

Legislative Council,*Tuesday, 28th October, 1930.*

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

QUESTION—FEDERAL DISABILITIES GRANT.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: 1, What amount of financial assistance has this State received from the Commonwealth Government as a disabilities grant for each year, since this grant was authorised by the Federal Parliament? 2, Of that total, how much was allocated to assist gold mining, and when was it paid? 3, How was the money distributed, and to whom—(a) by way of a grant; (b) by way of loan bearing interest; (c) by way of payment of third schedule premiums under the Workers' Compensation Act. 4, Is the fund exhausted; if not, what is the position of the fund at the present time? 5, On what dates were the first and last payments made?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1, 1926-27, £565,905; 1927-28, £300,000; 1928-29, £300,000; 1929-30, £300,000; 1930-31 (3 months), £75,000; total, £1,540,905. 2, £165,905 on the 1926-27 Estimates. 3 (a), Diamond Drilling Co. contract survey of Golden Mile, sundry persons. £22,844; (b) Sons of Gwalia, Ltd., Golden Horseshoe Co., bearing interest, £20,080; Sons of Gwalia, not bearing interest, £40,000; (c) £79,630, State Accident Insurance Office. 4, No. There is a balance of £8,083 18s. 9d. 5, March, 1926, and September, 1930.

MOTION—COLLIE POWER SCHEME.

HON. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan)
[4.37]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the best interests of the State will be served by installing any new units for the production of electric power at Collie instead of at East Perth.

I tabled this motion in consequence of a report that appeared in the "West Australian" on the 15th of this month, from Mr. Taylor, the Manager of the Electric Power Station at East Perth. I have seen fit to bring this matter forward in order that the Government may make some investigation and inquiry before spending any more money on plant and equipment at East Perth.

Hon Sir William Lathlain: Hear, hear!

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The purport of the report to which I refer is that most of the units at present at East Perth are obsolete or worn out. They are not economical, and for two years Mr. Taylor has been urging the expenditure of £300,000 on the installation of a new unit. He tells us that the new units are more economical to work, and that during the year 1928-29 there was a saving in coal consumption of £18,000, owing to the installation of the latest type of unit. He is pressing for the installation of a further unit at East Perth. I think, however, we ought to look a little ahead and see whether it is not advisable to go to Collie so that we could have a large national scheme, giving cheap power not only to the people of Perth, but also to settlers between Perth and Collie; and perhaps later on, instead of buying new pumps for the nearest pumping stations, we could use electricity generated from our own coal for that purpose. Mr. Taylor tells us that the Collie scheme would involve an expenditure of 1½ million pounds. He indicates that if we continue to pay for coal at the present rate, and pay the £82,000 which would be the interest on the 1½ million pounds I have just mentioned, we would still be to the bad £13,000 on the interest account, as against the cost of the haulage of coal. But he does not take into account the haulage on the coal for the new unit. We have been told quite often that it does not pay the railways to carry coal. We can, therefore, leave out the railways,

for apparently they make no profit on the transaction. Whether they do the work or not matters little. Perhaps it may not involve them in quite so much loss. This matter was brought up last session by Mr. Ewing. After some debate, the Chief Secretary replied in a speech which no doubt was furnished to him by Mr. Taylor. I do not think he will challenge that statement, for he could not otherwise have become possessed of the information. Mr. Drew set out that it was impracticable to go to Collie now for various reasons. One reason was that the line would be quite unprotected, and that it might be injured by stray bullets, by storms, or breakdowns. The Canadians have very long transmission lines. I do not think they use fewer bullets in America than we do, nor do they have less severe storms than we do. In Canada the storms are more severe than they are here, as they come down from the North Pole. That is the danger that he suggests now, though I do not think this can carry any weight with us. In the speech which Mr. Drew delivered on behalf of Mr. Taylor, he pointed out that the Melbourne-Yallourn scheme was protected by a station at Newport. We could still keep the units available at East Perth if we want any protection. It would not pay to remove them, and they could be used as a subsidiary station. He also said that against the saving of .236d. per unit which represents the haulage of coal, the transmission line would cost £500,000 in addition to a million for a new power station. In other words the Collie scheme complete would cost 1½ million pounds. The interest, he said, would amount to £82,000, and the freight on coal in 1929 amounted to £68,596; therefore, the haulage cost of coal would be £13,904 less than the interest on the money. I happened to be a member of the select committee which was appointed in 1922 to go into the question of the electricity supply, for the city of Perth and other places, by the Government. Mr. Taylor was a witness before the committee. He told a different story then. He said—

I am not averse to transmission from Collie. Indeed I would favour it, but a power station at Collie with a transmission line to Perth would cost 1½ millions. We could not have fewer than two turbines at Collie. They must be 15,000 kilowatt sets; but if I could see

50,000,000 or 100,000,000 units being consumed ahead I would ask the Government for 1½ millions of money to go to Collie.

That was what he said in 1922. From the report that has been tabled, we find that already the consumption is 88,489,000 units, so that he has got nearly 100,000,000 units at the present time. Certainly he has got more than the 50,000,000 units, and by the time he gets the new set installed, he will have over 100,000,000 units. Therefore, on Mr. Taylor's own showing in 1922, he should recommend the Government to instal the new unit at Collie instead of at East Perth.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: At what cost?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: At a cost of £1,500,000.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Where will you get that amount of money now?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The manager of the Electricity Supply Department, in his report last year, and again in his latest report, pressed the Government to immediately spend another £300,000 on the installation of an additional unit. I ask the Government at this period not to agree to Mr. Taylor's recommendation. It is perfectly true, as Mr. Taylor may point out, that the demand is in excess of the available supply of power, but I suggest that if that is so, Collie is the place where the new unit should be installed. The time is specially opportune because the price of copper is down to about £43 per ton, and all the machinery imported from England to-day is as low in price as it has ever been. Perhaps this is because the industry is subsidised by the Imperial Government.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It would be necessary to pay duty under the high tariff.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Mr. Taylor is hopeful that the machinery he desires will be admitted duty free. If he is successful, well and good. Personally I do not think the Federal Government will impose a high tariff on the importation of electrical machinery, seeing that no duty was imposed on the machinery required in Victoria, because no such machinery can be manufactured here.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But in these times the Federal Government are looking for every penny.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I will not take much more time in dealing with the motion, and will not discuss the merits of the whole question, except to say that on his own show-

ing as to the consumption of electric power, Mr. Taylor has admitted that Collie is the place to go to. The report submitted to us shows that the consumption he indicated has already been reached, and before the Government agree to spend another £300,000 in installing an additional unit at the East Perth power station, they should investigate the whole question, and ascertain whether it is not possible to instal a big national scheme at Collie. This is the chance of a lifetime, particularly as Mr. Taylor has pointed out that three of the units at East Perth are practically worn out, or obsolete, and in course of time will have to be renewed.

HON. SIR WILLIAM LATHLAIN (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.48]: I second the motion. I am glad that Mr. Lovekin has placed this matter before the House, because, in my opinion, it represents one of the most important problems the State will have to deal with in the near future. Two years ago I spoke in this House along similar lines. During my trip abroad I made extensive inquiries regarding what was taking place in other countries. I found that in Italy power is carried over tremendously high mountains, and over huge distances. They seem to have coped with the position with little difficulty. We will be asked to spend more money on the East Perth station, and I agree with Mr. Lovekin that we should carefully consider the position before we endorse any proposal for further expenditure at East Perth. Particularly should we consider the position seriously, seeing that we have in view the establishment of a power house at Collie for the generating of current to be supplied to the principal parts of the State. From time to time this matter has received the attention of experts. Some years ago a conference dealt with this technical question, and those who participated ridiculed the suggestion that we could transmit power over long distances. Nowadays when we see what is being done in other countries, we must appreciate the fact that the distance from Collie to other centres where power would be supplied is comparatively small indeed. I was so interested in this question that I consulted one of the greatest authorities on electricity supply in England, and he in turn introduced me to a notable expert on the subject. I went to Savoy House and secured the reports of our State Electricity Supply Department. When

I submitted these to the expert, he was astounded at the rapid increase in consumption of electric current in Western Australia. In addition to that, he informed me that something had taken place in connection with the electrical trade that was of great importance regarding long-distance transmission. He told me that a cable had been invented that was considerably cheaper than those formerly used. The question involved in the motion is one of the most technical that the House could deal with, and, in my opinion, the time is ripe for the Government to secure the services of the best expert available to investigate the position with a view to assuring that whatever is done in the future shall be on sound and economic lines. Many of us feel that the establishment of a large power scheme at Collie would result in cheaper supplies of electrical power being made available at Bunbury, Busselton, Albany and towns along the Great Southern Railway, as well as at Perth itself. However, it is such a technical question that the best expert advice should be secured in order to guide future action. I have nothing to say against the ability of Mr. Taylor, because I am not competent to judge, but I contend the question is one that should receive the serious consideration of hon. members. For years past we have added continually to the cost and capacity of the East Perth power station, so that it stands on the books as representing a huge sum of money, and there seems to be no finality as to the expenditure to be required in the future. The Government would be wise if they investigated the question, and secured expert advice regarding the possibility of generating power at Collie on a comprehensive scale. The problem warrants the serious and prompt attention of the Government. It is not possible to carry out a scheme of such a magnitude in a short period. In the meantime, we should not spend a large sum of money in providing a new unit at East Perth, in view of the suggestion that it would be more economical to have a modern and up-to-date generating plant established at Collie. This question has received serious consideration in England, and at present five large generating stations are being constructed in different parts of Great Britain with a view to doing away with the many small plants at present in use. While in reality that may not effect a saving in one

particular section, it will effect a large national saving. I can cite an instance in Western Australia bearing on that phase. At Bunbury the local authorities have installed a plant for generating electricity, and the fuel used is not our own coal, but imported oil.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Shame!

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: When we realise that practically all the small towns throughout the State are developing electrical power under different conditions, we must realise the serious national loss that is involved. Regarding the position at Collie, I hope that the rights the State held regarding water supplies and other phases are still intact. We dealt with that phase a couple of years ago, and I hope the position is sound from that standpoint. I regard the motion as one of national importance and of extreme urgency.

On motion by Minister for Country Water Supplies, debate adjourned.

MOTION—TRAFFIC ACT.

To Disallow Regulation.

Debate resumed from the 23rd October on the following motion by Hon. Sir William Lathlain:—

That the amendment to Regulation No. 230 (a) under the Traffic Act, 1919-26, published in the "Government Gazette" on 26th September, 1930, and laid on the Table of the House on the 1st October, 1930, be and is hereby disallowed.

HON. J. M. MACFARLANE (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.57]: In view of the statement made by the Leader of the House, I secured the adjournment of the debate on Sir William Lathlain's motion so that I might refer the Minister's remarks to those interested. I am pleased to be able to inform the Minister that, by and large, those concerned are in favour of them. They are a bit sceptical regarding the carrying out of some of the promises made, because in 1923 the then Minister for Railways, who happened to be the same person as the present holder of that portfolio, made a definite promise that there would be a 10-minute service in connection with the tramways, but no such service has been provided. Had that promise been carried out, the present difficulties that we are now discussing would not have arisen. The fact is appre-

ciated that it is proposed to extend the 3d section to Broadway and that there are to be two 1d. sections provided between Broadway and Bay View-terrace in Claremont. There is to be an accelerated service, and the daily trips are to be increased from 47 to 68. They are a bit sceptical about the accelerated service that has been promised, and they ask for an assurance from the Minister that that part of the programme will be provided.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: I give you that assurance.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I thank the Minister. The acceleration of the trip itself is of great importance and will be appreciated if carried out. There is another point. The regulation sets out that the taxis shall neither pick up nor drop passengers in certain sections. The Minister gave an assurance that the taxi drivers would be permitted to pick up on the outward journey between Broadway and Loch-street. Now they should know whether it will be possible under the regulation for them to drop passengers that are picked up on the other side of the Bay View-terrace tramline, that is, coming from Fremantle. That has not been stated. I am sure the Minister will find no difficulty in overcoming that part of it. It would be difficult to grant concessions to pick up passengers one way and not allow them to drop those passengers within that area. If these points are emphasised and carried out, it is felt that the Minister will have given the required attention to this question, and the position will be considered as a fair compromise. The suggestion is made that Sir William Lathlain might now withdraw the motion, the understanding being that the programme as indicated by the Leader of the House will be adhered to.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [5.3]: As Sir William Lathlain has achieved the object he set out to secure, and in view of the definite promise that has been made that the people in the districts concerned will receive a good service, I trust he will withdraw the motion. We at the Fremantle end have had a somewhat similar trouble during the last two or three years, and it was only after the Minister had the regulation gazetted which prevented the taxis picking up and setting down passengers in certain areas, that the tramway system was able to carry on. The position is similar in the matter we are now

discussing, but with a service of less than quarter-hourly and with the cheap sections outlined by the Minister, I think the residents in the particular area should be satisfied. There is the phase that it would have meant serious unemployment for some of those that are at present engaged on the tramways, and I understand that if these regulations had not been allowed to remain, it would have meant the dismissal of more from the tramways. With the new service outlined by the Minister, not only will those already engaged in the tramways be retained, but probably work will be found for extra men, which is a good thing in these bad times. Seeing that the extra service has been guaranteed and that penny sections will be allotted, I trust Sir William Lathlain will withdraw the motion and allow the regulation to stand.

HON. SIR WILLIAM LATHLAIN (Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [5.6]: I listened attentively to the remarks of the Leader of the House, and was very much impressed by them. One of the difficulties was that it would be impossible to pick up passengers in the particular area in question. That concession has been granted. Then again, there is to be an increase in the number of trams and additional facilities. Further, I am mindful of the obligations which the Claremont Council and the Claremont Road Board entered into when they agreed with the Government that they would do everything to assist the trams, provided the route was connected from Broadway to Mount's Bay-road. That having been done, the council are under a moral obligation to support the Government. I ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—EDUCATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd October.

HON. SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [5.8]: I have only a few words to say. I have listened to the remarks of those hon. members who are much more familiar with this question than am I, and when the Bill is in Committee I shall support the amendments that have been outlined.

HON. H. STEWART (South-East) [5.9]: It is my intention to support the second reading of the Bill, but at a later stage I am not going to be a party to putting further imposition on people owning their own vehicles and who desire to transport their own produce. Those people should at least be allowed to haul their own produce. They should not be debarred from doing that merely to defend the department which, in comparison, has done nothing to meet the difficulties from which agriculturists and pastoralists are suffering.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [5.10]: The Bill is essentially one for Committee. When it reaches that stage I hope there will be some modifications. Having at one time been a farmer, I endorse the remarks of Mr. Stewart and will take the opportunity to support that which will assist the owner of a motor vehicle to carry his own produce. An amendment of that kind is reasonable and should be agreed to by this House. I remember the time when there was no possibility of a farmer doing his own carting. Now farmers should be assisted to that extent, and in the case of a farmer who has his own motor vehicle, he should be allowed, if he so desires, to take his produce to the port.

Hon. J. Cornell: Owners of motor trucks to-day are offering to do that work for less than the cocky himself can do it.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: A lot of people work for practically nothing nowadays, in order to get food.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Do they work under award rates?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I cannot say. There is one thing about the motion that was withdrawn by Sir William Lathlain this afternoon that requires consideration in the Bill we are now discussing, and it is the fact,

that taxi drivers have had their license fees doubled, and their operations severely restricted. I hope the Minister will realise that even the tramway service set out in the schedule will not be adequate to meet the requirements of Nedlands and Claremont. The Minister has told us that there will be an average 15-minute service, but the proposed time-table provides for a 5-minute service at certain peak periods and even so, the residents will be heavily handicapped, inasmuch as there must be at certain times intervals up to 30 minutes to maintain the average 5 minutes schedule. Personally I still think that some consideration should be given to the taxi drivers, and that they should be allowed to run at stated periods and pick up and set down passengers in those periods. It is not a fair thing to double their fees and then cut off a big proportion of their remunerative picking up places. One wonders whether the authorities are trying to drive the taxis and charabanes off the road. The railway authorities deserve all the trouble they have got into in the way of loss of revenue by reason of the competition of the buses and taxis. It has been stated that the railway authorities propose to meet that competition by introducing a new type of train. As one who has watched this traffic closely, I consider that nothing but a five or seven minutes service between Fremantle and Perth will be of any value if it is desired to overtake the big business that the Metro buses are now doing between the city and the port. Then to institute such a service would cost the Railway Department an enormous sum of money. The Metro buses are providing a service, I should say, equal to anything of its kind in any part of the world. They provide a cheap and comfortable trip, and I would suggest—and this is a matter of supreme importance from the tourist point of view—that the State should give the necessary facilities for taxis and buses to go through the park to allow visitors to see some of the beauties of the city, instead of allowing them to travel by train and seeing from the carriage window everything that is unattractive.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The park roads would not stand that traffic.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The river road could be used. At the present time heavy traffic passes over it, but no taxis other

than those proceeding to Nedlands are allowed the right to use that thoroughfare. Unquestionably, if the Routes Advisory Board will agree to this suggestion, the taxi and bus services between Fremantle and Perth would be of great benefit in advertising the State. One wonders why the Metro buses and taxis are singled out for increased taxation while motor cars are left at the old rate. In another place the Government made a great point of the comparative cost of road maintenance and so forth, but no one can argue that the heavy maintenance cost of £9,000 annually is due to the Metro buses and the taxi service. In view of the enormous difference between the rates charged in the Old Country and those charged here on motor cars, it is fair to argue that all classes of transport should be asked to bear extra taxation in order to conserve the interests of the Railway Department. The responsibility of the State and of the people to the railways cannot be questioned, and most certainly the railways lose hundreds of thousands of pounds annually owing to the use of private motor cars. It is reasonable to ask the Government why, instead of increasing the load upon the workers, possibly in the shape of increased bus fares, all classes of people should not be required to bear the burden, particularly as the purchasers of motor cars are one of the main causes of loss in passenger receipts to the Railway Department. In another place it was stated by the Government that in England the fee on a Morris Cowley car is £10 as against £4 charged here, on the heavy Morris Oxford £12 as against £5 here, on a Ford car £17 as against £6, and on the Austin car £12 as against £5. One can understand the reasons for the heavy fees charged in the Old Country, and those reasons should hold good in Western Australia. Personally I do not think it possible to wean the people from motor transport service. If a man is wealthy enough, he buys a car and uses it. The worker, who cannot afford to buy a car, is entitled to the best and most modern means of transport, and therefore he uses a taxi or a bus. Why the bus should be singled out for increased taxation and the motor car left alone is something I should like the Leader of the House to explain. An argument used by the hon. gentleman for increasing fees on buses and taxis is the

amount paid by the tramway system and the percentages contributed by that system to local authorities. I fail to see why that money should be paid to the local authorities. When the trams enter the territory of a local authority, they are of great benefit to the community; and it is not justifiable to ask them to pay a huge sum year after year for the right of running through the various districts. An Act of Parliament should be passed to stop such payments. The trams are no argument for increasing license fees on buses and taxis. One can understand the increased fees imposed upon motor trucks and vehicles in country districts. The license fee may be regarded as almost prohibitive, and the Government should be asked to make an explanation. I can imagine what would have happened if the previous Government had submitted such a provision. There would have been protests from one end of the country to the other. In the other Chamber Queensland was held up as a model in connection with this legislation. Hitherto that State has been held up as a reproach. Now it is put before Western Australia as an example to follow in legislation. In Committee I shall try to effect various improvements in the Bill, and shall support any action taken with a view to securing justice to farmers as regards conveying their products in their own vehicles. Generally I support the Bill.

HON. J. M. MACFARLANE (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.21]: I realise that the Government must do something to protect that great State asset, the railway system, on which such heavy losses are incurred almost year by year. I do not altogether sympathise with the Railway Department, who I consider have contributed a good deal to the present position. They have encouraged road traffic by the manner in which they have dealt with their customers. The department frequently find themselves attacked by the energy and enterprise of some individual who sees an opening for establishing a traffic business. The department are too slow to recognise the position and forestall opposition by activity on their own part rather than by using brutal efforts such as they resort to frequently. In stopping the Metro buses the department do not use courtesy, but seem to want to hit the opposition with steel hammers. The better course would have been to use a little energy and

enterprise at the outset. As regards goods received at the railway sheds, the conditions imposed are such as the commercial world frequently finds it difficult or impossible to adhere to. In order to catch a train, the goods have to be there on a certain day by a certain time; but frequently the consignor cannot ascertain the exact time. Again, the department will not bend their conditions to meet the public. As a result, the traffic goes to motor trucks, which pick up the goods at the store and deliver them direct to the customer in the country. The railway management should realise that healthy competition is good. I admire the people who succeeded in competition with such a service as the Railway Department afford. The department should not squeal when they are beaten, as in the case of the Metro buses. Some young fellows told me recently how they had succeeded in competition with the Railway Department. Their success was due solely to the fact that the department were not alive to the situation. Thus the young fellows were enabled to put it all over them. When I was at Pingelly recently with Mr. Charles Wittenoom, a delegation of farmers from the Wandering area on the Albany-road, located some 20 miles from the railway line, represented to us that they had owned motor cars for some time in order to cart goods off their farms. They found that once the truck was loaded, it was almost as easy to deliver the goods in town as to convey them to the railway station, a matter of 20 or 25 miles. If the Bill is enacted and the proviso to proposed Section 10a is not administered with some generosity, these farmers will have to spend practically as much time in carting their goods to the station on the Great Southern railway and putting up with the delays created by the Railway Department in carrying perishable products, as it would take the farmers to deliver the goods by road. They state that frequently they receive advice that goods will be at the railway station at a certain time. Upon making a run of 20 odd miles to the station, they find that the goods have not arrived. Consequently they have to go back home, and come in again some other day. Such circumstances would be met by the proviso in question. These men should have the right to run direct into the city. If the Minister will give an assurance that this case will receive attention, I shall not be greatly concerned about farmers in outback districts being permitted to come into town with their trucks.

The railways, after all, have been built through the country largely on the appeal of the farmers themselves for railway communication. The railway system has now become a burden on the State by reason of our having so huge a mileage over such wide areas with so few people per mile to maintain them. They must be maintained. They are there now to stop. They are public property. They concern us all. Farmers are receiving the benefit of the railways through the carriage of fertiliser, and they in turn should honour the obligations of the situation by giving their goods to the Railway Department to carry so that the system may be made to pay. I trust the Minister will give me an assurance that the proviso to which I have alluded will be so administered by the Railway Department as to meet the case put up by the Wandering farmers. I dare say similar circumstances exist in other localities. The intention, I believe, is that the proviso should meet such cases. If that is so, I shall accept the remainder of the measure as it stands.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [5.28]: This legislation is really an expression of the battle which is taking place all over the world between the motor transport system and the system of transport by rail which has been in vogue for so many years. I shall not to-day attempt to reply to many of the criticisms which have been advanced against the Railway Department. Largely they are justified, in view of the fact that the Railway Department have not risen to the occasion as they should have done. There are, however, other aspects of our railway system which have been entirely lost sight of in this debate. The first and foremost is that the railway system has been laid down primarily for the purpose of developing our agricultural areas. There is not the slightest doubt that a State of the dimensions of Western Australia, having laid down a railway system of something over 4,100 miles, has undertaken a very serious responsibility in doing so, and that it is up to the community as a whole to recognise that fact. It is also up to the farmers to realise that those railway facilities were created primarily for their benefit. While the depression undoubtedly affects the farmers most seriously, the fact remains that cartage of wheat cannot be undertaken over our extensive road system

at a cost which can compete with railway freights. The railway system is being left with the heavy bulk traffic, traffic largely carried at practically unpayable rates because it is necessary for the development of the country that such traffic shall be carried. The coal traffic, the grain traffic and traffic of that description as a rule is carried at very low rates because it is economically impossible to move the crops except the rate be a low one. At the same time, while laying out our railway system of over 4,000 miles, we have embarked upon elaborate expenditure in the constructing of roads some of which have cost three times as much per mile as a railway track. And many of those roads were constructed practically as relief work. The fact remains that we cannot bring down the cost of constructing roads—I am thinking of the Canning Road—to anything like the cost of a railway track. That Canning Road, we know, cost three times as much as a railway. Yet we have been indulging in this lavish expenditure on roads and so introducing competition against the railway system, competition which in the past has been largely unfair. So we have been penalising ourselves both ways. In regard to the extra imposition on the motor vehicles, so far as that is done with a view to asking them to pay their fair share of the maintenance of roads, I am with it; but as for imposing other charges which will benefit the railways at the cost of the motor vehicles, I do not know that I am prepared to support it. But I ask that those factors under which the railways have been operating should be taken into consideration. Reference has been made to the fact that motor vehicles have been able to compete with the railways in the coaching traffic. Undoubtedly that is true. Looking at the railway statistics, we find that practically no coaching stock has been placed on the railways for many years, except the two-berth sleeping cars introduced on the express trains. The only way in which the railways could compete successfully against motor transport in the metropolitan area is by means of providing rapid transit and frequent service. To do that under the existing railway system is impossible. What we shall have to do is to introduce a class of stock similar to the metropolitan buses and run them on the railway system, suspending

during the greater part of the day the operation of the safe working equipment. In the metropolitan area, on account of the infrequency of the train service, a great deal of the railway expense is due to the fact that the railways have been most elaborately equipped in this direction to a degree not yet warranted. Only during the last two years has there been any addition to the wagon stock. The blame is not always to be laid at the door of the management of the railways. Much of it has to be laid at the door of the Governments, who have to find the finance for railway equipment. So there is a great deal to be said against the severe criticism of the railways which we so frequently hear. Now I wish to refer to a point mentioned by previous speakers, namely as to the acreage of uncultivated land lying along existing railway lines. I have previously quoted these figures, but I think they are well worth repeating. Along our railways, exclusive of railways in dry areas, there is an acreage of alienated land aggregating 35,775,000 acres. And within 12 miles of the railways, excluding railways in dry areas, there is an acreage of land aggregating 47,385,000 acres. Yet the total acreage under crop is only $4\frac{1}{4}$ million acres, or 9.5 per cent. of alienated land within 12 miles of the railways.

Hon. H. Stewart: But much of it is not worth cropping.

Hon. H. SEDDON: That may be so, but quite a lot of it is well worth cropping. Much of this land which is held but not cultivated, should be cultivated. Even allowing 50 per cent. of the area within 12 miles of the railways as being unsuitable for cropping, there is still a tremendous area not being cultivated which should be cultivated and so provide increased traffic for the railways.

Hon. J. Cornell: Have you considered that a fair proportion of that land is being used for grazing?

Hon. H. SEDDON: I have. Even if it were used for grazing alone, it should be providing much more traffic than the railways enjoy to-day. With only $4\frac{1}{4}$ million acres under crop, out of an aggregate area of 47,385,000 acres within 12 miles of the railways, we can allow a large margin and there still remains an immense area of land which for some reason is not being used.

Hon. H. Stewart interjected.

The PRESIDENT: I point out that the hon. member has already spoken on the Bill.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The point I make is that if our railways are to pay, they will have to be provided with a great deal more traffic than they are carrying at present. If, on the other hand, motor transport is to be allowed to compete with our railways by using our roads without paying a fair share of the maintenance of the roads, it is only reasonable to expect that our railways will have to increase their freights if they are to show a profit at all. Take an illustration: I understand that for a considerable time past very heavy motor trucks have been coming into Perth from 190 miles along the railway, bringing heavy loads of beer. Those vehicles, of course, do considerable damage to the country roads while competing with our railway system. That is only one illustration of the way the traffic on our roads is unfairly competing against our railways are working considerable damage to our roads. Certainly we should provide charges upon those using motor vehicles, if only from the standpoint that they should pay their fair share of the cost of maintenance of the roads and also their fair share of the construction of the road system in our State. Much construction has been done on main roads, many of them running parallel with our railways. The original intention of the Main Roads Board was that largely their efforts should be directed to the constructing of developmental roads really intended to feed our railways, and so enable the Government to carry out further development. But with a railway system extending over 4,000 miles, we cannot undertake the construction of expensive roads and still maintain the railways without imposing an unfair charge on the whole of the community, unless indeed it is provided that the motor traffic shall pay a fair share of the cost of road maintenance. I will support the second reading.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [5.40]: Having carefully gone through the Bill, it appears to me the Government have a two-fold object, namely, to make the motor traffic pay a fair share of the cost of maintaining the roads, and in the second place to endeavour to provide more traffic for the railways. Dealing with this second phase, I do not think any great improvement will be shown in the metropolitan area. It appears

to me something like the attempt of parents to attend to their sick child who has been ailing for a considerable time, and who expect to get that child well again by a mere dose of medicine; whereas instead of the child being ill in the ordinary way, it has a growth. In the metropolitan area the motor transport has assumed serious proportions. Past Governments have been lacking in their duty to the railways. When, nine or ten years ago, the motor transport first came into being, if the Government of the day had taken proper action, the railways would not have been in the position they are in to-day. For some years the people have been accustomed to the motor traffic, and it will be very hard on them if we have to tax that traffic off the roads now. I know the Minister will say that it is not intended; but when it is proposed to double the seating tax on motor vehicles it appears to me something of that sort is being attempted. If the Government in power when the motor traffic first started on the road had only—

Hon. G. W. Miles: What about the Government of the last six years?

Hon. G. FRASER: I contend that all Governments during the past nine or ten years have been lacking in their duty in this respect; but the Government in power when first the motor traffic came on the roads should carry the greatest blame. If they had seized their opportunity they could have so organised that motor traffic that it would have been of great benefit to the community. What an economic waste we see in the metropolitan area to-day! Between Perth and Fremantle passengers are served by railways, motor buses, motor taxis and, for at least half the distance, by trams also. For the passenger traffic there are four methods of conveyance between the port and the city. It is no wonder the railways are feeling the pinch. It is possible to run a bus with 20 or 30 passengers, but not so a railway train. And, because of their limited seating capacity, it is possible for the motor buses to give a much better service than can the railways. Moreover, in the past the railways have taken certain actions which tended to drive passengers to the buses. For instance, a few months ago there was placed outside the Fremantle railway station a large clock dial showing the time of departure of the next train. An intending passenger walking down to the station can see this clock a quarter of a mile away. So if he finds he

has missed the train and, consequently, will have 30 or 40 minutes to wait, he takes his seat in the bus, the stand for the buses being just a little way up the street.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The buses should have been stationed right away from the railway.

Hon. G. FRASER: Exactly. The bus stand is within a couple of hundred yards of the railway station, and so any intending passenger coming down the street and seeing by the clock dial that he has missed his train, changes his mind and takes a seat in the bus. A person who wishes to travel by bus or taxi catches it within a few hundred yards of the railway line. If the traffic had been organised years ago and the motors used as feeders to the railways, benefit would have accrued to all concerned. There is a considerable distance at Claremont and Cottesloe between the river and the sea beach, and it would have been beneficial to the residents of those areas if the motor service had been properly organised to link up with the railway. At present motors and trains are running in competition. There are three buses running to the Mosman Bay area, which is quite a fair walk from the railway station. I am pleased that severe penalties are proposed for people who are under the influence of liquor while driving motor vehicles. It is satisfactory to know that the law is being tightened up in that respect. An unsatisfactory feature of the Bill is that contained in Clause 4 relating to farmers handling their own produce. The term "Personal effects or domestic requirements" admits of a wide interpretation. I heard it stated in another place that "domestic requirements" would not refer to a couple of cases of provisions carried by a farmer who had visited the city. I have also heard it said that if a farmer carried a couple of tins of oil on his truck, he would be subject to the increased license fee. Oil is certainly a requirement of the home, but unless there is a definite understanding of what the term implies, many arguments will arise. However, country members may be trusted to attend to that portion of the measure which is likely to affect their constituents. While I am prepared to support the Bill, I consider it is drastic in its relation to farmers who own motor trucks, many of which are used as motor cars. In Committee it should be possible to amend the Bill so that relief may be afforded to farmers who own trucks. The increased rates provided

for vehicles shod with solid rubber tyres and metal tyres, and operating in the metropolitan area, appear to be rather high, namely, 40 per cent. and 80 per cent., but I understand those rates are based on the proportion of damage done to the roads. If that is so, one cannot complain, but it is hard for a layman to understand how experts arrive at the difference in the charges. There are men in the metropolitan area who have purchased such trucks and have built up a little business connection, and to have their charges increased by 40 per cent. or 80 per cent. will make their position very difficult. The Minister might explain the methods adopted to arrive at the amount of damage done by vehicles shod with the various kinds of tyres.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [5.50]: I congratulate the Government on having introduced the Bill. Had the question of motor transport been handled years ago, the present trouble would have been obviated. Motors could have been used as feeders to the railways instead of in competition with them. I should like the Minister to consider the views expressed by Mr. Gray. The Government are in need of revenue and the license fees charged for privately-owned vehicles in the Old Country might well be adopted here. The farmers of this State should support the railways more than they have done in the past. I hope too much latitude will not be given to farmers to use their own motor trucks on the roads. They should cart their produce to the nearest railway siding. Every taxpayer of the country should realise how much is invested in the railways and appreciate the need for supporting them. To secure satisfactory results, the railways must be run on business lines, and I think that in future the railway authorities will go out of their way to attract business and give greater satisfaction to their clients.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East—in reply) [5.52]: When introducing the Bill I took considerable pains to explain the terms of the measure, and gave data to assist members to reach a logical decision. In so doing I considered I was performing a duty expected of me. It was satisfactory to be told by a number of mem-

bers that my presentation had been very lucid, but, unfortunately, others do not appear to have found it so, despite the fact that I reduced the matter to the most elementary form. The Bill is of such importance to the State that I feel no apology is necessary if I traverse arguments which I have already used, as some members have imported into the Bill certain intentions which are neither in the measure nor in the minds of its framers. Briefly, the measure has for its object the co-ordination and control of the transport work throughout the State. It is designed to place the various agencies engaged in that work on an economic footing. If that could be accomplished, nothing but good could result, since the elimination of waste and overlapping of services must benefit the people as a whole. We have been told that the Bill aims at the confiscation of motor transport. There is not a single confiscatory clause in the Bill, and I can only conclude that such a statement was prompted by a rhetorical desire. The Bill certainly provides for a substantial increase in the fees now paid by motor vehicles plying for hire or reward, and in my previous speech I submitted figures which fully justified the increase suggested. I pointed out that a Metro 'bus carrying 28 passengers now paid the State equal to ½d. per mile for its road rights. Can anyone claim that such a payment is equitable in face of the cost to the State for the upkeep of roads. If the Bill be accepted these heavy, profit-earning vehicles will contribute an extra £42 per annum towards the cost of maintaining the expensive road-bed placed at their disposal by the State. The contribution then will work out at the rate of .75d. per mile, or a shade over 9d. for the right to run over the 13 miles of road between Fremantle and Perth. In face of those figures can anyone suggest that confiscation is aimed at? On the other hand do not they suggest that the Government are showing extreme leniency in the matter of license and seating fees? The average annual mileage covered by the Metro 'buses is 40,000 miles, and if that figure be divided into the proposed new license fees, it will give the quotient I have mentioned. Nine-pence for the right to run one of the heaviest vehicles in the State over 12 miles of first-class road! The sum is so trivial that the fare charged by the com-

pany for the carriage of a 12-year old child for that distance would be sufficient to pay it. Where, then, is the necessity for the exaggerated suggestion about confiscation?

Hon. E. H. Gray: What about the increase on motor trucks?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I shall deal with that, but the hon. member made a point about other vehicles. What is true of the motor 'bus is equally true of the goods lorry. A 5-ton lorry will pay £53 a year for its running rights, and assuming it covers 30,000 miles per annum, which is less than 100 miles a day, its payment will work out at less than one-half-penny per mile.

Hon. V. Hamersley: It will pay the same rate in the Kimberleys, will it not?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Of course it will not; the measure will not apply to that part of the State. Imagine a vehicle loaded to its capacity contributing approximately 2s. 6d. for the right to run between Perth and Northam! Is it reasonable, then, lightly to impute confiscatory intentions to the Government because they refuse to allow the present inadequate fees to continue? An attempt has been made to show that if the railways were privately owned, the losses experienced from motor competition would never have occurred. Frankly, I am unable to follow that line of reasoning. In my previous speech I pointed out that in Great Britain, America and other countries where the railways are privately owned, the most drastic forms of control of motor transportation exist. The position here, acute as it is, is as nothing compared with what the big railway companies are experiencing in other parts of the world. Is there something here, then, that would enable private enterprise to solve a problem which is taxing the best business brains in other lands? If there is, it is not easy to distinguish it. Perhaps it can be traced to the salubrity of our climate, or to a divine dispensation. One member has even had recourse to prophecy. He prophesied that within five years the Australian railways would be taken over by private enterprise.

Hon. V. Hamersley: It looks as if they will.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I should expect that from Mr. Hamersley.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It might not be a bad thing if they were.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The value of the prophecy rests entirely on the terms of purchase. We have not to delve very deeply into the history of the State to find the terms which were acceptable to private companies for the building of railway lines. Nothing short of 12,000 acres of land for every mile of railway built would satisfy the private investor, and if the question of the purchase of our present system ever did arise it would be found that terms, relatively equal, would be demanded. I do not wish to create the impression that I am averse to private enterprise. Quite the reverse. But I am certain that if we had waited for private capital to provide railway facilities for the opening up of our sparsely populated areas, we would have waited in vain. The reason is not hard to find. Private capital rightly looks for a reasonable return on its investments, but that would hardly eventuate if capital were sunk in a railway system catering for only 100 people to the mile. A statement equally ridiculous was that private enterprise had captured the railway trade and the Government were now trying to take it away from the victors. I tried to make it abundantly clear that the privately owned motor vehicle was not really competing with the railways, but under the guise of competition it was engaged purely on specialist work. The comments of a number of members convince me that they not only interpreted my remarks correctly but that they agreed with me.

For the benefit of those who evidently missed that important point, I would like to reiterate my previous statement. I pointed out that last year the railways carried 3,530,188 tons of goods and livestock for an average rate of 1.67d. per ton mile, and that in that tonnage all the raw materials for our primary and secondary industries as well as our agricultural produce were carried. That is to say, the railways are not only common carriers but they so frame their charges that the commodities essential for carrying on the State's industries are transported at the lowest possible rates. I then went on to show that the motor vehicle had no desire to enter that field of endeavour, because the work was unprofitable. The motor vehicle owner regards traffic as traffic when it will show him a profit on each transaction. Anything

below 4d. per ton mile appears to be unprofitable to him, and that is why he is attracted by such goods as wool, beer, petrol, kerosene, groceries, etc.

Hon. H. Seddon: All the highest paid traffic.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: In other words, he takes the goods which come within the higher classification of the railways' tariff, and which form only about 8 per cent. of the railways' total goods business. In such circumstances can private enterprise be said to have captured the trade? I say emphatically it cannot. It is specialisation in the worst possible form, and unless it is checked it will have the effect of raising railway rates on superphosphates, coal, ores, agricultural produce, firewood, road metal, timber, etc., with a consequent lowering of the higher rated goods to a point unprofitable to the motor lorry owner. I will deal with one other matter before I leave the question of private versus governmental operation. Mr. Holmes in his speech stated, in support of his argument that—

The Midland Company were charging cheaper freights than the Government and the people were giving the line preference over the Wangan line. The Government compelled the Company to put up their freights, being able to do that because of the agreement with the Midland Company, which provides that they are to charge the same rates as those on the Government Railways.

How could the Midland Company's rates be cheaper if they are the same as those in force on the Government lines?

Hon. J. Cornell: Mr. Holmes said they were cheaper.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: He contradicts himself. Although Mr. Holmes has a property along the Midland line he appears to have a very imperfect knowledge of what that company's rates are and why they were recently raised. The position is that railway by-laws, Nos. 55 and 60, which form the Goods and Coaching Rates Books, bear the endorsement of the General Manager of the Company as being "the scales of charges and the conditions and regulations" under which he will accept traffic for transit. That endorsement should make the tariff of the two concerns the same; but in many instances they are not. For example, the Mid-

land Company's mileage rate for passengers is: first single, 2d. per mile; second single, 1½d. per mile. The Government charge is 2d. and 1¼d. per mile respectively. It will thus be seen that a second class passenger pays a 20 per cent. higher fare on the Midland line than he does on the Government lines.

The case of goods traffic is somewhat more involved. Mr. Holmes is quite wrong in saying that the Government compelled the company to put up its charges. What did happen was that prior to the 21st December, 1925, goods sent from a Government station to a Midland Company's station were charged at the rate laid down for the throughout mileage, and the freight collected was afterwards divided up on a proportionate basis. The company then requested the Government to allow them—under the terms of the original agreement—to make their line subject to a local charge as though such line was separate and detached from the Government Railways: that is, a charge for the actual distance hauled over their line. The effect of that arrangement was an increase in freight to the Midland Company's settlers on all goods which did not originate or terminate on the company's line. To show how the new method of calculating the freight worked out, the following examples are quoted:—

Formerly the rate on wheat from Moora to North Fremantle was 11s. 7d. per ton; under the new scheme it is 13s. per ton, an increase of 1s. 5d. Here is an actual case where a charge of £1 15s. 4d. was raised on a small truck of cattle from Upper Swan to Subiaco. Under the old method of charging, the freight would have been £1 2s. 6d. Of the amount of £1 15s. 4d. the Midland Company received £1 2s. 6d. for a 9-miles haul and the Government Railways received 12s. 10d. for a 12-miles haul.

The increases benefit the company only. The Government Railway's share is no more now than it was formerly. I hope my explanation will be accepted as an effective answer to the claim that the Midland Railway Company's charges are cheaper than those imposed on Government lines. Those are not the only instances where exaggeration has been resorted to in order to throw cold water on the Bill. Mr. Hamersley in his speech told the House that the railway rates on wool were so high that growers were inclined to revert to the old horse

teams for their cartage. Such a statement really does not deserve notice. Taking his own district as a case in point, we find the railway rate on wool (prior to the recent reductions) from York to Fremantle was £2 7s. 1d. per ton. Does Mr. Hamersley seriously wish to state that a slow moving horse team could cart wool down for less than that rate?

Hon. J. Cornell: He may go back to his bullock teams.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Another matter in which the hon. member was wide of the mark was when he referred "to the tax which was passed specially to relieve the railways of some of the cost." I presume he refers to the unimproved land tax brought in by the former Government. So far from receiving any material gain the Railway Department actually lost revenue by the passing of that measure. When the Bill became law the Commissioner of Railways was instructed by the Collier Government to reduce rates to the extent of £45,000 per annum to offset the amount of the tax. Statements such as that can only recoil on the head of the person making them, and leave him open to the obvious inference that he is speaking without a full knowledge of his subject. Alleged maladministration of the railways has also been brought up as a reason why this Bill is not necessary. Mr. Holmes points proudly to the fully loaded mixed trains of the Midland Railway Company, and asks why a Government department cannot adopt that method of working. I am disappointed to find one who was once associated with the railways displaying such ignorance. Mixed train working has been a feature of the Government railways since their inception. It was a method employed before ever a rail was laid of the present Midland Railway Company's line. And, furthermore, there is no facet of railway working which evolves so many complaints from the public. The present Commissioner has told the Government that such a system is undesirable, but owing to our sparse population it will have to be resorted to until such time as a suitable and economic self-propelled vehicle can be found which will cater for the meagre passenger trade.

Hon. J. Cornell: I presume that is in regard to spur lines.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: When that time comes, goods and livestock traffic will be worked independently and better transit given. Even the carefully planned and considerate exemptions in the Bill have been pointed to as doubtful of ever being exercised. Surely members know that when the Bill becomes law the exemptions being a part of it, will also have a legal standing, and no Government or body can refuse to put them into operation when a just claim is presented.

Everything humanly possible has been done by the Railway Department to meet the inroads of the unfair competition it is up against, but finds that the lenient license fees and the lack of control enable the motor vehicles to skim the cream of the traffic. For the past five or six years the Commissioner has launched a campaign among wool growers with the object of securing the cartage of their clips. In his literature he has pointed out that wool is the only item going to or coming from the farms that the motor lorry is interested in; and in support of his contention that the railways were justly entitled to the work of transporting the wool he drew attention to the fact that the whole of the agricultural produce, superphosphates and farming requisites were being carried over the State system at remarkably low rates. Within the six railway districts, local committees, consisting of representatives of the different branches, have been formed with the object of giving better service to the public and bringing about closer co-operation. In furtherance of its policy the department has granted easement of the conditions attached to certain classes of goods where it has been shown that some hardship was being experienced by its customers in complying with the conditions. Quite recently the department undertook a revision of the days on which goods in less than truck loads are accepted, with the result that hundreds of stations now enjoy more frequent and speedier deliveries. I have referred to those matters with the object of showing the department is not the quiescent affair some people would have us suppose. Succeeding Governments, with the concurrence of Parliament, have placed upon the Commissioner a heavy task in operating an immense mileage which serves so few people. Yet no one will dispute that without the

assistance the railways have rendered there could not have been the development of the State that has been witnessed in recent years.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.50 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Before the tea adjournment I was referring to the assistance the railways had rendered in the development of the State. In view of what I have explained, no amount of specious argument can set aside those facts. The Government are urging the passing of the Bill under the firm conviction that it will place the State's important transportation facilities on firmer and more economical grounds. To sum up, then, the Bill aims at two main objects:—

(a) To see that motor vehicles plying for hire or reward pay license fees commensurate with the use they make of the roads, and

(b) To see that the railways that are now carrying the whole of the low rated goods essential to the State's development, are given adequate protection.

These two aspects of the present complex question of transportation are indissolubly linked together. If the State is to progress, it is essential that there be as little possible disturbance of the present freight rates on our low-priced commodities. But that can only come about by a measure of protection being granted to that asset in which £23,500,000 of the people's money has been invested. Mr. Hall cited the case of a man who consigned 3 tons of wheat and was charged as for 6 tons. The Railway Department is not aware of the particular case referred to but if the charge were so computed, Mr. Hall can rest assured that the consignor was given the cheapest rate operating. The tariff on wheat when carried at the special grain rate insists on a minimum of 6 tons. The normal rate for a 3-ton lot, as mentioned, would be "B" rate, but where the charge at 6 tons at special grain rate works out less than the actual weight at "B" rate, the advantage of the former charge is given the sender. Regarding transgressions of motor cyclists, I think the remarks of Mr. Mann should be given earnest consideration and with that object in view I have drawn the Attorney General's attention to them. In conclusion, I would

earnestly ask all hon. members who have amendments in mind to place them on the Notice Paper. By so doing, they will give me the opportunity to consult the responsible officers and so permit uninterrupted consideration when the Bill is in Committee.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Minister for Country Water Supplies in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 2:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I wish to draw attention to what is probably a typographical error. In the principal Act, reference is made to "tires," whereas the Bill refers to "tyres."

The CHAIRMAN: The Clerk will attend to anything of that description.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 10:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I would point out that there is a transposition of the clause that needs attention.

The CHAIRMAN: The Clerk will attend to that also.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—New section: Additional fees to be paid for certain vehicles used on roads in Fifth Schedule:

Hon. H. STEWART: I wish to move the addition of a proviso at the end of Subclause (1) of the proposed new clause.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Nicholson has an amendment to move in an earlier part of the subclause.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of Subclause (1) "domestic requirements" be struck out and "articles of domestic use or requirement" be inserted in lieu.

Hon. H. STEWART: There is a confusion of intention between Subclause (1) and the proposed new subclause to be inserted by the Leader of the House, which sets out that the term "goods" shall mean chattels of every kind capable of physical transport

but excludes live animals when conveyed to and from agricultural shows for show purposes. The very comprehensiveness of that definition should cover the position.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But that has reference to "goods" mentioned in paragraph (b).

Hon. H. STEWART: Surely it must apply throughout. I draw attention to the position, because the two provisions do not seem to be in harmony.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. STEWART: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added to Subclause (1):—"Provided that this section shall not apply to vehicles owned by agriculturists or graziers when used for carrying the natural produce of his farm to the nearest or most convenient town or most convenient railway station or siding and for carrying any requisites for his farm."

I want to make provision for the agriculturists or graziers who own vehicles that they will use once or twice a year for conveyance of their products over the roads mentioned in the schedule. I am dealing with men who, because of reduced prices, have lost practically the whole of their income. I feel confident the Committee will accept the amendment.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Mr. Stewart used the word "agriculturist," as he said, in a comprehensive sense. As I understand the two industries, we call those associated with them pastoralists and agriculturists. There is the fear that a grazier situated in an agricultural area will get a concession under the hon. member's proposal that may be denied to the pastoralist outside that area. I should like a definition of the word "grazier."

Hon. H. STEWART: I selected the two most comprehensive words I could get. I had thought of using the word "agronomist," but I thought it would be more suitable to use the words "agriculturist" and "grazier." If Mr. Holmes can substitute words that will have a wider meaning and that will be equally simple, I shall accept them. I should say that "grazier" would include all those engaged in raising sheep, cattle, horses, and pigs.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: While no doubt Mr. Stewart's amendment will appeal to many, I am sure that in view of the fact that the Government are introducing a Bill which will correct troubles created by motor

traffic on roads constructed at great expense, the proviso the hon. member seeks to add will undermine the whole Bill and render it practically useless. In a proviso which followed in the same clause there are a host of exemptions provided for the agriculturist, and they too would apply to graziers.

Hon. H. Stewart: But not to the man who uses the vehicle he owns.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It would be of the utmost difficulty for inspectors to carry out a check of those who own vehicles and those who borrow or hire vehicles.

Hon. H. Stewart: I can suggest an easy way to overcome the difficulty.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: There would be required an army of inspectors on the road, and that would entail great cost on the Government. I cannot see any way by which we can escape from the difficulties I have foreshadowed other than by employing an army of inspectors.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Mr. Nicholson is quite right when he suggests that Mr. Stewart's amendment will destroy the purpose of the Bill. The amendment is too wide. The "nearest market" might be Geraldton, Albany or Bunbury. The amendment will defeat the object of the Bill and should not be agreed to.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Mr. Nicholson's claim is that the Bill is designed to restore the traffic to the railways. The real effect will be to penalise private institutions. The railways have been assisted to lose traffic by the Government building roads parallel to the railways. The motor vehicle engaged in carrying from one year's end to the other will impose charges so light that it will continue to carry not only passengers, but traffic as well. The primary producer will be penalised to a further extent, but the railways will not get any more trade than they are receiving now.

Hon. H. STEWART: Hon. members must admit the justice of my objective. Mr. Nicholson says that the amendment will be unworkable and he claims it will require the services of an army of inspectors to carry it out. In the metropolitan area there is no difficulty about differentiating between taxis and privately owned cars, or vehicles run by motor dealers. Consequently there should be no difficulty in having a distinctive identification disc for vehicles coming under the proposed exemption.

It should not be beyond the capabilities of the Traffic Department to find a method of identifying this particular vehicle that will come under the proviso. The Minister said the vehicle might run all over the place. Anyone would think that the Government had never brought regulations into force. I draw attention to the words of the amendment—"for carrying only the produce of his farm to the nearest or most convenient town and for carrying requisites for his farm." If hon. members prefer it they can use the words "agricultural holding."

Hon. J. Nicholson: Would you say he would be entitled to go as far as Fremantle from, say, Meekatharra?

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes, once or twice a year with his annual crop. Surely the Government will help a man sufficiently to allow him to use his vehicle on the roads that he has assisted to build. How often will he make a trip with his own vehicle and carry his own produce? He could not make very many trips from Meekatharra to Fremantle. I am seeking to give some little assistance to those people whose whole revenue has come from wool and who in late years have had no net income from it. There are people west of the Great Southern line who, to rail their produce to market, have to convey it between 160 and 200 miles and subject it to three handlings, whereas by motor vehicle they could run it down over a distance of 80 miles and also save the treble handling. True, that would make for less work, but it would prevent the pastoralist from getting further behind with his liabilities.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: When considering amendments, we must bear in mind the purpose of the Bill. The Leader of the House has previously explained that the object of the Government is to correct the divergence of traffic by motor drivers which has taken place by reason of the facilities afforded through the expenditure of huge sums of money, which the ratepayers have either paid or are liable for. Our railway system is running at a loss of half a million yearly. Is that loss to continue?

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment is circumscribed in its terms.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I asked whether the amendment meant that a man could take his goods from Meekatharra to Fremantle, and Mr. Stewart replied that the man could go to the nearest market town.

Hon. H. Stewart: But he must be an agronomic holder.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Some clear restriction must be placed upon the use of the roads, whether by the owner of the truck or by the man licensed to drive and carry. Under the proviso all that would be necessary to evade the Act would be for a farmer to arrange with the owner of a vehicle usually plying for hire, say taking wool and other produce from farms to Fremantle, to buy the vehicle under hire-purchase agreement. Then the vehicle would nominally belong to the farmer, who would run it with the former owner as ostensible driver. Thus there would be wide-spread evasion. I hope the amendment will not be pressed.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Like Mr. Stewart, the members of the Government are concerned about the position to which he refers, and they wish to afford farmers and pastoralists every opportunity to escape being seriously disadvantaged by the measure. The proviso already inserted shows that. The Railway Department would administer the proviso so as to obviate hardship. Mr. Stewart's amendment could never be policed. Under it what is to prevent one farmer carting the produce of other farmers? Wool to be conveyed to market, for instance, is produced with the aid of superphosphate which is carried by the railways at an extremely low freight.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: We are at a disadvantage in not having a copy of the amendment before us. I understand its object to be that the owner of a truck, being an agriculturist and carrying his own produce to market, shall be protected. Would the proviso apply to a farmer who was not able to purchase a motor truck and who borrowed his neighbour's vehicle? Would the owner of the truck be able to take his poorer neighbour's produce to market if there was spare room for it in the truck? Possibly the hon. member has not given the amendment full consideration.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I have been trying for weeks to frame a clause dealing with this subject, and I have failed utterly, because at every attempt I saw that I opened the door wide enough to allow the whole flood to pass through. Mr. Stewart would be well advised to put his amendment on the Notice Paper. My amendment with the same object has been on the Notice Paper

for some time. I do not think Mr. Stewart's amendment will help. Rather will it cut the whole value of the measure away.

Hon. H. STEWART: I generally put on the Notice Paper any amendment which is not very simple indeed. Occasionally country members cannot manage to get their amendments placed on the paper. I thought the wording of this amendment simple. In contradistinction to the view expressed by Mr. Harris, I say that I have given a great deal of consideration to the amendment. I am desirous of helping the Government as much as possible. Some farmers have not been able to get their super up, and I fear they may not be able to get it up at all. I am concerned for the Government, but equally concerned for men who have lost their incomes. I cannot agree that the amendment leaves the door open to evasion. Its operation could be limited by public opinion and sentiment. Mr. Harris puts up a case in favour of my doing what Mr. Nicholson and Mr. Lovekin say my amendment would do. The man with a motor truck might be in a more difficult position than his neighbour without a vehicle. It is not always the most thrifty who have motor cars and motor trucks. I have tried to restrict this to cases with which we could deal with reasonable safety.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Everyone is trying to help you to do that.

Hon. H. STEWART: At the same time, Mr. Harris's argument was not helpful in the least.

Hon. E. H. Harris: I will put up another if you give me a chance.

Hon. H. STEWART: Like most Acts of Parliament, if this were put into operation it would be effective, and would not be a loophole for the escape of everyone. Public opinion is too strong and the feeling in favour of the diverting of all possible traffic to the railways is too well-defined a sentiment to allow people to abuse the provision the amendment would make. I realise that the Minister could exempt these cases. But Ministers come and Ministers go, and very often they are guided by departmental officers who sometimes are by no means sympathetic with persons outback.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: On the second reading I drew attention to this point raised by Mr. Stewart, and suggested that a producer with his own vehicle should be allowed to cart his own produce to any desired des-

tination. I pointed out that the fruitgrowers of the Swan have taken their produce out to the wheatbelt to sell and distribute it, but that under the Bill they would not be allowed to do that without the payment of a higher fee. Also under the Bill the producers at Bedforddale or Armadale would scarcely be allowed to bring in their produce for sale in the metropolitan area.

Hon. J. Nicholson: In exceptional cases the Minister can grant exemptions.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: And everybody who wants it will have to go to the Minister for exemption. The producer who has bought a truck in order to do this work is now to be told he must not use his truck for the purpose. I will support the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Mr. Yelland was unfortunate in his reference to the Bedforddale and Armadale producers. Their nearest market place would be the metropolitan area, and so the Bill would not apply to them at all. Nor are the fruitgrowers on the Swan at the disadvantage suggested by the hon. member. The Railway Department provided them with a railway truck to travel through the wheat areas for the disposal of their fruit. The amendment, if agreed to, would so open the door that the department would have no control at all.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I am going to take the Minister at his own word. Since he says the market gardeners of Bedforddale will be able to bring their produce to the metropolitan area, as the nearest market place, will he give us an assurance that the wool growers will be able to cart their wool by motor truck to the nearest market place, which will be Perth or Fremantle? If so, there is no need for the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The hon. member is going to extremes. What is provided for perishable products, he would have extended to embrace wool.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Financial experts have told us the salvation of this country depends on the primary producers. We have built railways extravagantly, for which the primary producer has had to pay, and we have built roads extravagantly, for which also he has had to pay. We have held out to him the inducement of magnificent roads, and so he has purchased a motor truck, and now the Government propose to prohibit him from using his own vehicle. Is that fair? The railways have lost their traffic, and they

will never get it back unless an autocrat is placed in charge and fires out about two-thirds of the employees, buys coal at a reasonable price and then gets back to reasonable freight rates. Instead of approaching it from that angle, the railway management seek to achieve the same end by penalising the section of the community which Sir Otto Niemeyer has said will save the country.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Are those supporting the amendment prepared to assure the Railway Department that the producers are ready to pay the railways a fair rate on the transport of their requirements?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If the Minister is complaining of the low rate at which superphosphate is carried, let him charge a reasonable rate on it.

Hon. G. Fraser: There would be a big squeal then.

Hon. H. Stewart: Yes, and you people in the metropolitan area would feel the effects.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It is only fair that those people who have bought their vehicles should be allowed to use them, and it is equally fair that they should not expect their super to be carried at a special rate.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I will oppose the amendment. There is in the Bill ample provision for the protection of the farmer. I am against the argument advanced by some speakers that because a farmer has invested in a motor truck he should be allowed to use it in competition with the railways. We have 23 millions of money sunk in the railways, and they must be protected. I have told farmers in the Central Province that if they do not support the railways, sooner or later the Government must increase the rates on super and on wheat and then, as in Queensland, make a rebate to those farmers who have given the whole of their transport to the railways. To-day motor trucks are bringing down wool from the interior, instead of that wool coming down by rail. I will oppose the amendment.

Hon. H. STEWART: I am thinking of the men who have lost their income from wheat and wool, and who are asked to support the railways, in the administration of which there is paid a basic wage 7s. higher than the Federal basic wage. Are the primary producers to be penalised because there are not in the department sufficient brains to safeguard an amendment like

this? If the amendment made the measure too wide, the Railway Department could increase freights, as Mr. Miles suggested, and grant a rebate to farmers who gave all their business to the department. The amendment would afford help to men who need it. I am only appealing for people who would be put to additional expense if compelled to cart to the railway.

Hon. E. ROSE: Milk, cream and bacon are collected under contract by motor vehicles which have to pass railway stations but which must be used in order to transport those perishables quickly to the factories. Will such vehicles be exempt from the additional license fee?

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Such vehicles would not be affected because the increased license fee would apply only to vehicles running on proclaimed roads.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Would producers who take their produce to the kerbstone markets be restricted to selling at Victoria Park, which would be the nearest market? If so, they would be able to work only two days a week, whereas if they were able to attend every market in the metropolitan area, they could work six days a week.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The measure does not apply to the metropolitan area, so the producers mentioned by Mr. Macfarlane would not be affected.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The more the provision is discussed, the wider it appears to be. The amendment should be inserted to ensure that the point will receive consideration from the Government. Vehicles that pick up perishables should not be penalised, because their work makes work for the railways.

Hon. J. Nicholson: How will you get over the half million loss on the railways last year?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The railways will not pick up cream cans along the route as motor vehicles will. The position of the primary producers should not be made more difficult.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Perth-Fremantle-road is a main road. On the Peel Estate we have spent £2,000,000, to say nothing of the private expenditure on farms in the Spearwood and contiguous districts.

Producers from those districts would have to go to the nearest railway station.

Hon. J. Nicholson: No the roads they use would not be proclaimed roads.

Hon. G. FRASER: I oppose the amendment, but would like the clause to be made less drastic. It should not apply to a farmer who uses a truck to take his family to Perth for an occasional holiday. Will the Minister give an assurance that there will be no unnecessary delay by the department in replying to requests for exemption?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: There is not likely to be any trouble in the direction indicated by Mr. Fraser. Families are not chattels.

Hon. G. Fraser: But they might wish to take goods back with them.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: There would be no objection to that.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Under sympathetic administration, farmers west of the Great Southern railway should be permitted to cart their produce direct to Perth instead of eastward to the railway. Motor vehicles collecting cream and other perishables should be able to pass railway stations en route to the butter factories.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Now you are beginning to wake up.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I do not want to see the wool man and the petrol user getting in on the backs of the dairy farmers. I want to see the railways brought to a position where they can be made to pay.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The clause indicates that a market place can be interpreted to mean a butter factory. If it were situated beyond a railway station or town, the user of the vehicle would not be affected.

Hon. H. STEWART: Many of my constituents may not know of these exemptions, and, if they did, would not care to write to the department about them. These are the people I am seeking to protect. It may take some of them days to get a letter to the department even if they cared to write, and many more days would elapse before they could get a reply. The amendment should be passed; the Bill can be recommitted if further safeguards are found to be necessary.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: In reply to Mr. Rose I would say that a contractor who is carting cream would be exempt.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I support the amendment in the hope that the Bill may be re-committed and proper safeguards inserted in it. The clause is drastic as it is, and I think it would be dangerous to allow it to stand without amendment.

Amendment stated.

The CHAIRMAN: I will cast my vote with the ayes.

Division taken with the following result:

Ayes	..	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	..	11
					—
Majority for	..	..	..	..	1
					—

AYES.

Hon. F. W. Allsop	Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. G. A. Kempton
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. H. Stewart
	(Teller).

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. J. T. Franklin
Hon. G. W. Miles	(Teller).

Amendment thus passed.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of paragraph (a) the words "timber mills" be struck out and "forests" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: This is inconsistent with the clause as it now stands. It allows the agriculturist, the grazier and the agronomist to carry his produce to the nearest markets. The timber mill owners should also be allowed to do so. If we are not consistent we might as well throw aside the Bill. In view of the amendment which has just been carried no doubt the Government will immediately close some of their railway lines. The Minister should withdraw his last amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee have already passed it.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I hope the Minister will reconsider the matter at a later stage.

The CHAIRMAN: The paragraph will be consequentially amended where necessary.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of paragraph (a) of the proviso "or timber mill" be struck out and after "requisites" the following be inserted:—"or requisites for the production of timber."

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I have an amendment to move.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Nicholson's amendment will have to be dealt with first.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of paragraph (a) before "town" the word "principal" be inserted.

I have not suggested it, but we will probably find it necessary to provide a definition of the word "principal."

Hon. G. Fraser: You will have all sorts of parochial arguments as to which is the principal town.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That may be so. We know there are townships that are merely names.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Why waste time inserting a word that will complicate matters?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I was going to explain it.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You cannot explain that.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Which would be the principal town, Beverley or York?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Beverley would be the principal town.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Because your farm is there!

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Not at all.

Hon. A. Lovekin: At any rate, we will need to have a definition of "principal."

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I recognise that the use of that word will mean there will be considerable argument.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! On second thoughts I find that Mr. Harris's amendment must be dealt with first.

Hon. J. T. Franklin: Mr. Nicholson took too long to explain.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I move an amendment—

That in lines 4 and 5 of paragraph (a) "railway station or town nearest to such farm or forests" be struck out and the words "nearest town or the nearest or most convenient railway station or siding" be inserted in lieu.

The nearest railway station may be in a locality that will make it difficult to take a heavy load uphill. The nearest railway station may be the shortest, but another railway station may be more convenient from the standpoint of business to be transacted.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Mr. Nicholson made a suggestion that would give rise to arguments about the word "principal," and Mr. Harris has not improved the position. He wants to raise an argument as to what is meant by "most convenient." It might be that a farmer would regard Fremantle as the most convenient township to which he would take his goods. We would take the accepted meaning of a township. I would remind hon. members that the Committee have forced upon the Government an amendment of the Bill, and we shall have to consider whether the Bill, as amended, is worth while. If hon. members persist in amendments of this description, the Bill will be worthless and then members will have destroyed a measure to which we look for some recompense from those who use the roads and should contribute towards their upkeep. The Committee are taking the measure out of the hands of the Government.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I cannot agree with the Minister. I have pointed out that my amendment contemplates a farmer travelling a few more miles only.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: But it does not stop at that.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The Minister's reference to Fremantle was rather stretching the point. My sole object was to provide greater facilities for the settlers.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: How will the paragraph be construed regarding the distance to the nearest town? Will it be by road or as the crow flies? I know of one man who is situated so that he is nine miles away from a siding as the crow flies, but nearly 17 miles by road.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: My definition of "town" does not agree with that of the Minister. As I understand it, "town" is represented by the Latin word "oppidum" which means an area having a wall around it. The Minister's definition is quite in opposition to that. In putting in "town" we should give it its proper definition, and declare it to be a place that is walled in.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: It means the nearest accessible railway station or town.

Hon. G. W. MILES: This will need to be administered with discretion. Mr. Nicholson's property is nearer to Kokeby siding. My boys are out west, and Kokeby is the nearest point from their settlement, but it is uphill and a heavy track. Beverley is 15 miles away, but the siding they cart to is Dale Bridge, which is 14 miles away. In cases of that sort, the Bill will have to be administered with discretion.

Amendment stated.

The CHAIRMAN: It is my intention to vote with the ayes.

The Committee divided with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	..	12
					—
A tie	..	..	..	..	0
					—

AYES.

Hon. F. W. Allsop	Hon. G. A. Kempton
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. E. H. Harris
(Teller).	

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. E. Loe
Hon. W. H. Kitson	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. J. M. Drew
(Teller).	

The CHAIRMAN: The voting being equal, the question passes in the negative.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move—

That the following new paragraph be inserted to follow paragraph (a) and to stand as paragraph (b):—"(b) for carrying grain, being the produce of a farm, to the nearest flour mill for the purpose of being gristed,

milled, or treated, and carrying from such mill to the farm flour, meal, bran, pollard or offal received in exchange for such grain or for food for animals."

Mr. Yelland has informed me that he would like to add certain words so that bran, pollard or offal purchased at a mill may be covered. I have no objection to the addition.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Mr. Nicholson should be commended for bringing forward this amendment, but on going into it we find that it is too wide. It would give a person the opportunity to go to a number of farmers, collect grain and return with produce. To meet the position I suggest that the amendment should read—

For carrying grain in a vehicle owned by the producer of such grain to the nearest flour mill for the purpose of being gristed or treated, and carrying from such mill on the return journey, flour, meal, bran, pollard or offal received in exchange for such grain for use on the farm on which the grain was produced.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I have no objection to that but I think it should also cover what was suggested by Mr. Yelland.

Hon. H. STEWART: I agree with Mr. Nicholson that the effect of the amendment which emanated from Mr. Yelland should be included.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The usual position is that a person takes a quantity of wheat to a mill, and that the amount of flour produced from that wheat is far greater than his personal requirements. Naturally he would use more of the offal than of the flour on his holding. Provision should be made for him to purchase a quantity of offal from the mill and take it back with him to his farm. Between the words "grain" and "or" there should be inserted "or purchased for domestic purposes or for food for animals."

Hon. G. W. MILES: I do not think "nearest" should appear before "town." In one case there is a bad road to a town which has a flour mill, and that town is the nearest town. It would pay the farmer better to go by a longer road to another town. Why compel the farmer to go to the nearest town? He will not go further than necessary. A farmer on the Dale River is nearer to Brookton, but the road

to Brookton is much worse than the road to York.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I do not think the amendment will grant the relief desired. A man takes wheat to the mill and gets an equivalent of flour, bran and pollard manufactured out of some other wheat. Therefore the amendment will not meet the case. The man will have to leave his wheat, go back to his farm without a load, and then return to the flour mill when the miller will tell him that his particular wheat has been gristed.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Mr. Holmes is drawing a red herring across the trail. The clause does not say that the flour, bran and pollard are to be received in exchange for the grain supplied by the farmer.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I ask leave to withdraw my amendment in favour of the Minister's suggested amendment.

Amendment (Hon. J. Nicholson's) by leave withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I move an amendment—

That the following new paragraph be inserted to follow paragraph (a), and to stand as paragraph (d):—(d) For carrying grain in a vehicle owned by the producer of such grain to the nearest flour mill for the purpose of being gristed, milled or treated, and carrying from such mill on the return journey flour, meal, bran, pollard or offal received in exchange for such grain for use on the farm where the grain was produced.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I move an amendment on the amendment—

That the words "the nearest" before "flour mill" be struck out, and "a" inserted in lieu.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I have no objection to the amendment on the amendment, but does not the Minister's amendment raise the position stated by Mr. Stewart as regards a farmer not possessed of a vehicle who desires, for economy's sake, to have his grain gristed at the mill?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The amendment, naturally, can only apply to those farmers who have vehicles; but I do not see why permission should be refused them.

Amendment on the amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. STEWART: It is necessary to insert specific authority in the amendment.

Amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I desire the insertion of a provision by which a person may be able to buy goods at the mill and bring them back for use on his farm. The case will be met by the insertion of the words "or purchased for domestic purposes or for food for animals."

The CHAIRMAN: The stage has gone by at which that amendment could be moved. It will have to be done on recommitment.

Hon. H. STEWART: Mr. Yelland can rest assured that the clause will be recommended, since the words "on the return journey" should not be included.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I move an amendment—

That "Solely" in paragraph (c) of proposed Subsection (1) be struck out, and "Principally" inserted in lieu.

It is seldom or never that a vehicle is used solely for conveying ore and mining requisites. In fact, I know of only one such case. Many vehicles are used chiefly or principally for that purpose.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I have no objection to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of paragraph (d) "solely" be struck out and "principally" inserted in lieu.

My reasons are the same as in the last instance.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I will agree to this in paragraph (d) also, but I would not agree to it in paragraph (b).

Hon. H. STEWART: This is a provision for the imposition of an increased fee on motor vehicles operating over certain main roads. Vehicles principally used in carrying ore from mines within a prescribed mining area become liable to this tax when operating over certain schedule roads. What the Committee did in carrying the last amendment was more than I asked them to do for a section of the people badly needing assistance. To agree to the amendment now be-

fore us would be to open the door very wide indeed.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The proviso prescribes that in exceptional cases the Minister may exempt the owner of a vehicle from liability to pay the increased fee. That, I understand, contemplates special work of a temporary nature or some special trip the owner may wish to take, perhaps hurriedly. In view of the delay that may occur in getting a reply to an application for exemption, I suggest we should have an amendment permitting the local authority or some other person authorised by the Minister to grant that permission.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I could not possibly accept the suggestion, for under it we would have all the various local authorities interpreting this provision in various ways. There would be no control whatever.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: This makes provision that in exceptional cases the Minister may exempt the owner of the vehicle from liability to pay the prescribed license fee, either wholly or partially. This is under Section 10A. By Clause 3 of the Bill, Section 10 of the principal Act is amended by inserting at the beginning thereof the words, "subject to the next section following," which is 10A. This Section 10A prescribes this proviso that in certain cases the Minister may grant exemption. But Section 10 of the principal Act provides that any minister of religion shall be entitled to obtain gratis a license for one vehicle owned and kept by him for his personal use. Under this proviso therefore, unless granted exemption, a minister of religion must pay the additional license fee provided in the schedule. Is it intended to take away the privilege of the minister of religion in a country district and compel him to pay the additional fee?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Ministers of religion do not come within the scope of the Bill at all.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Nevertheless under this they will have to pay the additional license fee, unless they get exemption.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Fees are paid under the Third Schedule, whereas in the second proviso it is provided that a minister of

religion shall be entitled to have one vehicle free. The extra fees come under Section 10A, and could not apply to a minister of religion.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I have a further amendment to the clause, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has had ample opportunity to submit it.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I have an amendment to strike out Subclause 2. It is on the Notice Paper, and I drew attention to it.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member did nothing of the sort. He was carrying on a conversation with Mr. Rose when I put the question.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Can I not submit my amendment?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, on recommitment.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I should like to draw the attention of the Committee to what I am moving to strike out.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will resume his seat. I will re-state the question. The question is that Clause 4 stand as amended.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That Subclause 2 be struck out.

Almost invariably we have taken exception to legislation by regulation.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I cannot accept the amendment. It may be necessary to bring additional roads under the measure and from time to time to remove the roads so added.

Amendment put and negatived.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I move an amendment—

That the following be inserted to stand as Subclause 8:—“(8.) For the purposes of this section, subject as in this section previously provided, the term ‘goods’ means chattels of every kind capable of physical transport, but does not include live animals when the same are being conveyed to or from agricultural shows for show purposes.”

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I ask the Minister to agree to delete the words “capable of physical transport.”

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The amendment has

been carefully drafted, and I hope the words will be retained.

Hon. H. STEWART: If people are allowed to take live animals to an agricultural show, they should also be permitted to carry wheat, garden produce, and other things that go to make up a show. I move—

That the amendment be amended by inserting after "animals" the words "or chattels."

Amendment on amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That the words "capable of physical transport" be struck out.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has missed his opportunity.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I moved it.

The CHAIRMAN: You did not. The amendment agreed to comes subsequently and we cannot go back.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Then may I ask the Minister to consider the matter, because I do not know what is meant by "chattels of every kind capable of physical transport."

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I wish to be clear on the point whether the chattels inserted at the instance of Mr. Stewart would be capable of physical transport.

Amendment, as amended, put and passed.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Do not we need a definition of "physical transport?" Would it mean transport by aeroplane?

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 5, 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Amendment of Section 13:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That paragraphs (a) and (b) be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—"(a) By inserting at the end of Subsection (2) the words 'excepting the additional fees to be paid and applied by the Minister, as provided by Section 10 (a)'."

The words proposed by the Bill to be inserted in Section 13 are not necessary.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I hope the amendment will not be agreed to. It is very necessary that the additional license fees should be collected by the Minister.

Hon. J. Nicholson: We want to safeguard that position.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The clause has been drafted in this way to make sure that the fees shall be collected and paid to the Minister so that they may go into the trust funds.

Amendment put and negatived.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I move an amendment—

That a paragraph be added to stand as paragraph (c), as follows:—(c) by deleting the words "that portion of Railway Road abutting on the Karrakatta Cemetery" from paragraph (b) of Subsection (2).

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

Clauses 8 to 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Amendment of Section 44:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That all the words after "inserting," in line 2, be struck out, and at the commencement of the section the words "subject to the provisions of Section 10a hereof" be inserted.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Special license fees have to be paid into the trust account.

Hon. J. Nicholson: This amendment will preserve that.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: If the amendment is made, the clause will not be so effective. The Parliamentary Draftsman thinks the clause should remain as printed.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 12—agreed to.

Progress reported.

BILL—MAIN ROADS.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendment made by the Council.

House adjourned at 10.22 p.m.