australian annual dinner. I was heartened and pleased with what I heard.

Hon. G. Taylor: It was a good place to make a speech.

Mr. SAMPSON: It was a good speech and well received. Because people are enthusiastic when they go to the Old Country, is no detriment to them. We cannot help being enthusiastic when we are in the Old Country and when we recall the delights and opportunities that exist in this State. I am only sorry that more of our brethren from Great Britain are not here enjoying the opportunities. The Government would be unwise to accept the responsibility for this work without first making the fullest possible inquiry. I daresay Mr. Stileman would welcome the appointment of a select committee, but whether he did or not, the importance of the subject warrants the carrying of the motion. The wide divergence of opinions expressed is a full justification

for the appointment of a select committee and I hope the Government will approve of it. One might say that Western Australia is only at the commencement of its development. It is developing as a wheat growing country and in a very few years our present production will appear very small indeed. Canada, it is said, will produce 600,000,000 bushels of wheat this season. I am not going to predict that we shall ever produce 600,000,000 bushels, but I suppose that before another decade has passed we shall be producing 100,000,000 bushels. That, then, is an added reason why, before proceeding with the scheme, the Government should obtain the fullest evidence and be fortified with the best opinions available.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [5.30]: I do not wish to cast a silent vote on such an important matter. If I said nothing, it might be assumed that I did not favour any inquiry. That view would certainly be wrong. I spoke against the \$800ft. proposal last session when the Leighton-Robb's Jetty Railway Bill was before the House, and again voiced my objection on the Address-in-reply. I have heard nothing since to make me alter my opinion. The Minister for Works, speaking on this motion, said it could be taken under three headings, and one he mentioned was the objection to up-river extension because of the tidal effect on Perth waters. Mr. Stileman may be right in his view, but he is the only engineer who has declared that a flooding of Perth waters might result. From time immemorial engineers have differed with regard to tides in the Swan River. Sir John Coode was brought out to report on the matter many years ago. Sir John Forrest, in moving a motion expressing approval of proposed harbour improvements at Fremantle, said on the 6th January, 1892:—

We have had the opinions of Mr. Doyne and Mr. Wardell, and the report of Sir John Coode in 1877. Not satisfied with these the Government, at considerable expense, induced Sir John Coode to come to the colony in 1886 and to report again on the matter from personal observation.

This is what Sir John Coode had to say:—

A reconsideration of this question (that is the river mouth), now that I have had an opportunity of personally examining the site and of studying the further data which have been provided, has tended to confirm the views expressed in my report of 1877, viz., that the

conditions are so adverse that it is quite impracticable to treat the existing entrance to the Swan with a view to the formation and maintenance of a deep-water approach from the sea with any degree of success, and that any operations of this character, except to the limited extent to which I shall hereafter refer, would be attended with failure and disappointment The cost of the works required to open up the entrance to the river, putting aside for the moment the practicability of maintenance of depth when so formed, may be put down at £530,000. This sum would cover the construction of two protection moles, internal training banks, the removal of the rock bar, and the formation of a channel below the bridge. The aim of these works would be to afford a navigable depth of 15 feet at low water, but, as I have previously intimated, there is not the slightest prospect of such an entrance being kept open or the depth maintained therein I cannot bring to mind any successful treatment of a river entrance of this character unless accompanied by an adequate scour of fresh and tidal water, more particularly of the latter. In the foregoing remarks as to the river entrance, I have dealt with works of comparatively small magnitude for the accommodation of coasting and other steamers, but if the design were extended for the reception of larger vessels, the cost would be immensely increased by reason of the greater length of the moles and the additional outlay on the formation of the channel; in fact, it would be quite impracticable, at any reasonable cost, to provide hereafter, under such a project, for the reception of ocean-going steamers.

There we have the opinion of Sir John Coode, that it is quite impracticable to open the mouth of the river. In those days some people said that the opening of the river would mean the flooding of the foreshore all along the river. Then we have Mr. C. Y. O'Connor recommending that the harbour should be made inside the river. A motion was moved in this House that the harbour should be taken to Owen Anchorage. On top of that it was decided that a joint select committee from both Houses should inquire into the matter. Thus there were laymen dealing with the conflicting opinions of engineers. One said it could be done; the other said it could not.

Mr. Mann: You are putting up a good case for the motion.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I believe I am putting up a good case for inquiry, though not for the kind suggested by the motion. I do favour inquiry. Mr. O'Connor, when he came to the actual opening of the river, said, "I am an engineer, but I am not the only man who knows anything about harbours." So he called in conference certain gentlemen who were regarded as experts in

that particular line. Among them were Captain Russell, the chief harbour master, Captain Morrison, Captain Scott, and other pilots, and also Mr. John Bateman. Mr. C. Y. O'Connor gave consideration to the views of all these experts, and, having first decided that the entrance to the channel should be 800ft. wide, resolved to make the width 1,200ft. Captain Angus, the representative of the P. and O. Company, next made his appearance and had something to say. He declared that unless the harbour was made suitable for the reception of ships then considered big—ships of 6,000 tons—by the entrance being widened to 1,400ft., Fremantle would not be a port of call for the P. and O. steamers. That was the deciding factor. When the Government learnt that the P. and O. steamers were not likely to come to Fremantle unless the entrance to the harbour was made 1,400ft. wide, that width was adopted. I maintain that our present Engineer-in-Chief, although a capable engineer, is not the only man who can offer a reasonable opinion as to the building of a harbour for vessels using the port of Fremantle. If the channel is built 800ft. wide, we shall have vessels lying on either side of the harbour and other vessels will have to come in through the channel between them. Mr. Stileman criticises the pilots for their declaration that they could not negotiate the narrower portion of the harbour that is proposed, and refers them to the fact that they are at present negotiating an entrance channel of about 450ft. At the same time Mr. Stileman recognises the need for widening the entrance channel. As regards the 450ft. entrance, vessels have to pass through it at their best possible speed, without manoeuvring; they are manoeuvred only when they have passed through. Here is what Mr. Stileman said at a conference of engineers held in Perth in the early part of last year:—

The entrance channel was originally designed and dredged for a width of 450 feet on the bottom, and to a depth of 30 feet. When deepened to 36 feet the width was not increased, but bell-mouthing at the entrance to the channel is being undertaken at present in order to facilitate the handling of the longer vessels now entering. The widening of the channel throughout its length is one of the problems of the early future, and such widening, it is hoped, can be designed to take out part of the curve in the existing channel. Though this will almost certainly involve removal of a portion of one or other of the breakwaters, the necessity for a wide channel as well as increased berthage in the harbour at an early date must be anticipated.

When the harbour was built 1,400ft., it was built to provide for ships of a maximum of about 6,000 tons. To-day we have vessels of 22,000 tons entering the harbour, and it is safe to predict that vessels will not become any smaller, but that in the next few years we shall have steamers of considerably greater tonnage than 22,000 tons entering the port. It does not behove us to build the harbour to a width of 800ft., thus making a bottle-neck, because there is the possibility that before many years pass over our heads shipping may come past the proposed site of the bridge. Even though the present Parliament may decide that shipping shall not come more than 1,000ft. past the anticipated site of the bridge, we must look ahead to possibilities. It is no use saying we will build for the purposes of the present day. Ships, I repeat, are becoming larger and larger; and Fremantle is likely to become the terminal port. We must provide for years ahead. The Minister for Works recently quoted the "Olympic" and other huge vessels entering Southampton through a narrower space than that provided at Fremantle. My information, however, is that the "Olympic" was handled by seven tugs, and that sometimes she was pulled out of her berth stern first. If the same thing is to happen at Fremantle, we may as well hand over the harbour to the tug proprietors. It is necessary that an inquiry should be held. I do not favour an inquiry by members of Parliament, but would suggest that the matter be referred to men outside, competent men who will be able to bring in a report on which Parliament can confidently proceed. What will be the position if an engineer brought from London or New York happens to be of the same opinion as Sir George Buchanan?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I hope he will agree with either one or the other.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Are we then to say that Sir George Buchanan is right and that Mr. Stileman is wrong? Or are we to get another engineer, who may possibly agree with Mr. Stileman?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You take your fences before you come to them.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Evidently the hon. member interjecting does not believe in looking ahead. An engineer brought out at considerable cost might prove to be of the same opinion as Sir John Coode, and where are we then?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Heaven knows!

Mr. SLEEMAN: The evidence of some people in this country is just as valuable as that of any engineer.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I think we should stick to the river.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do not think the Leader of the Opposition or I will ever see an outer harbour. However, there are people whose views on the building of a harbour at Fremantle should be respected. I refer to the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners, and to the pilots; the people who respectively manage and work the harbour. I find that the Commissioners, in their reply to the criticism of the Engineer-in-Chief, write as follows:—

After very careful consideration of the whole matter, and with every respect paid to what Mr. Stileman writes on the 28th November, I am directed—

This is written by the secretary of the Fremantle Harbour Trust:—

—to say that while they have no desire to enter into anything in the nature of a controversy, nor do they wish to criticise any purely engineering detail in the proposals of the Engineer-in-Chief, they must, as the persons charged with the working of the port of Fremantle, adhere to the principles they have already placed in the hands of the Government as being essentials which must be given effect to in any design that is prepared for the enlargement of Fremantle harbour. The Commissioners fancy from the tone in which the Engineer-in-Chief now writes, that he regards the remarks of the Commissioners as a criticism of his work as an engineer, and in fact unfortunately goes to the length of practically declaring that the deciding of such essentials as the position as well as the breadth and depth of a harbour is a purely engineering matter, but the Commissioners disagree with this. They have already said plainly that they have no wish to criticise any engineering proposal, and this they repeat, but in regard to the inclusion in any work of essentials in design dictated by actual experience of work, the Commissioners suggest that this is not a purely engineering matter, but comes decidedly within the realms of administration. Obviously, while it is possible to make a success and a credit of a good and well-thought-out design, there might be other designs which, although containing very excellent engineering practice, might fail in operation to give the same satisfaction The Commissioners are endeavouring to see the matter with the perspective before them of the years to come. They earnestly advise not to build for yesterday or to-day, but for years ahead, when Fremantle shall become, as it is surely destined to become, a great port.

Then there are the views of the pilots, highly condemnatory of the 800ft. width and also of the outer harbour. I shall not worry much about the outer harbour, be-

cause my personal opinion is that many years will pass before the suggestion of such a harbour will be entertained. Some of the views expressed by the pilots are as follows:—

We do not wish to write at the great length such an important subject demands, so beg to suggest that arrangements be made whereby we could, with the consent of course of the Commissioners, confer with Mr. Stileman, when we feel certain we could put before him facts which would make him, or any other engineer, hesitate before recommending for a harbour, above all things, certain principles which to our minds, as nautical men, involve trouble, grave risk of danger, and perhaps the impossible position arising of not being able to get ships in or out as required.

It is not my intention to speak at length on the motion. I have now given the House my views. Certainly I consider that there should be an inquiry before the work is proceeded with. I am just as anxious as any other member of the House to see that Fremantle gets a bridge. Even at the risk of holding up the project for a few months, I am prepared to put up a fight, having no wish to spoil the ship for the sake of a penny worth of tar. We should look far ahead and not confine our work to the provision of a narrow waterway, remembering the large steamers that are now afloat and the possibility of even bigger vessels being constructed. We have all the space that is required to provide a harbour wider than has been suggested, and it would be more economical to acquire land in the neighbourhood at the present time than let the purchase of it stand over until some future date. Then again, the opinions of nautical men should be taken into consideration on the subject of the width of the harbour. My vote will always be given against any proposals to limit the width to 800 feet unless nautical men's opinions be first obtained to show that they agree to the narrowing of the harbour.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [5.46]: Quite recently a big business man who had spent many years in Western Australia and who was returning to the Eastern States after a visit to Perth, in responding to a toast, expressed the opinion that before many decades had gone by the two most important cities in Australia would be Sydney and Perth. That was his considered opinion regarding the importance of Western Australia in the near future. Whether his

forecast will prove to be correct or not, members of this House must be firmly of the opinion that Western Australia must develop into an important State, and that Perth, with Fremantle as its port, must also gain in importance. Therefore it looks as if the subject matter of the motion we are discussing is going to involve the expenditure of a large sum of money. Up to the present time the expenditure authorised by the Bill that was passed last session will be a mere flea-bite compared to the expenditure that must be involved in effecting improvements to the harbour. I should not be at all surprised if it amounted to ten millions sterling before the complete scheme was carried out. It is obviously important, therefore, that the foundations be correctly laid. To my mind, the foundations rest on the reports of the engineers who are to be consulted and who are to lay out the plans for the work. I would not presume in any way to criticise the report of an engineer of the calibre of Mr. Stileman, and neither do I think any other member would do so. I do hold the opinion, however, that the House should not agree to expenditure on any work that might involve the outlay of, say, £1,000,000, on the opinion of one man, no matter whether he be the most capable man in the world. The member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) has already referred to what I intended to allude, namely that many years ago the State engaged an eminent engineer in the person of Sir John Coode to report to the then Government on the advisability of constructing an inner harbour. That engineer's report was not in favour of an inner harbour, and it was through the late Lord Forrest's disappointment that the services of the late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor were engaged. Mr. O'Connor's opinion and advice were obtained, and the result is that we have an inner harbour at the present time. When two such eminent engineers give different opinions it is advisable that a full inquiry be held. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned the scheme set out by Mr. J. J. Harwood. To a layman, that would appear to be the very thing required. Mr. Harwood suggested docks between our present railway bridge and Rocky Bay running into North Fremantle, but there must be a reason why that proposal is not satisfactory. If there be a reason, we have not heard it. From a lay-

man's point of view, it should meet all requirements. Another comprehensive scheme was proposed by the late Mr. G. A. Lefroy and published even in the London newspapers. That also should be inquired into. I really consider that Mr. Stileman's proposals should be checked. I would be delighted if his report were supported by any other engineer the Government thought advisable to engage. At the same time, the visiting engineer might suggest something that Mr. Stileman had overlooked. It is just possible that an estimate or something else had not been correctly put up; so that before we embark upon expenditure of the dimensions that the proposals will necessitate, we should certainly have a check at the hands of another capable engineer. I am pleased to think that when Mr. Stileman's report was placed before the House in October last I took the first opportunity on the budget debate to express the views I am voicing now. I said I had no desire to criticise the report, but expressed the belief that the Government would be well advised to have a check made by an independent engineer. I still hold that opinion, though with a slight modification. At that time I did not suggest that a select committee should carry out the work because such a committee would take a very long time to gain all the information that would be necessary, and even then the members of it would have to be guided by the evidence of engineers. My opinion is that we should have a committee of engineers.

Mr. Mann: A Royal Commission of Engineers.

Mr. ANGELO: I should like to make another suggestion and it is that if the services of an engineer of outstanding ability cannot be secured in Australia, we should ask two or more of our sister States to loan to us their engineers so that a conference might be held of three or four engineers with Mr. Stileman.

Mr. Mann: Did New South Wales do that before they started their big harbour works?

Mr. ANGELO: I do not know, but I would like to see a precedent established. A job like this will mean a great deal to Australia as a whole. Therefore, why not establish a precedent by inviting two or three engineers from the other States to confer with Mr. Stileman, to either agree with his scheme or amplify or modify it?

Mr. Stubbs: Or condemn it.

Mr. ANGELO: Later on another State may ask us for the services of Mr. Stileman. If the engineers are of the opinion that Mr. Stileman's proposals are wrong, they will condemn it, but I do not think they will do so. What I wish to stress is that when there is an important job like this involving the expenditure of a huge sum of money, we should take the opportunity to engage the best possible brains in Australia. Why not let all the principal engineers come together and have a conference, as under secretaries of departments often do? I have no desire that the Government should go outside Australia for advice or assistance. At the same time, we must not forget that the late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor came from New Zealand. From a conference of engineers we should secure a report in a third of the time that it would take a select committee. After all, a select committee, to do their job properly, would have to obtain the views of engineers. I presume that if the Government did invite other engineers to consult with Mr. Stileman, they would seek harbour engineers. The Commonwealth have no harbour engineers and it would be of no use looking to the Federal Government. A Dominion like New Zealand, possessing numerous harbours would naturally employ capable men. Queensland, also, is a State with a number of harbours, and would also employ harbour engineers. My suggestion is that we should make use of whatever engineering ability there is to be found in Australia, not only on this job, but on all future works of similar dimensions throughout Australia. It should not take more than a month to carry out the investigations, and if the visiting engineers could prove that Mr. Stileman's project was the correct one to carry out, no one would be more delighted than I. Mr. Stileman's suggestion is that the outer harbour should be to the north. I hope the Government will not lose sight of the fact that experts in defence should be asked to give an opinion as to whether that would be the right position for an outer harbour. We must not forget that that would be a most vulnerable point, and that ships would be safer in a harbour up-river, or south of the existing harbour. Not only will any harbour that might be built outside to the north be subject to north-west gales, but will also make a good target in the event of an attack. That is merely a

suggestion. I suppose it has been considered; if not, opinions should be sought on the point. This huge undertaking should be considered entirely from a non-party aspect. Everyone, the Government, the Opposition, and the people of Western Australia should be out to get the best job done. I take it the Government have decided, from what we have been told by the Minister, to get a check on Mr. Stileman's report. I should like to see the conference enlarged to three persons. Whether one, two, or three engineers report on the Stileman project, I would suggest to the Premier that he should invite the Leader of the Opposition to join him and the Minister for Works in making the selection. Let this be a purely non-party business. Let us, on the Opposition side, take our share of the responsibility. If it was known that the selection of the engineers, who are going to report on the Stileman scheme, had been made by representatives of all interests in Parliament, the people of the State would be better satisfied.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [6.2]: I feel convinced that the mover of this motion was actuated by a desire that all expenditure of public money on engineering schemes should be made on solid and sound lines. A few years ago it took two or three Ministers of the Crown a long while to see the defects of an engineering scheme that was launched in my electorate. On one occasion the Engineer-in-Chief of that time was invited by the Minister for Works, then the Hon. W. J. George, to pay a visit to the scheme. He did so. When asked for an opinion upon it, he declined to give one. In my presence, and that of other representative men, he declared that he had not designed it, had not been consulted with regard to it, and point-blank refused to enter into a discussion upon it. The result was that between £10,000 and £12,000 of public money was wasted on that scheme. To-day it stands as a monument to the incapacity of the engineers who designed it and carried it out.

Hon. G. Taylor: Were they Government engineers?

Mr. STUBBS: Yes.

Hon. G. Taylor: Was the scheme carried out without consulting the Engineer-in-Chief?

Mr. STUBBS: Yes.

The Premier: In those days the Engineer-in-Chief was not consulted about anything.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Whose Engineer-in-Chief?

The Premier: Yours and ours.

Mr. STUBBS: My reason for rising to speak this afternoon is to endeavour to ensure that the mistakes due to the incapacity of our engineers during the last 15 or 20 years shall not be repeated. Every member of the Chamber is responsible for the control and expenditure of public funds. We have to assist the Minister for Works, and the Premier who provides the money, to ensure that whatever is voted for public works is wisely expended. Can any member deny that in the past huge sums have been expended on engineering works that have proved a failure? I take it the desire of the member for Katanning is that there shall be no wasteful expenditure on the Fremantle harbour development. No doubt the importance of the work has been carefully weighed by the Engineer-in-Chief. I do not think the mover of the motion desires to reflect upon the integrity or the ability of that officer. Mr. Stileman was selected, from a number of applicants, by the Premier. I believe he is a first-class officer in every way, and that his credentials are undoubted. He has had considerable experience. I would point out to the Premier, and the Minister for Works, who is relying upon the scheme propounded by Mr. Stileman, that only a week or ten days ago one of the most experienced captains in the interstate shipping service, in command of one of the largest of the vessels, the "Katoomba," said to me, "Stubbs, if your influence with your colleagues in Parliament will prevent the scheme from going in a northward direction, for God's sake do the best you can to prevent a calamity." The captain in question does not live in Western Australia. He had no more idea of doing an injury to Mr. Stileman or to the State than the knife I hold in my hand. Am I not justified, from my seat in this House, in saying that the advice of a captain of 20 years' experience is worthy of consideration? If Mr. Stileman's scheme is carried out, it will mean the expenditure of millions of money. Most of us desire to prevent the repetition of the mistakes that have been made in the past in connection with the expenditure of the State's funds. Nearly 21 years ago, when I first entered Parliament, there was a great outcry on the hustings, from the general pub-

lic as well as from members, concerning a fiasco which involved the expenditure of a quarter of a million pounds. This money was sunk in a wild-cat scheme, contrary, I understand on the best of authority, to the advice of the leading engineer in this State. I refer to the dock at Fremantle. It was said, and I am not going to deny it, that this was a political ramp, carried out in order to keep a certain member in Parliament.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You cannot say that.

Mr. STUBBS: I believe I am right in making that assertion.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I know you are wrong.

Mr. STUBBS: The hon. member has a perfect right to his opinion, and I have a right to mine. I say that a certain gentleman was promised the support of many people in Fremantle, if he would induce the Government to agree to the construction of this dock.

The Premier: It was a political job all right.

Mr. STUBBS: It was the opinion of a large number of people that the Fremantle dock was a political job.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Oh no, it was not.

Mr. STUBBS: It does not make any difference to me what the Leader of the Opposition may say to the contrary; it does not alter my opinion. I was told this by men in whom I have every confidence, and whom I esteem as much as I do the hon. member. That was what prompted me the other night to ask the Minister for Works where it was proposed to spend the first portion of the money. He replied, "Inside the river." I was glad to hear that interjection. The Engineer-in-Chief of that day, the late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, was the best engineer the State ever had. He was in favour of the up-river extension of the harbour. If the Stileman scheme is adopted, the Government must first get the authority of Parliament for the expenditure of the money. I was one of a party of members who accompanied the Harbour Trust Commissioners on their recent tour of inspection of the harbour. I have no desire to criticise the Premier because he interjected that he would prefer to take the opinion of an eminent engineer like Mr. Stileman to that of laymen who control the Fremantle har-

bour. The Premier was justified in making that interjection.

Hon. G. Taylor: It was one of his jokes.

The Premier: It was one of my few serious moments.

Mr. STUBBS: Individual members should be very careful about adopting any one scheme, without first getting a check upon it from other responsible engineers of equal status with the gentleman who is responsible for propounding it. I would be the last to cast the slightest reflection upon the integrity or ability of Mr. Stileman, but would point out that he has been in Western Australia only five or ten minutes.

The Premier: To whom do you refer?

Mr. STUBBS: To Mr. Stileman.

The Premier: He has been here for three years, but the other man who reported on the matter was here only three days.

Mr. STUBBS: I am with the Premier in that matter. I am not for one moment pitting Mr. Stileman's judgment against that of Sir George Buchanan. Some 20 or 30 years ago a gale seriously affected ships coming into Fremantle from the North-West. It is from this point of the compass that storms frequently arise. We have seen in the paper during the last two or three days what terrible results have followed in the train of a tornado that reached the coast of America. No engineer can provide against the violence of nature. What we have to do is to endeavour to make the harbour at Fremantle as secure as possible from the elements, and prevent disasters to shipping. Mr. Stileman has not had a sufficiently long experience of the coast of Western Australia, and the prevailing conditions, to enable him to form a clear judgment as to the effect of the periodical disturbances that attack Fremantle from the North-West. His short experience does not warrant the House in adopting his scheme without first having a check report made upon it. Some other advice must be sought as to whether he is right in extending the harbour to the North-West.

The Minister for Works: We have given our word that we shall have a check made upon it.

Mr. STUBBS: I am glad the Minister for Works views the matter in the right light. I am not actuated by any political motives in the speech I have made this evening. My object is to see that public moneys, which have been wasted on the Peel

Estate and in other directions, shall in future be wisely spent.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. STUBBS: Before tea I was endeavouring to justify the motion before the Chair. While not desirous of being parochial in regard to harbour extension, I wish to emphasise the importance of ensuring that not only the primary producers, but every man and every woman residing in the outlying districts, should get a fair deal. In furtherance of that objective let me point out the importance of many other harbours which, like Fremantle harbour, require the expenditure of public money. I trust, and I believe, that the Government stand to the principle of every port receiving the benefit of the produce grown in its hinterland. If I thought that the expenditure of millions of pounds on the extension of Fremantle harbour was for the purpose of hauling wheat and other products hundreds of miles away from their natural ports of shipment, I would, even if I stood alone, speak as long as my voice and my strength held out in an endeavour to show the people of Western Australia that such a course was not in the best interests of the State. I do not suppose for one moment that the Minister for Works desires to carry over the Western Australian railways enormous quantities of grain and produce to any but the nearest ports of shipment. My experience of 21 years as a member of Parliament warrants me in saying that the advice I have received from various engineers necessarily leads me to be most careful in regard to engineering schemes. This is so, especially in view of our unhappy experiences during that period. One has only to look upon the monuments of engineering folly for which the Western Australian taxpayer has to foot the bill, to recognise the costliness of some mistakes made by our engineers. I have no desire to do any injustice whatever to the professional men in our Government service, but I do not think the Minister for Works can find fault with me for pointing out the importance of making sure that the expenditure on the Fremantle harbour is such as can be justified. As I said earlier in the debate, the scheme now before us was put forward by an engineer who has been in Western Australia for only five minutes, so to speak. That gentleman, be he the cleverest engineer the world has

known, still has not had sufficient local experience to warrant him in putting up a recommendation asking the Government to expend millions on a scheme without having his figures checked by some equally capable engineer. What will the Minister for Works say to the engineer who comes here to check Mr. Stileman's figures? I desire to acknowledge that the Minister's speech on the motion was lucid and fair-minded, and such as no one could cavil at. Still, I urge upon the Minister that the point I am raising is highly important. No professional engineer is likely, except on excellent grounds, to condemn the figures and recommendations of an engineer of the capacity and world-wide reputation of Mr. Stileman.

Mr. Thomson: That is a good point.

Mr. STUBBS: Then what is wrong with the suggestion I am about to make, that if the proposal for a select committee is not approved by the Government, some professional committee should be appointed? If the Minister thinks that members of the Chamber, as laymen, are incapable of judging a scheme put forward by Mr. Stileman or any other engineer, what is wrong with the appointment of a board of experts, as suggested by the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo)?

Mr. Angelo: A committee of engineers in chief.

Mr. STUBBS: That brings me to another point. The engineers-in-chief of the other States may be, and no doubt are, highly capable men; but still one hears a man like the master of the "Katoomba," Captain Moodie-Heddle, who has no other interest than that of performing his duties as skipper of one of the finest boats that ever entered Fremantle harbour, stating definitely that anyone who proposes a scheme involving a harbour north of the mole does not understand his job. What object can Captain Moodie-Heddle have in making such an assertion if he does not honestly believe it to be necessary in the best interests of the people of Western Australia? He is not an engineer, but he has entered and left the port of Fremantle in all weathers. The gales that attack our coast come, in nine cases out of ten, from the north-west.

The Minister for Works: There you are wrong. The strongest gales come from the south-west. The records show that.

Mr. STUBBS: Then Captain Moodie-Heddle is wrong. Does the Minister suggest for a moment that Captain Moodie-Heddle does not know more about the gales that attack—

The Minister for Works: He does not know more than the records show over a number of years. The records speak for themselves. They are compiled by experts.

Mr. STUBBS: The Minister's contention is open to reasonable discussion.

The Minister for Works: I can only state what the records show.

Mr. STUBBS: Let me go a step further and say that the most capable engineer Western Australia ever had up to the time of Mr. Stileman was Mr. C. Y. O'Connor. This Parliament has expended millions of pounds in carrying out Mr. O'Connor's scheme of developing the harbour within the river. Now, according to Mr. Stileman, we have to scrap all that Mr. C. Y. O'Connor did.

Members: No.

The Minister for Railways: We will scrap nothing.

Mr. STUBBS: With all respect to those who differ from me, the fact stands out clear as the sun at noonday that eventually millions of pounds will be expended on a harbour outside the Swan River. Can anyone deny that?

Mr. Marshall: We shall not see that day.

Mr. STUBBS: But we are supposed to be legislating for the future prosperity of Western Australia. Any mistakes we may make in regard to Fremantle harbour during the next few years, will rebound upon us, especially if we perpetuate the costly errors of the past. That is my excuse for delaying the House in pointing out the importance of hastening slowly in regard to this all-important scheme. If my memory serves me rightly, Mr. O'Connor's idea was to bring the shipping up the river as far as Rocky Bay.

Mr. Thomson: Then why did the Government of the day repurchase all that land at Cottesloe?

Mr. STUBBS: I am guided by the extraordinary action of the then Government in commandeering all that land, and giving resumption notices to property owners on the banks of the Swan River right up as far as Rocky Bay. If my statement is in-

accurate, what was the need for running the country into an expenditure of many thousands of pounds in acquiring private property?

The Minister for Works: I do not feel quite sure, but I am fairly confident that the land was purchased long after Mr. O'Connor's time.

Mr. Thomson: No.

Mr. STUBBS: With all due respect to the Minister for Works, it was generally considered at the time that the land purchases were in accordance with the scheme which Mr. O'Connor had conceived and on more than one occasion had made public. If that were not so, why was all that money expended on testing the Swan River bed at a point nearly a mile further up from where the Government, under the Stileman scheme, propose to construct a bridge across the river? During that wonderful day when members of Parliament had the privilege of inspecting the present harbour at Fremantle and had had explained to them the proposals regarding future extensions, I could not help being struck by the fact that an enormous amount of money would be required to pay for the resumption of household property and other lands on the south side of the river between the present railway bridge and the site of the proposed new bridge. It is because of that that I, as a country member whose produce does not go through Fremantle but is shipped from Albany or Bunbury, point out in all seriousness that before the Government recommend Parliament to spend any further money in connection with the Stileman scheme, favourable consideration should be given to the suggestion that further evidence should be obtained. What I want to impress upon them more than anything else is the danger that if an engineer is to be asked to check Mr. Stileman's estimates, that engineer may merely look at the figures from a professional point of view.

Mr. Thomson: He may be accused of unprofessional conduct!

Mr. STUBBS: The engineer who is called in may consider that he is asked to check the figures and not to express an opinion as to whether the scheme will be sound in the interests of the State. He may simply consider it would be better for him to keep his mouth shut and merely check the accuracy of the estimates.

The Minister for Works: I will give you an assurance that no restriction will be

placed upon whoever is appointed as to the expression of his opinions.

Mr. STUBBS: That serves to still further pave the way towards a proper understanding of the whole position. I would like to pay a compliment to the Minister for Works. When he was speaking, I believe he endeavoured to point out that he was not wedded to the present scheme if it could be proved to his satisfaction that Mr. Stileman had not made out a good case. I think he said he had an open mind. I believe that the Minister, when he asks some engineer or engineers to confer with Mr. Stileman, will point out that a considerable difference of opinion has been expressed by laymen regarding the scheme. He will also point out that some of those who have expressed doubt have been connected with the Fremantle harbour for a great many years. The Premier said that he would not for one moment accept the judgment of laymen against that of a professional man like Mr. Stileman. Probably the Premier is right, but it is nevertheless a fact that in all parts of the world various Government have realised that there is sufficient business acumen to be found in laymen to warrant them in appointing a certain number to act as a public works committee to scrutinise schemes involving the expenditure of public moneys. I hope that fact will not be lost sight of by members of Parliament. I regret to say that past experience justifies me in referring to the fact that we have often been told in this Chamber and in conferences with party representatives from either side of the House, that a certain scheme that may have been under discussion at the time would cost a certain sum of money. We were told that all the flowers in the garden were lovely, but after a few years the fact leaked out that the scheme, instead of costing, say, £100,000, had cost £500,000 or £600,000, and that the thing was a damned failure! I speak feelingly because private members of the House have often been hoodwinked by specious arguments advanced to show that schemes were in the best interests of the State, whereas in subsequent years we have found that not only were the schemes downright failures, but that we had been parties to the expenditure of money although we had nothing to do with the proposals, any more than the lights in this Chamber. I hope that in the future we shall have no more instances of the rotten underground engineering that has taken place in the past.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [7.49]: I do not intend to deal with this question at length because the Leader of the Country Party has already discussed fully the various features of the Fremantle harbour extension scheme. In the early days when the Fremantle harbour was first mooted and the Coolgardie water scheme was in the air, the newspapers of the day, particularly the "Morning Herald" and the "Sunday Times," claimed that the Fremantle harbour proposals merely represented a waste of money, that the harbour could not be constructed there, and that the scheme meant the throwing away of £500,000 for nothing. The Press advocated that the main port for the State should be at Albany. Later, when the Coolgardie water scheme was discussed, a further attack was made upon Mr. C. Y. O'Connor and that scheme. In those days the "Morning Herald" was the leading attacking paper, and that newspaper pointed out, in the course of elaborate articles, that the scheme would be a ghastly failure, that the pipes would not last, and that there would be a reckless expenditure of money.

Hon. G. Taylor: The "Morning Herald" was the opposition paper!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: That is so, but the point I wish to make is that something of the same sort is going on to-day. Opinions outside are much divided now, just as they were then. Mr. Stileman is probably the most talked about man in Western Australia to-night, and his ears must be burning.

Mr. Stubbs: No one has criticised him.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: That is so. My idea in speaking in support of the proposal of the Leader of the Country Party is to save Mr. Stileman from criticism such as heaped that great engineer, C. Y. O'Connor, to his grave.

Mr. Angelo: Had his proposal been supported by another engineer, he would not have cared a tinker's curse for the Press criticism!

Mr. Marshall: He was supported by another engineer.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I would like to make it clear that the Leader of the Country Party did not table his motion on his own initiative. The members of the Country Party requested him to take that action, not in any party spirit nor with the intention of attacking anyone. The motion was suggested merely from the standpoint that we, as representatives of an industry the produce of which will be the main cargo to be

handled at Fremantle, should see to it that the producers were not required to shoulder any undue burden in common with, of course, the general taxpayer. It was made clear that the question should be discussed in an impartial manner. I have heard it said that if the motion were agreed to and a select committee were appointed, the Leader of the Country Party should not be chairman, as he would be biased. If any hon. member took the trouble to read the speech delivered by the Leader of the Country Party, he would admit that he dealt with the question fairly and impartially. Other speakers have said that we shall never have an outer harbour while we are alive, either on the northern or the southern side of the existing harbour. In 1923 the wheat production of the State amounted to 13,000,000 bushels. According to the statistics, the production increased by the end of the last financial year to 36,000,000 bushels, an increase of 300 per cent. Mr. Stileman, I believe, based his calculations regarding wharfage accommodation at Fremantle on the fact that for every one ton of wheat handled, three tons of general merchandise had to be dealt with.

The Minister for Works: He said that was the position up to the present.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Our production has increased 300 per cent. inside five years, and Mr. Stileman forecasts that by 1936-37 we shall be exporting from Fremantle some 27,000,000 bushels of wheat. According to the "Statistical Abstract," during the last financial year, which ended on the 30th June last, our wheat exports totalled 26,193,333 bushels.

Mr. Marshall: But not all through Fremantle! That total is divided among several ports. The exports have nearly ceased at Fremantle.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: At any rate, that was the quantity exported from the State. If we have a 50,000,000 bushel harvest, and the usual percentage is exported, it will mean that 53 per cent., or 27,500,000 bushels, will be exported during the next export season.

Mr. Stubbs: From Fremantle?

Mr. Marshall: No, the other ports will be included in that.

Mr. Thomson: Nothing of the sort. If so, why spend all this money on the Fremantle harbour?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: With the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) I have been making inquiries regarding bulk handling, and re-

cently I asked the Minister whether provision had been made in the Stileman scheme for bulk handling. I was informed that ~~had~~ been considered. I should like to tell the House what is the position in respect of bulk handling and bag handling. Let us take our bag handling in Fremantle. We have 3,200ft. of wharf space devoted entirely to wheat under the bag handling system, and we are cramped for room. We have sent away about 18,000,000 bushels of wheat from Fremantle, and with all that 3,200ft. of wharf space, we are cramped for room. At Glebe Island a new system of conveyor galleys is being erected, and when these are completed 2,000 tons can be loaded into a ship in an hour with ten men. There they have 1,540ft. of wharf space at the terminal elevator, which, with the new conveyor galleys, is sufficient to load 45,000,000 bushels in the season. I want to stress the fact that bulk handling will greatly curtail the space that is at present required for the loading of wheat under the bag system. I do not want anybody to think I am a crank on the bulk handling system. I have taken a very great interest in the matter ever since I saw bulk handling in operation in America, and I am convinced that it will be a good thing for us. In supporting the motion for inquiry into the Fremantle harbour scheme, I consider the two things should go hand in hand and full inquiries be made into both. Bulk handling will come, whether we want it or not. It has to come before many years will have passed. There will be published shortly figures showing that the scheme can be introduced at a very much lower cost than was previously estimated, that prices of material have gone back and that a considerable cut can be made in expenditure on the mechanical side. The Engineer-in-Chief in his report on the extension of the Fremantle harbour bases the extra wharfage required on the increased production of wheat, and states that for every additional ton of wheat exported three tons of other cargo will be handled. He estimates that 27,000,000 bushels will be exported from Fremantle in 1936-37. Based on this figure, 7,931ft. of new quay is required; and 5,750ft. of new quay in the inner harbour, with equipment etc., would cost £2,000,000. On the above figures, £500,000 would be required for extra wharf accommodation for the handling of wheat. The member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs), speaking a little while ago, appealed to

members to treat this question as a thing of national importance, with no suggestion of trying to take a rise out of anybody or to attack anybody. He simply falls behind the Leader of the Country Party in agreeing that the proposed inquiry is called for. This evening I heard an interjection from the Premier in regard to a certain terminal elevator at Manchester which the Minister for Works inspected while in England. The Premier interjected that it was not on high ground. But it is well known that the erection of silos on high ground means an immense saving. That Manchester elevator, possibly on the level of the water front, would have to use power to discharge wheat into ships. The idea of having a silo on high ground is to do away with the necessity for that power to discharge the wheat into ships. That was the idea behind the report we recently issued on the bulk handling of wheat.

The Minister for Works: But you would require power to lift the wheat into the elevator.

Mr. Thomson: In an ordinary elevator the wheat has to be lifted in and lifted out again. With an elevator on high ground, the wheat could be run out by gravitation.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: These are things that must be inquired into. The one scheme has to work in with the other. In New South Wales the bulk handling scheme has not been a financial success. But I know that when a prospective farmer is out to purchase a farm, the first thing he asks is as to whether it is near a silo. If told that the farm under offer is not near a silo, the prospective purchaser says, "Oh, I want one that is somewhere near a silo." So apparently it appeals to the farmers that silos are a decided acquisition. The bulk handling scheme in New South Wales has not been a success because it has been overloaded. There is lying in Sydney to-day something like £600,000 worth of machinery that has never been used. When people talk of going to Canada for information on the subject, I think of the huge drying plant that will never be used and I always advise them to go to New South Wales and find out what mistakes have been made with the system in that State. In my view it would be perfectly safe to base a scheme on that scheme minus the obvious errors that have been made. The terminal elevator erected there is of 6,500,000 bushels capacity, but has never been more than one-third filled. So,

too, in the country districts the silos have never been anything like fully used. The trouble was that in the first place the scheme was converted from a bulk handling into a storage scheme. Bulk handling is going to be forced upon us. At present we are finding a good deal of difficulty in handling 28,000,000 bushels of wheat. The railways have had to work at top speed to get the harvest down. Every credit is due for what the railways have accomplished. But when we reach the 50,000,000 bushel standard and go on beyond that mark, the question will be as to what is to be done to get the wheat shifted from the country sidings to the port. In this evening's newspaper we find the following:—

Basic Industries.

Wheat and Wool.

Sir B. Morgan's Warning.

Helpful advice and a warning were forthcoming from Sir Benjamin Morgan, chairman of the British Empire Producers' Organisation, in an interview shortly after his arrival to-day.

I do not know yet to what extent it applies to Western Australia, but the wheat industry as a whole is badly in need of modern methods of handling and shipping. The time has come when bulk handling must be adopted, and, either State or co-operative enterprise must produce proper storage accommodation in districts as well as at ports of shipment, and obviate the present laborious method of handling in sacks. The present method, with all the loss by vermin, increased cost of truckage to ports and vastly increased cost of both loading ships and freight charges is wrong.

The wheat industry must be prepared for increased competition from many countries, and it is essential that efforts should be made as soon as possible to lower production costs. Western Australia, with its marvellous record of progress in this industry should be the first to examine and adopt modern methods. In this matter of warehousing and handling, apart from the immense cost of bags, she could effect considerable economies.

In conclusion, I agree that the requested inquiry is called for. Without any reflection at all upon Mr. Stileman, I realise that there is an uneasy feeling amongst laymen, and that conflicting opinions are being voiced by experts and so-called experts. Since I was one of those who asked the Leader of the Country Party to bring in some such motion as he has moved, I will support the motion if it should go to a division.

Mr. BROWN: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [8.12]: As one of those who, last session, favoured the appointment of a select committee to make further inquiries into this harbour extension scheme, I confess I am still of the same opinion. It would be advantageous to the House and to the public generally to have further information. There must be vested interests at stake. The other day when I went down with a party to have a look over the harbour, I drew my own conclusions. They are only a layman's, but it appears to me the outer harbour scheme could be made practicable. At the same time I should like to know what the cost is to be. We have had no estimate of cost. If we are to pledge ourselves to a scheme that will cost millions of money, we should have the fullest information before we vote for that scheme. I have the greatest faith in Mr. Stileman. He is an engineer of high qualifications, but nevertheless no man is infallible, and I should say that Mr. Stileman would welcome further investigations.

The Minister for Works: I have told you that.

Mr. BROWN: If a committee were formed with power to take evidence, and if qualified persons were called to give evidence, it would be advantageous to everybody. I understand the Minister is prepared to engage a qualified engineer to consult with Mr. Stileman. But it seems their deliberations will be held in camera, and we shall know nothing about it until they make a joint report, whereas if we had a select committee or a Royal Commission the whole of the members of the House could follow the evidence as it was tendered. It appears to me that if the proposed bridge be built on the site that was pointed out to us, it will not interfere with the town of Fremantle. If, on the other hand, the bridge were to be brought a couple of miles further up, possibly Fremantle would have to suffer; for the strip of land between the present site and the ocean to the north is only very narrow, and no town of any magnitude could be built on that land. On the other hand, there is nothing to prevent the building of a railway on the south side of the river, and the people of Fremantle who wanted to come to Perth could travel via the south side of the river. Anyone who was born in Victoria knows that the River Yarra was very shallow, but the bottom was dredged to a con-

siderable depth so that steamers of large tonnage can now berth right up in the town. That was an up-river scheme. It seems to me that the day might come when we shall have to deepen the Swan River so that steamers may come right up to Perth.

The Minister for Works: Save us from that!

Mr. Angelo: Yes, God forbid!

Mr. BROWN: Why?

Mr. A. Wansbrough: It would be vandalism, pure and simple.

Mr. BROWN: But commerce is always prepared to let beauty go to the wall. It would be very convenient to have our merchandise unloaded from the ships right in the heart of the city. I fail to see how it could affect Perth if the bottom of the river were dredged, because the river is a wide one. The Yarra, on the other hand, is a very narrow river. If the centre of the river were dredged, there would still be considerable waterway on either side of the channel.

Mr. Angelo: Is this the Brown scheme?

Mr. BROWN: I am merely giving my ideas.

The Minister for Works: I think it must be the charcoal scheme.

Mr. BROWN: Members should pay heed to the remarks of the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) and the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Rowe). Both of those gentlemen live at Fremantle and are in a position to judge of the effect of heavy winds and storms, and of the difficulty that ships experience in berthing close to the site of the proposed outer harbour. Those members are in a position to judge what is best.

The Minister for Works: How long have I lived there?

Mr. BROWN: Perhaps a little longer than either of the members I have mentioned. But I take it that the Minister for Works lives at South Fremantle and it is quite possible that the scheme might affect his district.

The Minister for Works: That is where the strong blows come.

Mr. BROWN: And South Fremantle might suffer if the bridge were constructed much higher up the river.

The Minister for Works: You are trying to force it on me by pushing it to the south.

Mr. BROWN: We know exactly what will happen at Fremantle, with all its large buildings, if the harbour is extended upstream. The town must suffer.

Mr. Angelo: You cannot accuse the Minister of being parochial in this matter.

Mr. BROWN: No, he is very broad-minded as regards his own electorate. My principal objection is that the House does not know the estimated cost of the scheme. Is the work going to cost five, ten, or twenty millions of money? No one knows. Neither Sir George Buchanan nor Mr. Stileman has gone into that phase of the question.

The Minister for Works: Yes, Mr. Stileman has.

Mr. BROWN: What does he say the estimated cost will be?

The Minister for Works: Read his report.

Mr. Thomson: Between five and six millions.

Mr. BROWN: Apart from the cost of the bridge.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: What would it cost to bring the ships right up the river?

Mr. BROWN: If the ships were brought up the river, we would have the satisfaction of knowing they would be in a safe harbour; there would be no damage caused by ships bumping against the wharves, and there would be no difficulty in getting in or out of the harbour.

Mr. Angelo: You would destroy all the algae in the river.

Mr. BROWN: Perhaps that would be a good thing.

Mr. Clydesdale: Oh, well, put it up there.

Mr. Thomson: Yes, at South Perth.

Mr. BROWN: If the harbour is extended up-stream for a distance of 1,000 feet it will meet all requirements for some years. Reference has been made to the bulk handling of grain, but I am afraid that day is far distant. I believe terminal elevators will have to be provided ultimately, and when they are provided ships will get quicker despatch. We must not forget that the population of the State is growing by leaps and bounds; therefore merchandise in larger and larger quantities will be coming from overseas into the Fremantle harbour. Even if quicker despatch is given to the grain ships, the harbour accommodation will be taxed as much as ever. Consequently it is essential that sufficient harbour accommodation be provided. When members inspected Fremantle harbour the other day, it was almost fully occupied with shipping. There was hardly room for another boat, and one vessel was tied up in the stream.

Mr. Angelo: Some boats are anchored outside now.

Mr. BROWN: But we know the reason for that. They cannot get their cargo unloaded; harbour dues are high, and so they have moved into the open roadstead. I fail to see what harm would be done by appointing a select committee. Some members have asked where it would be possible to get additional expert advice, and whether there are engineers of sufficiently high qualifications available to give evidence. I take it there are. There is no escaping the fact that consideration should be given to the views of the pilots and of members of the Harbour Trust. They know from experience something of the peculiarities of the elements, and evidence from such men must carry a certain amount of weight. Judging by the attitude of the Government, I do not think a select committee will be granted. I am pleased, however, that the Minister for Works realises it would be advantageous to the House and the country to seek further expert advice. That being so, I hope the Government will obtain the best expert available to consult with Mr. Stileman. If they can agree upon a scheme, it will be more satisfactory for everybody. Suppose, however, there was a disagreement between Mr. Stileman and the third expert. I take it that any man called in to advise would adhere to his own opinion, and if he differed from Mr. Stileman, what would be the result? We should be in the same position. Suppose the third expert did not agree with the outer harbour scheme but favoured the scheme of Sir George Buchanan, what would be the result? Will the Minister give an assurance that he will adopt the scheme of the majority, or will he still adhere to Mr. Stileman's scheme?

Mr. Angelo: Let us take the hurdles as they come.

Mr. BROWN: That attitude might be satisfactory to the hon. member, but this matter is of vital importance to me. A few people have taken me to task and told me I must go bald-headed for a new bridge on the existing site, because otherwise it might affect the Robb's Jetty scheme and, if that railway were not built, it might affect the Brookton-Armadale railway project.

Mr. Angelo: It will not affect that at all.

Mr. BROWN: No, because if the bridge is constructed further up stream, the Robb's Jetty railway will be built, and so it will not make the slightest difference to the Brookton-Armadale line. From the information placed before us, and from the

opinions expressed by people of Fremantle, a considerable expenditure for resumptions will be involved in the construction of the Robb's Jetty line. I understand that 30 or 40 streets will have to be crossed, and that the route lies through the thickly populated part of South Fremantle and Fremantle. Perhaps it would be an advantage to have the bridge further up stream. The bridge will cost a large sum, but I take it provision will be made for pedestrian, road and railway traffic.

Mr. Thomson: That is the intention.

Mr. BROWN: I have no objection to that; it is only right that the bridge should cater for all classes of traffic. I support the motion.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [8.25]: I do not propose to prolong the discussion, but I should like to express the hope that the motion will not be carried and that a select committee will not be appointed. From a very considerable experience of the work of select committees in this House, I have long since come to the conclusion that they have never been of any real value. In fact, it is safe to say that not one-half of the members of the House ever take the trouble to read the reports of select committees, much less to attach any weight to them. We know, too, that even the method of selecting the members to comprise a select committee does not—

Hon. G. Taylor: Recommend itself.

The PREMIER: —does not as a rule give us the men best fitted to sit in judgment on the particular question.

Mr. Thomson: Who is responsible for that?

Hon. G. Taylor: The system.

The PREMIER: The practice that has grown up in the House—

Hon. G. Taylor: That is right.

The PREMIER: —the practice that has been associated with the appointment of select committees, under which at the last moment some member is asked if he will act, nearly all the members refuse to do so, and there is difficulty even to induce members to undertake the duty. After 23 years in this House, I can say that I have never served on a select committee, and I know that many other members are in a similar position. There is the point also that it would be utterly impossible for a select committee to run side by side with an inquiry by an expert authority. The Government have announced their intention to secure the

services of one of the most highly qualified men that can be obtained even in the whole of the British Empire. Efforts will be made to do that. If we should secure the services of an officer of that description, to have a select committee of members of this House investigating the question at the same time would, in my opinion, be the limit of absurdity.

Mr. Thomson: Could not the select committee collect the evidence in order to submit it to the expert authority when he came here?

The PREMIER: Collect the evidence! All the evidence he would require is already available, because the hon. member's high authority gave as his justification for his brief stay in the State—a stay of only three days—that he was here long enough to peruse all the evidence he required. He said, "It was all available to me and I could not have learnt any more about it had I stayed for three months."

Mr. Thomson: Which high authority are you quoting?

The PREMIER: Sir George Buchanan.

Mr. Thomson: I have not quoted him as an authority at all yet.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But we must quote him as an authority.

Mr. Thomson: I am not taking him specially as my authority.

The PREMIER: Then I shall take him as my authority and say he is a high authority. I do not say the hon. member has taken sides, but he has frequently referred to Sir George Buchanan as a high authority.

Mr. Thomson: Quite correct.

The PREMIER: Then is there anything wrong in my saying that he is the hon. member's high authority?

Mr. Thomson: He is one of them.

The PREMIER: Well, one of them. Sir George Buchanan himself said that the brief time he stayed in this State was sufficient to enable him to acquire all the information that was necessary in order to form a judgment.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course he had all the printed stuff.

The PREMIER: That is so, but I am answering the point made by the hon. member. Consequently, any other professional authority that might be appointed would similarly be supplied with all the printed matter and all the information. The hon.

member now says that a select committee might be a help to the new man by collecting the evidence for him. Yet we have from the Engineer-in-Chief on the one hand and from Sir George Buchanan on the other hand the statement that they have had all the information they required. Can any member imagine that the evidence which would be collected by the select committee would be of any assistance to an expert authority? Of course it would not. Let us assume that the person selected endorsed either the scheme of the Engineer-in-Chief, or the scheme of Sir George Buchanan, and that the select committee recommended some other proposal. Three engineers would have pronounced judgment on the scheme, Sir George Buchanan, the Engineer-in-Chief, and the man whose services we hope to obtain. Let us assume that two of them support one scheme, let it be either, and that the third man stands by his own. The select committee then comes along and finds in favour of the man who stands alone, and recommends his scheme. What are the Government and the House to do then? Are they going to accept the views of the two engineers, or of the one backed up by the report and finding of the select committee?

Hon. G. Taylor: And appoint another select committee to inquire into the findings of the first time.

The PREMIER: Yes, we would have to appoint another select committee to sit in judgment on the first. These are not the possibilities, but the probabilities. In view of the announcement that the Government are going to obtain the services of the best man available, it would be foolish to proceed with the appointment of a select committee from this House, appointed in the haphazard way that we know select committees have been appointed in the past, to call evidence from all over the place, and make a report.

Hon. G. Taylor: Do you think we are qualified to do that?

The PREMIER: I am sure we are not.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We can have a committee of the whole House to decide the question.

The PREMIER: In a scheme of this magnitude it is better for us to do that when we have before us the views of all three men. Sir George Buchanan, the Engineer-in-Chief, and the third man whom

we shall appoint. Let all three opinions be laid on the Table of the House, and let us have a select committee of the whole House to determine the point that will ultimately have to be determined in any case.

Mr. Angelo: It must come to that.

Mr. Stubbs: Parliament has to decide in the end.

The PREMIER: Before Parliament could be asked to decide such a question, it should have the whole scheme investigated from every angle by a competent authority, not by five laymen, who would be members of the House.

Mr. Stubbs: If you are going to ask an engineer to take Mr. Stileman's figures, will you not be placed in rather an invidious position, and will he not be similarly placed? He has either to say that Mr. Stileman's scheme is a good one, or come to some other conclusion.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not make a speech.

The PREMIER: If any engineer cares to come into consultation on this question, he will have been willing to give an opinion before he accepts the position. No man would accept the position having made up his mind beforehand that he would not express an opinion one way or the other.

Mr. Angelo: A doctor gives his opinion before he calls in another to confirm his own.

The PREMIER: Of course! No man would accept the position unless he were willing to express an opinion upon the scheme. Then we are going to have a select committee of this House that will call evidence and make a report. I can imagine the waste of time involved in that, let the select committee be ever so conscientious. All the kerbstone harbour authorities in the State would present themselves to give evidence.

Mr. Angelo: And they would come from port and starboard.

The PREMIER: They would come from Carnarvon, Port Hedland and Wyndham—from every port around the coast.

Mr. Angelo: Every important port.

The PREMIER: The Chamber of Commerce at Albany would come up to show that the harbour ought to be built at Albany and not at Fremantle.

Hon. G. Taylor: Or extended down there from the outer harbour.

The PREMIER: All those authorities who have been filling the columns of the newspapers for months past would be coming forward to give evidence. The printed evidence would stand a foot high, and to begin with would scare off anyone from looking at the proposition. Let us do the common sense thing, and agree to have a further investigation by someone qualified by his standing and training to express an opinion. I do not say this offensively, but I do think it would be reducing the whole question of harbour extension to a farce if we appointed a select committee.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You cannot say that the submission of any question to a select committee is a farce.

The PREMIER: I am dealing with this particular question.

Mr. Angelo: A highly technical one.

The PREMIER: I have expressed the opinion, formed from my experience in the House extending over many years, that in a great majority of cases select committees accomplish nothing and do no good. As a rule they carry no weight.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You have voted for a few of them.

The PREMIER: Yes, as the hon. member knows, with the object of conveniently shelving a question, very often, or getting it out of the way. Whilst both of us have voted for the appointment of select committees we have religiously kept off them ourselves. That is the position that would be created here. If after receiving the report of another engineer, the House should still require a further investigation to be made, that would be the time for us to take action, but not now.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You did not announce that you would submit the scheme for further investigation.

The PREMIER: We have never announced our opposition to any further inquiry. From the very beginning we have never said, "This is the scheme. We have embraced it. We will listen to nothing else."

Hon. G. Taylor: You have not yet put the whole scheme before us.

The PREMIER: We had not reached the stage when it was necessary to make a further pronouncement upon it. Neither the Minister for Works nor I have ever expressed opposition to any further investigation. It has always been open for further investigation, but we had not reached

the stage when that was necessary. We have never entertained any idea of an investigation by a select committee, or a board of engineers, as suggested by the member for Gascoyne. An investigation by a single engineer was in our minds all along.

Mr. Stubbs: What about the rumour that the line to Robb's Jetty was the first step towards the Stileman scheme?

Mr. Thomson: The Minister for Works said it was. That is in "Hansard."

The PREMIER: That has not determined the matter.

Mr. Thomson: The Government accepted the scheme.

The PREMIER: Last session the Minister for Works gave an assurance to the House that a further opportunity would be given to members to consider the whole question. He most distinctly gave that assurance.

Mr. Thomson: But the Government accepted the scheme.

The PREMIER: Of course the Government have accepted it.

Mr. Thomson: Then that is correct.

The PREMIER: I have not got up to say we have not accepted it. We as a Government have accepted it.

Mr. Thomson: No one is taking any exception to that.

The PREMIER: The responsibility was ours to take some stand.

Mr. Thomson: Of course!

The PREMIER: We could not come down and throw the scheme upon the Table of the House and say, "Here is a scheme. We have no opinion ourselves concerning it. Please tell us what you think about it."

Mr. Thomson: That would be absurd.

The PREMIER: Of course. The whole position will be best served at this stage by allowing the investigation proposed by the Government. I am not taking exception to the motion moved by the hon. member, but I think at this stage an investigation along the lines suggested by the Government is the proper one and the better one to take. Later on, if the House is not satisfied, it may take any action that may be deemed desirable.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) [8.40]: The motion asks that no further action shall be taken in this matter until the Stileman scheme has been investigated by a select committee. I have had some experience of select committees, and I do not

think one on this question would prove of very great value if appointed. The Leader of the Country Party would be well advised to withdraw his motion in view of the statements that have been made by the Premier and the Minister for Works. The Government do not intend to confine themselves to the Commonwealth, but are going to search wherever they can to obtain the most competent engineer available to go into this scheme and report upon it. I daresay much will depend upon the instructions that the engineer in question receives from the Government. I hope he will receive instructions to give his opinion as to what scheme he favours. We should know what he considers is the most suitable place for a harbour at Fremantle, apart from the reports that have already been furnished. He could of course go into those reports.

The Premier: He would do so.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: He may say that we can improve matters by doing this, that and the other. I should think he would have power to recommend what he thought best. This question should be discussed without any effort to depreciate or sully the capacity of any competent engineer, whether he be Mr. Stileman, Sir George Buchanan, or any other. Engineers have been discussed by members of this House in a manner which, in my opinion, did not tend either towards the carrying of the motion or its rejection. I must say that the Leader of the Country Party indulged in a great deal of research work upon these reports. He certainly placed before the House a synopsis of what he gathered. After the speech in favour of the motion had been made the Minister came forward and replied with a very carefully prepared speech, largely, as he said himself, representing the opinions of the Engineer-in-Chief. There is no doubt Mr. Stileman put up a good case in defence of his scheme, while the Minister in the course of his speech in defence of it, also did very well. I would say, without endeavouring to irritate the Minister, that he spoilt a good speech by allowing his feelings to carry him away, and by being rather severe on Sir George Buchanan. That is only my opinion.

Mr. Lutey: He only gave him a light tap.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is not my purpose to condemn Mr. Stileman. I know nothing about that officer. I am satisfied that when the Government appointed him they had every confidence in his being able to hold the position. Naturally they are prepared

to accept his scheme. He is employed to do this work. Their responsibility in the matter is not very great. Governments come and go. If the Government act upon the report of an engineer, and he fails to carry out the terms of that report, and we spend a lot of money, it is the State that loses. We lost about £211,000 on the graving dock at Fremantle.

The Minister for Works: It was £230,000.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I remember attacking that scheme in 1907, and again in 1909. The Premier will remember the occasion.

The Premier: I was numbered amongst those who opposed that scheme.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I think the Premier voted on the side that I was upholding. We put up a most reasonable case against the expenditure, but the only result was the loss of £200,000 odd to the State. The Minister for Works of the day told me personally, by way of interjection, that he was taking the responsibility and that the Government were taking the responsibility. I replied, "I would like the Engineer-in-Chief, who has advised the Government, to take the responsibility; and if he fails, let us get rid of that gentleman and obtain the services of someone on whom we can depend."

The Premier: The trouble was that the Government of the day took the responsibility without having the backing of the Engineer-in-Chief for the scheme.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: We were led to believe they had that backing. I have here the reference to the Minister's statement that he was taking the responsibility on the advice of his Engineer-in-Chief. What was the value of the responsibility which the Minister took on that occasion? And if this scheme fails, the present Minister will have no more actual responsibility than the Minister of the past. The motion seeks further inquiry. In my opinion, an inquiry of the nature suggested by the motion will, however, be of no value. I may be wrong, but that is my view. The Minister for Works and the Government have promised to search the earth's surface, so to speak, for the most capable engineer to advise on the matter. I understand that they are prepared to give him a free hand to suggest what he, as a highly qualified man, thinks is the best position in which to place the harbour. We cannot go far wrong in those circumstances. I am sorry that so much heat has been imported into the debate. In Parliament more especially, one gets into the habit of pressing one's view, though in

all good-faith, even to the extent of damaging reputations which men have taken years to gain. I think you will agree with me, Mr. Speaker, that the longer one is in Parliament the more reluctant one becomes to adopt such a method. The member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) has served his purpose of obtaining a full-dress debate on the subject. Last session, when the House was asked to vote £2,000 for preliminaries such as the taking of soundings and the preparing of a report, the Minister told members that they would not be committing themselves wholly to the support of the main scheme, because that scheme involved the expenditure of millions as against the £2,000 required to meet preliminary expenses. The money was voted; I think I supported the Government.

The Premier: There was no opposition, but every member did not feel that he was committing himself.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: No. The Minister for Works told us that before the scheme was proceeded with, it would be submitted to Parliament for discussion. As a matter of fact, the scheme has never yet been submitted to Parliament. It is impossible to debate the scheme fairly without seeing it. Some members, however, have gone so far as utterly to condemn Mr. Stileman, or at least to pit someone else against him. This raised the wrath of the Minister for Works, who came forward to defend the stand he had taken. I hope the Leader of the Country Party will withdraw the motion, resting satisfied with what he has achieved. We shall have a most competent engineer to investigate the scheme. A select committee would merely call persons interested, persons living in Fremantle. The witnesses would be bound to come from Fremantle. The mayor would be called first, and he would know all about the matter. Then would come several councillors.

The Premier: Whose properties would be affected.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: As soon as the evidence had been placed before the select committee, people would say that this gentleman owned property at such and such a place, and that gentleman at some other place. It is no use winking at things and trying to deceive ourselves. If the Commissioner of Railways put forward a proposal to remove the Katanning railway station to some other spot, the member for the district would be besieged with representations from people whose properties were

going to be affected by the removal. Would their evidence be worth while if the place to which the railway station was to be shifted was better in the interests of the district?

Mr. Thomson: There might be a proposal to shift the station in the interests of the department, and not in the interests of the district.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Fremantle harbour is to be placed where it will prove of most advantage to the commerce and shipping of the State. I know these select committees, and I know who comes along to give evidence. Most warmth is put into the demand for a select committee when some aggrieved person has put up what seems a really good case to be brought forward by an hon. member. On the evidence before him, that hon. member does his very utmost, and the House becomes sympathetic and says, "Yes, let us grant an inquiry." A select committee is capable of inquiring into a matter of that kind. But this subject is above laymen altogether. I hope the mover will withdraw the motion and accept the Government's assurance that the question will be investigated by the highest authority they can find.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning—in reply) [8.53]: Judging from some of the criticisms that have been offered, it would almost seem as if I had a personal motive in asking for further inquiry. My justification, however, is contained in the report of the Engineer-in-Chief, which refers to the fact that 75 per cent. of the cargo exported from Western Australia and 25 per cent. of the total cargo handled in the Fremantle harbour consists of primary products. At a combined meeting of the party which I have the honour to lead, 15 out of 16 representatives being present, it was resolved that further inquiry should be made into the proposed extension of the Fremantle harbour. In proposing the motion I endeavoured to indicate clearly to the House that I had no desire to criticise either Mr. Stileman or the Government. I was merely animated, as were the party behind me, by a sincere desire to ensure that the best possible scheme for the future development of the Fremantle harbour should be adopted. It is a matter of some regret to me that the Minister, in the course of his speech, conveyed an impression that I was acting as the mouthpiece of Mr. Stevens, the secretary of the

Fremantle Harbour Trust. Indeed, the Premier said by way of interjection that if a select committee were appointed, its findings would be based on the evidence that Mr. Stevens would give. The hon. gentleman added that he knew a good deal of what was going on. In common justice to Mr. Stevens and to myself I make the statement, which I am prepared to repeat on oath, that I never saw or met Mr. Stevens, or had any communication with him, until I came in contact with him on the day when the Parliamentary section publicly inspected the Fremantle harbour. That fact shows the unfairness of the Minister for Works and the Premier in suggesting that I spoke in this House as the mouthpiece of the Fremantle Harbour Trust. I shall not enter into the question of my supposed bias. To me personally it is a matter of absolute indifference how the Fremantle harbour is developed, because my port, the port which supplies the wants of my district, is Albany. I want to see Albany developed. Therefore I have not approached the subject of the motion in any parochial spirit.

Hon. G. Taylor: We have always heard in this House that anything connected with Fremantle is a national question.

Mr. THOMSON: To me personally it does not matter whether Fremantle gets an outside harbour or one at Rocky Bay. However, I would have been lacking in my duty as a public man if I had not heeded the notes of warning sounded in this Chamber and elsewhere as to the position in which the proposed bridge is to be placed. When introducing the Leighton-Robb's Jetty Railway Bill the Minister expressed himself clearly and definitely—

This is a very small Bill, but it involves highly important issues, and carries with it a very substantial expenditure. In it we provide for the deviation of the railway that now serves Fremantle to the site of the suggested bridge over the Swan River, as recommended by the Engineer-in-Chief in his report on the bridge and the suggested improvements to the Fremantle harbour. So the Bill carries with it the acceptance by the Government of the Engineer-in-Chief's report.

That statement, I contend, fully justifies the House in asking that further inquiry be made. The Leader of the Opposition, when speaking on this motion, said that last year was the time I should have applied for a select committee.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No.

Mr. THOMSON: Well, that it would have been better if I had done so.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No.

Mr. THOMSON: In the course of this debate somebody said that when the Bill was first introduced was the time to ask for a select committee.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I did not say that.

Mr. THOMSON: I am sorry for the mistake. I did not make any notes, because I intended to be very brief in replying. However, I personally walked across the floor of the Chamber last session to ask the Minister for Works whether he would grant a select committee to make further inquiry into this matter. That was long before there was any report from the Harbour Trust, and long before we knew the opinions of that body or of any other section of the community. I felt that in a matter of such importance we should have an opportunity to collect evidence. The Minister for Works will correct me if I am wrong in my statements. I know that he, like myself, is man enough to stand up to what he has said. His reply to me was that it would be a piece of gross impertinence for this Chamber to ask that a select committee should be appointed to sit in judgment upon the Engineer-in-Chief of Western Australia.

The Minister for Works: I said, for laymen to do so.

Mr. THOMSON: I am quoting the statement only to show that last year the Minister for Works had made up his mind that as far as he and the Government were concerned, it was finally and definitely decided that—

The Minister for Works: Not at all. I spoke of an inquiry by laymen.

Mr. THOMSON: That the Government had finally and definitely accepted the scheme. And of course they had done that. There is tangible proof that they had accepted the Engineer-in-Chief's scheme, for they brought down a proposal to Parliament to sanction the expenditure of £2,000 on essential preliminary work, and also to give the Government authority to do what was necessary in connection with the resumption of land. I mention that point to show that my attitude now is consistent with that which I adopted last year. My only desire has been to do what is best in the interests of the State. I regret that the Minister's reply was somewhat contrary to mine in tone. I endeavoured to be fair and impartial

in my criticism of the scheme and owing to my desire to be as brief as possible, I asked the House to believe, if I said anything or omitted anything that could possibly be regarded as a reflection upon the Engineer-in-Chief, it would be unintentional and I asked members to exonerate me from any such intention. I regret that the Minister went out of his way to attack Sir George Buchanan, an eminent engineer whose report we have had the opportunity of comparing with that presented by the Engineer-in-Chief. It is true that Sir George Buchanan's report was not as full as that of the Engineer-in-Chief, but the former was never asked to present a full and detailed report, such as we would expect from our own Engineer-in-Chief, who was asked to prepare a full and definite scheme.

The Minister for Works: Sir George Buchanan went into figures.

Mr. THOMSON: But he did not go into the details we would expect from the Engineer-in-Chief.

The Minister for Works: He went into figures regarding the wharves.

Mr. THOMSON: That is so.

The Minister for Works: And he provided nothing for dredging!

Mr. THOMSON: Quite so, but we could not expect from Sir George Buchanan the same complete and detailed report that we are justified in expecting from our Engineer-in-Chief.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The tidal question that has cropped up lately is the great point.

Mr. THOMSON: All I ask is that there shall be further inquiry. The necessity for that has been clearly demonstrated by the statements of the Minister himself when he referred to the railway question. His statements then showed how essential it is that we should have further information. In the course of his remarks the Minister said, when referring to what took place regarding the presentation of the railway proposal—

He submits those plans as merely conveying an idea. There is no trouble as regards removal of the line a mile or two either way to get over any difficulties in that respect. On that point there should not be much controversy between the contending parties. Mr. Stileman already has his engineers out to see whether a better approach can be obtained.

The Minister says it is absurd for laymen to put up their opinions against those of the Engineer-in-Chief, but we have had presented to us a definite scheme by Mr. Stile-

man. The Government asked for the expenditure of £2,000 so that they could investigate the condition of the river bed to ascertain whether a secure foundation could be obtained for the bridge. I certainly took it at the time that proof that the scheme was a definite one was to be found in the fact that Mr. Stileman set out that the bridge was to be taken from Bruce-street across the river. If, however, the line can be deviated a mile one way or the other, as the Minister stated, it emphasises the necessity for a closer and more thorough investigation than apparently has been undertaken to date. There was no doubt in my mind at the time that the Engineer-in-Chief had arrived at a definite decision that the bridge would be taken from Bruce-street. I may be pardoned if I accuse the Government of displaying a certain amount of bias in arriving at a decision on this important developmental scheme now under discussion. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown) asked the Minister the following question:—

Is it his intention to lay on the Table of the House, for the information of members, the papers containing the scheme submitted by Mr. Stevens to the Fremantle Harbour Trust, for extensions to the harbour, also the latest comments of the Harbour Trust Commissioners and reply to Mr. Stileman's scheme, and the pilots' reply to Mr. Stileman.

The Minister for Works: How did he know that Mr. Stevens had furnished a report?

Mr. THOMSON: When I was speaking, the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) interjected that later information was available, and to-night when he was speaking, that hon. member quoted some of the very information that the member for Pingelly and I were desirous of having placed before the House.

The Minister for Works: That was not from Mr. Stevens' report at all! As I told you at the time, you asked for Mr. Stevens' report although it had not been in my hands an hour and a half!

Mr. THOMSON: That is not correct.

The Minister for Works: It is, and I told you so at the time.

Mr. THOMSON: I repeat the statement that I made at an earlier stage. I have never met Mr. Stevens, and if he were here now, I do not think I would know him. I have never received a single communication from that gentleman concerning the Fremantle harbour. The only indication we

had that later information was available was gained when I was reading from the reports submitted by the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners and the pilots, at which stage the member for Fremantle interjected that there were later reports.

The Minister for Works: That was regarding the pilots' reply, and had nothing to do with the Harbour Trust.

Mr. THOMSON: I can only say that I took it he was referring to the pilots and to the Harbour Trust Commissioners as well. What was the reply the Minister made to the member for Pingelly? It was as follows:—

For the reason that the Government cannot give serious consideration to the opinions of a man who has had only a clerical training, in regard to proposals submitted by a highly qualified engineer, it is considered that no good purpose could be served by laying the papers referred to on the Table of the House.

In other words, the Government in their reply refused to give the members of this Chamber an opportunity to peruse the latest replies of the Harbour Trust Commissioners and of the pilots, to the Engineer-in-Chief's statement upon their criticisms. In the circumstances, I think I am perfectly justified in saying that rather than that I am biassed, the Government themselves are biassed. If Parliament had had the advantage of the information furnished by the men who have been the practical administrators of the Fremantle harbour for many years and by those who have brought the ships in and taken them out of the harbour, it would have assisted us in dealing with this question. Let me again quote the Minister—

The Government have been asked to adopt the ideas advanced by the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners, but we cannot subscribe to that proposition. The Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners are all laymen, not one of them is an engineer. When they ask the Government to submit the people of this State to the responsibility of undertaking an engineering proposition involving millions of money merely on the advice of laymen, they ask us to do the impossible.

I admit quite frankly that I have never asked the Government to accept the opinions of laymen, and certainly I have never asked them to accept the opinions of the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners. If Parliament agreed to the appointment of a select committee, the evidence that would be collected would include information submitted

by the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners and by the pilots, as well as by others concerned. Surely the evidence that such a committee could procure, would be of value and assistance to the engineer who may be asked to investigate the position later on. However, we have apparently a new order of procedure. The Engineer-in-Chief is to have authority to construct the work, and the practical men who will have to administer the harbour will be considered only after that work is completed. The Minister pointed out, with a great deal of pleasure, that Sir George Buchanan had not provided for a bridge in connection with his scheme.

The Minister for Works: I said that in his estimates he had not provided for the cost.

Mr. THOMSON: During the course of his remarks, the Minister gave the House a lengthy, interesting and instructive address upon the outer harbour scheme, which is the proposal formulated by the Engineer-in-Chief. As I told the Minister, I consider the most instructive time I have ever spent in this House was that occupied by the Minister in his address, which had been skillfully and carefully prepared by the Engineer-in-Chief.

Mr. Angelo: I thought it was the Minister's own prepared speech!

Mr. THOMSON: It has been stated that Sir George Buchanan omitted to tell us what the bridge he regarded as essential, would cost to the State. Yet when the Minister went into so much detail regarding the outer harbour scheme that Mr. Stileman has propounded he did not tell us what that scheme would cost!

The Minister for Works: Mr. Stileman said he had not gone into the question of costs.

Mr. THOMSON: There you are!

The Minister for Works: What is the good of giving an estimate of the cost for such a work now, when the work may not be undertaken for 20 years? That shows what a bad case you have.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. THOMSON: I am just drawing attention to that fact.

The Minister for Works: You have been furnished with detailed costs for the work that is to be gone on with now. The bridge is the first thing that will have to be built,

and Sir George Buchanan in his estimates did not include any provision for a bridge.

Mr. THOMSON: We are discussing one of the most important subjects it has ever been my lot to consider since I have been in the House. The future development of the harbour means an expenditure of many millions of pounds; yet when we ask what is to be the cost of the outer harbour we are told that we shall get that information when the harbour is about to be constructed. The main reason why I have asked for this further inquiry is the fact that the Government have adopted the Engineer-in-Chief's proposal to place a new bridge above the Fremantle road-bridge, which means that they are effectually committing the State to the outer harbour scheme, although we do not know how much it is going to cost. The Government stand condemned when the Minister for Works says they have never taken that phase of the scheme into consideration.

The Minister for Works: Nonsense!

Mr. THOMSON: It shows the necessity for a further and more searching inquiry than apparently has been given to the scheme thus far. The House is entitled to know, by an independent engineer's check of the figures and of the scheme, the cost of the scheme, plus the outer harbour with all necessary expenditure. Then, as the State progresses, we shall add to that scheme year by year until we arrive at its ultimate completion. The Government have asked the Engineer-in-Chief to prepare a comprehensive railway scheme. Why? Because they desire to avoid the blunders of the past, which resulted in pushing out railways here and there. So they have asked for a comprehensive railway scheme to which they can work for many years to come. Yet when we get a scheme of harbour extension, involving many millions of pounds, all we are asked to do is to authorise the construction of a bridge that will prevent the utilisation of the Rocky Bay scheme if, at a later stage, that should be considered the better one. I ask that we should have a full and complete estimate of the cost of the Stileman scheme. We should also have the estimated cost of Sir George Buchanan's scheme as outlined in his report, with comparisons of facilities provided for shipping and other factors in the two schemes. Then there are other schemes that might be considered.

There was that scheme introduced into the House many years ago by Lord Forrest, a scheme extending down to Robb's Jetty. Inquiries might well be made as to whether that scheme would be practicable for the bulk handling of wheat and the sending away of our wool and other heavy export cargoes. The Minister for Works charged me with stating that the Government had no option but to accept their Engineer-in-Chief's report. These were the Minister's own words: "I feel that the case that has been submitted, the information contained in Mr. Stileman's original report, plus the facts I have been able to present to the House, will justify the recommendations that Mr. Stileman has made to the Government." If that is not an absolute statement that they have accepted the scheme, what is it? I cannot see how any Government, any Minister, could do other than feel morally bound to accept the scheme submitted by the Engineer-in-Chief. The Minister for Works suggested that when I said a select committee would assist the Government, I inferred that if a few of us examined this scheme, we would supply all the information that our highly qualified official could not supply. I never claimed anything of the sort. But I do say we require more information than apparently the Minister is prepared to give us. The Minister for Works said—and I do not claim any credit for having brought this about—"At the present moment we are inquiring with a view to securing the services of a highly qualified consulting engineer to confer with the Engineer-in-Chief upon his scheme." If that statement made by the Minister last Wednesday is put into effect, I do not think it will give us the careful consideration we think necessary for the two schemes proposed. For, after all, it means that we are going to ask a highly qualified engineer to come here to confer with Mr. Stileman upon his scheme. I will be frank and say that if that is all this highly qualified consulting engineer is going to do, the engaging of him will be a waste of money. If that is all that is to be done, I am doubtful whether we are going to achieve what we hoped for. I appreciate that we have accomplished part of what we set out to do, namely, that a consulting engineer's opinion is to be sought. But I must confess—and I hope the Minister will not think I am approaching it from any hypercritical standpoint—I do not think

from the Minister's statement that opportunity will be given to place the opinions and views of others before the consulting engineer. In my opinion the evidence and experience of the Fremantle Harbour Trust members and officials should be of value to the gentleman who will be asked to give an opinion. Also I think the practical experience of the pilots should have consideration. In addition, I hold that the naval authorities of the Commonwealth should be requested to submit evidence. For it is essential that, sooner or later, a dock be provided on the west coast of Australia. Although Sir George Buchanan stated that a dock could be constructed in the river, I fail to find in the Engineer-in-Chief's report any mention of a dock. So I maintain we should have the benefit of the opinion of the naval authorities before we embark on this outer harbour scheme. Despite a statement made by the Premier, I want to repeat that some of the select committees appointed by this House have performed very useful functions. If the Premier is desirous of improving the methods of appointing select committees, the position is entirely in his hands. There is no reason why we should not get a committee of men quite capable of sitting and collecting evidence on this subject. Ministers have said it is absurd for a layman to ask that we should go into the views expressed by the Engineer-in-Chief. May I point out that years ago in this House the Premier himself was very keen on the appointment of a public works committee. I am sorry he is not in the House now.

Mr. Kenneally: He is very lucky.

Mr. THOMSON: I presume the hon. member will give his leader credit for being sincere. Since the Premier made a statement in 1921, I hope the hon. member will give him the credit of being prepared to stand by it.

Mr. Kenneally: It has remained for the hon. member to question that.

Mr. THOMSON: It is you who are questioning it. I am not. I never raised the question at all. On page 1544 of "Hansard" of the 8th November, 1921, it is shown that the Premier, in supporting the appointment of a public works committee, said this—

Thus the House will gain a more direct control over the finances, not only as regards the expenditure of public money on new public works, but also as regards the management of various departments and public utilities. To-day the House has no direct control, except insofar as it controls the Ministry.

And on page 1545 of the same volume of "Hansard" the Premier is thus reported—

I do not desire to indicate any such works, but had we had in the past a standing committee, such as is proposed by this Bill, the measure authorising the construction of the Fremantle dock would not have been enacted, and this State would have saved a quarter of a million pounds of public money, which has been thrown into the river.

That is the Premier's statement regarding the appointment of a public works committee, a committee composed of laymen of this House. In 1921 he considered that a committee of three from this House and two from another place would be fully qualified to review the whole of the financial and the departmental management of this State. There is a public works committee of the Commonwealth Parliament, and I understand there are similar committees in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia. By way of comparison I want to show the duties that fall upon such a committee, and those that would fall upon the shoulders of a select committee if appointed from this House to investigate the Fremantle harbour scheme. Part III. of the Commonwealth Act, headed "Powers of the committee," states—

The committee shall, subject to the provisions of this Act, consider and report upon every public work (except any work already authorised by Parliament or which is authorised during the present session, and except works for the naval or military defence of the Commonwealth exempted by Order in Council from the operation of the Act) to be executed after the passing of this Act (and whether such work is a continuation, completion, repair, reconstruction, extension or new work) in all cases where the estimated cost of completing the work exceeds twenty-five thousand pounds.

Hon. G. Taylor: When was that Act passed?

Mr. THOMSON: In 1913.

Hon. G. Taylor: Is that committee responsible for the wilful squandering of Federal money?

Mr. Griffiths: The committee has exposed a good deal of it—Jervis Bay for instance.

Mr. THOMSON: Some of the Federal expenditure comes under the exemption of works for naval or military defence and therefore the Public Works Committee had no control over it. The Commonwealth Act continues—

In considering and reporting on any work the committee shall have regard to—(a) the stated purpose thereof; (b) the necessity or advisability of carrying it out; and where the

work purports to be of a reproductive or revenue-producing character, the amount of revenue which it may reasonably be expected to produce; and (c) the present and prospective value of the work; and generally the committee shall in all cases take such measures and procure such information as may enable them to inform or satisfy the Parliament as to the expedience of carrying out the work.

The Act goes on to provide conditions precedent to commencing public works. That is my justification for asking for the appointment of a select committee on the question of the Fremantle harbour. Letter for letter and clause for clause this House in 1921 passed a similar Bill for the appointment of a public works committee, the Bill having been introduced by the member for Northam when he was Premier. When Mr. Scaddan was Premier, he on two occasions submitted a Bill for a similar purpose and it was passed by this House, but when it went to another place it unfortunately was defeated. I quote that to show that what I am asking is nothing new. I am not suggesting suddenly that laymen of this House should be invited to express an opinion on such a vital matter. For it there is a precedent in all the other Parliaments and we have the precedent that in this House on three occasions a Bill was passed for the appointment of a public works committee "to take such measures and procure such information as may enable them to inform or satisfy the Parliament as to the expedience of carrying out the work." That is sufficient to show that in moving this motion I was not animated by any personal motives. Let me now quote what took place in this House on the 6th January, 1892. Sir John Forrest, the then Premier, said—

I now rise to move, "That this House approves of the scheme of harbour improvement for the port of Fremantle as proposed by the Government, which includes opening a passage through the Success Bank into Owen Anchorage, the construction of a wharf at or near Catherine Point, and a connection by railway from such wharf to the Customs House and goods shed at Fremantle in accordance with the plans and sections on the Table of the House."

After the Premier had submitted that motion, Mr. Pearse, the then member for North Fremantle, secured the adjournment of the debate. On the following day Mr. Pearse moved for the appointment of a joint select committee and the select committee was appointed. Consequently, I am not asking for anything new when I request that this matter be submitted to a select

committee of this House. According to the records, after the select committee had concluded the inquiry, it was moved by Mr. Harper and seconded by Mr. Pearse—

That the evidence given and opinions expressed to this committee by the engineers and nautical authorities consulted—

May I emphasise the reference to the nautical authorities and remind the House that they have not been consulted in this matter at all.

—point strongly to the superior advantages of opening the mouth of the River Swan over any other project, and this committee is therefore of opinion that the scheme as recommended by the Engineer-in-Chief and shown on drawing P.W.D. 1468 should be adopted.

That was the finding of the select committee. What did Sir John Forrest say when, on the 9th March—three months later—he introduced a Bill for the construction of the Fremantle harbour works. He stated, *inter alia*—

I am very glad indeed that our proposal did not meet with the concurrence of hon. members, and also did not meet with the concurrence of the people of the country. I admit most freely that I was under an erroneous impression as to the cost of the works necessary to construct a breakwater at Fremantle.

Thus, in asking for the appointment of a select committee, I am asking nothing new. In 1892 in the Legislative Assembly of this State, on the question of the inception of harbour works at Fremantle, it was not considered beneath the dignity of the Government to appoint a joint select committee composed of members of both Houses. As I have shown, the select committee actually reversed the decision at which the Government had previously arrived. Surely that is sufficient justification for the action I have taken on this occasion! Unfortunately, efforts have been made by the Minister and others to infer that I was actuated purely by personal motives. As I stated in my opening remarks, I had no ulterior motive in submitting the motion. My desire was to do what was best in the interests of the State. I am pleased that as a result of the discussion that has taken place, we have a definite assurance from the Government that further inquiry will be made. Still, I consider we are not going to get the full and sufficient inquiry necessary, that is if we may judge of the commission that is to be handed to the consulting engineer by the statement of the Minister when replying to me. I offer no apology for having intro-

duced the motion. By doing so I have done my duty to the State, and I have endeavoured, as far as is humanly possible, to steer absolutely clear of personal criticism either of the Government or of any official or engineer. My whole desire is to ensure that the future development of the Fremantle harbour will be carried out on lines calculated to serve the State to the best advantage. I regret that the Government apparently have made this a party question, whereas I introduced the motion from a non-party point of view.

The Premier: When did the Government make it a party question?

Mr. THOMSON: I am only assuming they have done so.

The Minister for Works: You made an admission that the resolution was carried at your party meeting.

Mr. THOMSON: But on the distinct understanding that it was to be approached from a national and not from a party point of view. There are members sitting on the Government side of the House who have adversely criticised the proposed scheme, and yet we find they have now changed their minds. Apparently—I do not say definitely—the Government have made it a party question.

The Premier: This motion was never discussed or mentioned at a party meeting of ours, but it was decided at a party meeting of yours.

Mr. Griffiths: That it should be entirely non-party.

The Premier: You pledged yourselves to vote for the motion. There is no one on our side pledged to vote against it.

Mr. THOMSON: We shall give them an opportunity to show where they stand.

The Premier: I do not care about the opportunity. I am speaking the truth when I say it was never discussed by our party.

Mr. THOMSON: I have no desire to doubt the word of the Premier, but I wish he would give me credit for equal sincerity.

Question put and declared negatived.

Mr. Thomson: I think we had better have a division.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the hon. member desire a division?

Mr. Thomson: Never mind.

Question thus negatived.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH SUPER-ANNUATION FUND.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 12th September of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair ;Mr. Mann in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Extension of powers to make by-laws:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I ask the hon. member to agree to report progress. There are certain phases that I wish to have examined and on which I wish to get the views of the department before we proceed further. I undertake to be ready to proceed on Wednesday next.

Progress reported.

BILL—DOG ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from 12th September: Mr. Lutey in the Chair; Mr. Lindsay in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 5:

Mr. THOMSON: The hon. member who is in charge of this Bill is unavoidably absent to-night, and I think this measure ought to be postponed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 9.38 p.m.