ently in industry than were the last lot brought out. To send these men Home it would cost £46 per head for passage money alone, and at least £14 per head would be required to give them necessary clothing, transport them to the seaboard, and give them some landing money. So it would mean £60 per head, or for a thousand of them, £60,000. The State cannot afford it, in addition to which it would be breaking an honourable agreement entered into between the Imperial Government, the Commonwealth Government and the Government of this State. I will not be one to break that agreement. I hope the House will give consideration to that before passing a motion asking the Government to repatriate those people.

On motion by Mr. Sampson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 21st May, 1931.

	PAGE
Leave of absence	3039
Bills: Workers' Compensation, 2R.	3039
Collie Recreation and Park Lands, 2R., Com. report	3063
Special Lease (Esperance Pine Plantation) Act Amendment, 2R., Com. report	3063
Traffic Act Amendment (No. 2), Com.	3064

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Coverley (Kimberley) on the ground of urgent public business.

BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 14th May.

HON. A. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [4.36]: When this subject was under discussion last week, the Attorney General, in a rather hysterical manner, issued a challenge to members on this side of the House. I could not quite understand the nature of the challenge, but it appeared to be that he was prepared to suffer some dire penalty if members on this side of the House were not prepared to support the second reading of the Bill. I wish to sum up the advantages and disadvantages of the Bill from our viewpoint, in order that it may be easy to decide what the attitude of members of the Opposition will be. From my reading of the Bill, the only possible improvement from the workers' viewpoint is that it makes insurance a State monopoly. On the other hand the disadvantages are that unless an accident disables the worker for 14 days, he will receive no compensation for the first four days. The Bill refers to the three days following the accident and does not include the day of the accident, and so, unless the disability continues over 14 days, the first four days will be at the worker's expense. The worker may be denied the right to have his own doctor; the medical allowance is to be reduced from £100 to 50 guineas; the age at which a worker's child shall be entitled to the 7s. 6d. a week is to be reduced from 16 to 14, and there is a further provision that the child must be wholly dependent upon the father or else it gets nothing. The worker may be directed to proceed to Perth for treatment and no provision is made for travelling expenses, for the expenses of an attendant if the worker is blind, or for expenses for attention if the injured man is a stretcher case and unable to look after himself. The worker may be compelled to submit to an operation against his will or forfeit all compensation. The worker is also to be compelled to make a choice between the First and Second Schedules before he knows the extent of his injuries, and he may be denied control of the expenditure of any lump sum payment awarded him and the right of objection to any lump sum settlement being registered in the court. The following reductions in the amounts payable under the Second Schedule are proposed by the Bill:—For

the loss of a leg at or just above the knee, £87 10s.; for the loss of a leg just below the knee, £112 10s.; for the loss of one thigh, £125; for the loss of a foot, £135; for the loss of an arm above the elbow, £200; for the loss of a hand, £200; for the loss of an eye, £75; for the loss of hearing, £150; for the loss of a great toe, £225; for the loss of a great toe at the distal joint, £35; for the loss of other than a great toe at metatarso phalangeal joint, £40; for the loss of a thumb at the main joint, £45; for the loss of a thumb at other joints, £52; for the loss of an index finger, £60; for the loss of other fingers, £75, and for the loss of joints of fingers from £50 to £70. There is no provision for loss of the distal joints of other than a great toe, and that means a reduction of £75. In view of these enormous monetary sacrifices and the other disabilities I have indicated, I cannot understand the mentality of anyone who had any hesitation as to what the attitude of members of the Opposition would be to the Bill. The cry of Ministers was, "Why do not you wait until you see the Bill?" Repeated interjections were made, "Will you undertake to vote against the second reading of the Bill?" I cannot understand why Ministers who knew the contents of the Bill should challenge members of the Opposition to declare themselves as opposing the Bill when it contains such retrogressive provisions from the workers' point of view. There can be no question of what attitude members of the Opposition will adopt to the Bill. The measure would place us far behind most countries of the world in legislation of this kind. As I have mentioned, the only improvement is the proposal to make workers' compensation insurance a State monopoly. Members on this side of the House are not for sale at that price. The tone of the speeches by the Minister for Works and the Attorney General, as well as of the report in the Press, was that the Bill aimed at reducing costs without reducing benefits. In face of what I have stated, where is the truth of that assertion? Where is there any foundation whatever for such a claim? With all the disadvantages as compared with the existing Act, how can such a contention bear examination for a moment? The question of making workers' compensation insurance a State monopoly —whether we call it workers' compensation fund or workers' insurance does not matter —carries us back to the original proposal of the Labour Government. No doubt it would be a substantial improvement on the existing arrangement, an improvement that we are prepared to support. The Minister now takes up the position that we occupied when we first handled the Bill. He says he is very glad he has a convert in me. In "Hansard," in 1926, 4½ pages are occupied by the Minister in abusing me.

Mr. Panton: That is nothing unusual.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: He abused me because I failed to come to an agreement with the insurance companies for covering miners' diseases. He said the fault was mine and that the companies themselves were reasonable, but that owing to my stand-and-deliver attitude an agreement was made impossible. Since then he has had some experience. Later on, when the Premier, now Leader of the Opposition, introduced the Bill dealing with State insurance, the Minister had this to say—

> This Bill says that the Government Insurance Office shall be the only one to do workers' compensation business. There may be something in this matter that I have not grasped. No matter how logical we may be on this side, I have never yet seen one of our amendments accepted by the Government. I opposed this Bill before because a State monopoly would mean that there would be no competition in the matter of the rates to be charged.

The Minister for Works: I am the convert.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Minister declared that I was the convert. He said in 1926 he would not support any monopoly, and denounced the policy of our Government. We now find he has gone even further than we proposed to go. I am prepared to support him in that regard. We recall the attack from the then Opposition about our attitude towards the insurance companies. We remember the Press propaganda of those companies. We know they paid a high salary to a member of the "West Australian" staff to devote himself solely to propaganda against the Government. Members then on this side of the House took up the case on behalf of the insurance companies and fought the Government's Bill. Now, when they get behind the scenes, they find the case we put up to be the correct one.

The Minister for Works: You did not go far enough.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I think I speak for every member of the Opposition when I say we shall not object to being converted in similar circumstances by every member on the Ministerial side of the House. We are open to that conversion, if they will adopt our policy. The Minister goes so far as to say that the companies are charging the highest rates in the world. When we said that there was no truth in it, we were denounced and decried by the Opposition, and our Bill was defeated. It is pleasing to find the change after the lapse of years. Now that the hon. member has reached Ministerial rank he says that the case we put up is correct, and he has adopted the policy. It is palpable to us that the Government are convinced that this imposition upon industry, as they frequently term it, has been largely contributed to by the insurance companies and that, had our Government had their way, this would have been mitigated at the very initiation of our measure. It would have been prevented had we had our way.

The Minister for Works: You are talking about dates in 1926 whereas you brought the Bill down in 1924.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: When I said it was owing to faulty draftmanship in our Bill that there was not a monopoly of workmen's compensation from the start, he declared there was no faulty draftmanship.

The Minister for Works: I referred to compulsory compensation.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes, and to a monopoly, too.

The Minister for Works: No.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: He said there was no faulty draftmanship. He understood what was in the mind of every member of our Cabinet. He knew better than we did what we were going to put into the Bill. When we said there was faulty drafting he declared there was no such thing, that we did not intend this. He is a mind reader. He knew what we were thinking and what our objective was at that period. Everyone who followed the discussion at the time knows that when the negotiations with the companies broke down, and we declared that approval would not be given to any company to do the business, the companies gave notice to their clients that they were getting out of it, because without the approval of the Minister they could not go on with it. Members of the legal fraternity then got to work and found that the clause read that the approval had to be given to an incorporated company. Had it not been for these two words, and had the clause merely read that an insurance policy had to be taken out, instead of mentioning an "incorporated company," there would have been a monopoly for the State office from the commencement. But these words were overlooked in the drafting of the Bill, and prevented the State office from having a monopoly of the work from the outset. The companies themselves believed they could not do the business, and gave notice to their clients that they were pulling out, but they retracted after getting legal advice. We afterwards endeavoured to remedy the position through the State Insurance Bill. This was our second attempt, for it was also aimed at in the original Workers' Compensation Bill. I hope members will not be misled by the figures the Minister quoted the other evening. When I asked him by interjection whether his figures included the mining industry, he replied they covered private work and not Government work.

The Minister for Works: To what figures are you alluding?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I am referring to the operations of the State office in the mining industry. The figures quoted by the Minister covered only a fraction of the business of that office. When we were in power we paid from £30,000 to £40,000 a year into that office from the mining industry alone. We paid that out of the Federal grant in order to assist the industry, and to relieve the office from payments for workers' compensation. The Minister, however, referred only to a thousand pounds or two.

The Minister for Works: Last year the amount was £47,000.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Minister did not include these sums. Is that not private enterprise? Are the mines run by the Government? The State Insurance Office did all the work of the mining industry, and yet a very substantial part of its business was not included by the Minister. The first disadvantage of the Bill I referred to was that dealing with waiting time. This has been re-introduced. In the old Act there was a waiting period of three days. If an accident disabled a worker for more than seven days, he was paid from the date of

the accident. The Bill provides that for three days following the accident there shall be no payment unless the accident disables the worker for 14 days. The Minister says this will overcome malingering. I interjected that it would create malingering. Anyone who has had experience of the operations of this portion of the old Act knows that it created malingering, and it was cut out with the idea of preventing it. Its re-introduction will mean the re-introduction of malingering. The great bulk of the trade unions in the country had their accident funds bankrupt over this provision. The way it operated was this: If a man was injured, he would receive payment from union funds from the moment the accident occurred, but if the accident disabled him only for two days, and he was able to go back to work, he would say, "If I stop off for another three or four days, I will get my accident pay from the date of the accident."

The Minister for Works: You are talking about what happened before the 1924 Act.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes. If at the end of the third day he was fit to return to work, he would say, "If I can hang on for a week, my payment will start from the date of the accident," and he therefore hung on. He was frequently given the tip by the employer to do this and not to return to work. This meant that the union funds were called upon to pay for an extra four or five days when there was no necessity to do so. There was no necessity to pay out half that money, or even a quarter of it, in many cases. Not satisfied with the seven days which were provided for, the Government now propose to make the period 14 days, which means that the fund will be involved in a fortnight's pay. If the worker is fit to return to work after eight or nine days, and if he hangs on for another three or four days and reaches the fortnight, he will receive compensation from the date of the accident. That being so, is he going back to work? If he can get out of the work, he will stay away, because if he goes back four days earlier he will receive four days less pay. That will be a greater incentive to malingering than was found in the old Act. The union funds will suffer because they will have to pay out for this extra four days. The first day of the accident is not counted. The moment an accident occurs to render the man unfit for work, his pay stops. For the three following days he is out of work at his own risk before any responsibility is cast upon the fund. The latest tabulation that I can produce from Geneva is somewhat obsolete, dating back to 1925; but it shows that of 63 countries throughout the world, only four extend the period to 14 days before the first three days become payable. Under this Bill, it will be the first four days. Yet the present measure comes from the Government who talk about reducing costs without affecting benefits. They go away to the limit, away to the backward nations of the earth. And yet there seems to be some hesitancy on the part of hon. members opposite as to how this side would be likely to view the measure. It appears to me that the waiting period proposed by the Bill is totally illogical. Why should a worker be called upon to carry the first four days of his period of incapacitation? If it is just, equitable and logical to pay him for his accident after four days, why should not he be paid from the time he meets with the accident? Where is the reason, logic or equity behind the Government's proposal? After that period of waiting, for whatever time the worker may be off he has to carry half the burden; he gets only half pay. The Government's proposal cannot be supported on the ground of justice at all. Another point is that the Bill provides that the worker may be denied the choice of his own doctor. A further pernicious principle is that the proposed commission are given power to establish a register of medical men for the purposes of the Bill. No doctor is to be able to do the workers' compensation business unless his name appears on the register. Again, the commission are to have the right to strike any medical man's name off that register. It is quite within the realms of possibility, under such a proposal, for the commission to decide that a mere handful of doctors, a small clique, a coterie of friends, shall be the only medical men operating under the Act, all the rest being precluded from doing workers' compensation business. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that a doctor is liberally disposed towards the injured worker and clashes with the commission in that regard, his reports and treatment not meeting with the commission's approval. If they consider the doctor too liberal with the disabled man or woman, they can strike him off the register, and then he will not be able to do any business under the Bill. Surely that is too great a power to grant to any

three individuals. If the commission are displeased, they can act as they think fit in this respect. The commission are to have power to say to an injured worker, "You must place yourself under Dr. Brown." The injured worker and that doctor may be antagonistic in private life, may be enemies; there may be a serious dispute between them. But the commission are to have the right to say to the worker, "You must go under that doctor, and be operated on as he thinks fit. If you object to undergoing any operation that the medical man says should be done, you will not get a penny-piece under the Act." That is altogether too extreme, too serious a decision to leave with any commission or board. True, the Bill provides the safeguard that the worker shall have the right of appeal to the medical board from the order of the commission. But his free choice is gone. I do not think any man will deny that if a patient has unlimited confidence in the medical man who is treating him, it will help considerably towards his recovery; and that the reverse situation applies also. If the patient has no confidence in the medical man, if there is feeling between them, recovery is apt to be retarded. To ask the patient to submit to medical treatment in such circumstances would be quite unreasonable. I am entirely opposed to the idea of the medical register. It is an outrageous proposition, and I hope that at all events this feature of the Bill will never be accepted. Even granting that there is an appeal to the medical board, we know that doctors, in the same way as men in any other line of business, work in little circles. We know that there are certain doctors who relieve one another. If one doctor wants to go on a holiday, he has a friend to look after his practice during his absence. If there is any consultation to be done, those doctors work together. Thus, there is always a possibility that the power under the bill may be used by cliques or coteries to get into their hands the whole of the medical business connected with workers' compensation. I totally disagree with the proposal in question. It is a serious matter to say to a man, "You have to undergo an operation." There have been and probably there always will be cases in which it is to the advantage of the patient to undergo an operation, and he nevertheless objects; but there is no power in this land to-day to compel any person to undergo an operation. No doctor can perform an operation without the consent of the patient; such a proceeding would be absolutely outside the law. But in this Bill power is taken to compel an injured man to submit to operation. The doctor may say, "We want to take your leg off," and the man may reply, "No, I will put up a fight to keep that leg; I am going to hang on to it even if I have to take it round with me a bit crooked or bent; I intend to hang on to my limb." In those circumstances the worker's compensation will be absolutely gone under the Bill. The man will not get a penny. He is to be deprived of every benefit because he thinks fit to try to preserve his limb. I daresay there is not a member of this Chamber but could cite some instance where a friend of his has been advised by a medical man to have an amputation, and the friend has objected, and the limb is quite good to-day. The Bill proposes a most serious innovation upon the existing law. There is the man's home to be kept up, his family are wanting food, rent has to be paid, while he is maimed and crippled in hospital. The Bill furnishes a weapon to be used against the man. "Unless your leg comes off, or your eye comes out, or your arm is amputated, your family can starve: there will be no money for them." That is what the Bill suggests. It is altogether beyond reason, and no one can expect Parliament, which looks to justice and equity between the people of the State, to agree to such a proposal. The next feature of the Bill is that medical expenses shall be reduced from £100 to 50 guineas. The Minister made a point that the Queensland Act does not provide for medical expenses. When I interjected that those expenses were provided for under hospital treatment in Queensland, he said I was wrong. However, I am not wrong. In Queensland every injured worker, whether he is under the Act or not, is taken into a State hospital and treated without charge. Therefore, the issue cannot be decided merely by reference to workers' compensation measures. There are other Acts governing the position. A similar system operates in other Australian States and in various parts of the world. No charge is made to the Queensland worker for medical expenses, no matter what they may amount to. The public of this State have been led to believe that our provision of £100 for medical expenses is something excessive, something extravagant, something which no other country does, that it is alto-

gether unreasonable to allow £100 for medical expenses. I have said that the tabulation from Geneva dated 1925 is the latest I have been able to obtain, and I am going to refer to it again. Of my own knowledge I can say that many countries have improved the position regarding workers' compensation since then. However, it will suit my case to take the position as it stood in 1925, without allowing for any improvement that has taken place since that year. I challenge the Minister to name one country in the world that has retrogressed in the matter of workers' compensation as he proposes to do in this Bill. There is not one country in the world that has lowered the benefits to the worker since 1925. I am, therefore, giving a good deal in when I take this Geneva tabulation. It mentions our old Act, which provided only £1 for medical expenses. That is stated at the head of the tabulation, "Western Australia, £1." Austria allows not more than 52 weeks, which may be continued by accident insurance at discretion. Belgium allows not more than six months; if the workman chooses the doctor, the expenses must not exceed the amount fixed by regulation and dependent upon the nature of the injury. In Brazil the position is the same. In Bulgaria, until the injury is healed. In Alberta, Canada, the matter is in the discretion of the Workers' Compensation Board as to maximum and treatment. In British Columbia and Manitoba, Canada, treatment is given as long as required to relieve effects of injury. In New Brunswick and Nova Scotia the matter is in the discretion of the Workers' Compensation Board without any maximum; and similarly in Ontario, Quebec, Saskatchewan and Yukon. In Italy not more than a year is allowed. In Czecho-Slovakia, not more than 52 weeks treatment, but may be continued by accident insurance at discretion. Denmark allows treatment until the injury is healed. In Ecuador the maximum duration is not more than one year: in Esthonia, until the injury has healed; in Finland, not more than 120 days. In France the period is until the injury has healed, treatment to be renewed if it is shown to be necessary at review. If the workman chooses his own doctor, the expenses must not exceed the amount fixed by regulations and depends on the number of visits and operations. In Germany it is until the injury has healed, treatment to be renewed if necessary. In Great Britain, it is the same. In Greece it is for not more than two years, and in Hungary it is until the injury has healed, treatment to be renewed if necessary. In Japan it is until the injury has healed, and in Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway and Panama it is the same. In Peru it is for not more than three years, and in Poland—former German territory—it is until the injury has healed. In former Austrian and Russian territories it is for not more than 52 weeks, but treatment may be continued by accident insurance at its discretion. In Portugal it is for not more than three years, and in Roumania it is until the injury has healed. In Russia there is no provision because the necessary aid is provided by social insurance. In Salvador it is for not more than one year, and in the Serb-Croat-Slovene kingdom the period is until the injury has healed. In South Africa the worker is not entitled to medical aid and in Spain the maximum duration is for not more than one year. In Sweden, Switzerland and Uruguay the time is until the injury has healed. There members have a list of a large number of countries, and it will be noted that in many of them there is no limit to the amount to be spent. So they are well ahead of the £100 provided for in our Act.

The Minister for Works: There is no limit fixed in our Bill.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: That is so. The Minister pointed out that there was at present no limit specifically set out in our legislation. He stated that on numerous occasions the £100 had been exceeded, and told the House that the member for Kalgoorlie (Hon. J. Cunningham), during my absence, had exceeded the amount, and that I also had exceeded it. He further said that he had exceeded the amount himself. For my part, I have exceeded the amount in a number of cases and have thus permitted the doctors to carry out the work they deemed necessary in order that patients might be enabled to return to work. I have more than one instance in mind in which that action has proved successful.

The Minister for Works: The Bill does not prevent that being done.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: No, but the Minister has reduced the £100 to £52 10s., and says that, on the recommendation of the commission and with the approval of the Minister, that amount may be exceeded. Take the in-

stance I mentioned the other night regarding the lad in the North-West who had met with an accident. What hope would that boy have had for his life under the provisions of the Bill?

The Minister for Lands: He would have just the same chance. There would be no trouble in securing the approval of the Minister.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: From the station out in the North-West, bring the lad to port, get an aeroplane up, transport the boy down here for a delicate operation—all that has to be done, and yet the commission has to sit and the Minister's approval obtained first!

The Minister for Lands: Nothing of the sort.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: What does the Bill say? It provides that not more than £52 10s. can be spent unless the Minister approves.

The Minister for Lands: There is £52 10s. to start with.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Minister is quite ignorant of the position in the North-West. Here is a boy who has met with an accident on a back station in the North-West. Who will decide? We know there will be £52 10s. at the disposal of the lad, but what good will that be?

The Minister for Lands: If £52 10s. is no good, £100 will be no good either.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: What nonsense!

The Minister for Lands: Of course not.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: That boy is back at work now.

The Minister for Lands: And so he would be under the provisions of the Bill.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I told the Minister that the full £100 had been cut out.

The Minister for Lands: It might cost £200 under the provisions of the Bill.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: But a start could not be made to deal with a case such as that of the lad I have referred to. Doctors will not commence a serious operation under such circumstances. Who will take the responsibility of engaging the aeroplane?

The Minister for Lands: From whom would the aeroplane be engaged?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Not from the Government.

The Minister for Lands: Where would the aeroplane be engaged?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: A telegram would have to be sent to the plane at the nearest port. Perhaps they could telephone.

The Minister for Lands: Of course they would.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: They have got to do it. In the instance I have alluded to, the doctor's verdict was that unless the boy was operated on within 48 hours, he would die. Will any hon. member tell me that it would be possible to send a telegram from a station in the North-West to Perth, for a meeting of the commission to be held and the approval of the Minister secured, a telegram despatched back with that intimation, transport the boy from the station by aeroplane and have him attended to within 48 hours?

The Minister for Lands: Of course, you know it would be.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: What utter nonsense!

The Minister for Lands: You are exaggerating; you know it.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Minister is the one who is exaggerating, because he does not know the conditions.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, I do.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: He has had no experience and does not understand the position. Let us come closer to Perth and consider the position at Kalgoorlie. There may have been a big fall of rock and a number of men may have been crushed. Those men will have to be operated on at a moment's notice.

The Minister for Lands: It would be done if there was not a shilling available, and you know it.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I know to the contrary.

The Minister for Lands: I know that it would be done.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I can give instances of doctors having refused to leave their homes until £52 10s. had been guaranteed.

Hon. M. F. Troy: And the Minister knows that.

The Minister for Lands: And I know that the money has frequently been guaranteed by outsiders.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: If the Minister wants to have the position clearly before him from the other standpoint, I will bring before him men who are crippled and maimed to-day because they could not find the money necessary to pay for their operations.

Mr. Lamond: Do not forget that the money for the hire of the aeroplane has to be guaranteed before the plane will leave the aerodrome.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: That is so.

The Minister for Lands: It is necessary to wire down here for the plane.

Mr. Lamond: Not always; I have arranged such matters myself.

The Minister for Lands: You know that a plane would be sent up as quickly as possible.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: We know that delays will jeopardise men's lives.

The Minister for Lands: There will be no delays.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: In view of the details I read regarding the position in other countries of the world, it is extraordinary that the Government should introduce legislation providing for retrogression and denying the workers fair treatment. They propose to deprive the workers of a chance of being made fit to return to work. It may be also that this legislation will prevent their lives being saved. This Government is the only one on the face of the earth that has adopted such an attitude. No Government in any other civilised country would face the issue from such a point of view.

Mr. Wansbrough: There was an instance in connection with the group settlements of a doctor requiring a guarantee.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The quotations I have read are against me in that they are obsolete, but they serve the purpose to show that the £100 provided in the parent Act is by no means extravagant, and that in other parts of the world the position is even better in some instances.

The Minister for Works: Why not come closer home and deal with the position in Australia?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I gave the Minister particulars regarding Australia.

The Minister for Works: I did not hear them.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I dealt with Queensland, too.

Mr. Marshall: The Minister bases his views on Wyalcatchem.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The present position has been created by paid Press propaganda. It has had its effect. It has created the desired pyschology, and people have been led to think that the provision of £100 in the Act is extravagant. Even members sitting on the Government side of the House are thoroughly convinced that the provision is not warranted and that our Act contains something that does not operate elsewhere. Their minds are not open. I appeal to them to examine the position dispassionately and without prejudice, wholly uninfluenced by Press propaganda. Take the list I have referred to in the Geneva document, and let that guide them, not the Press propaganda in the "West Australian." If they will do that, they will then ascertain whether our Act is extravagant as compared with the legislation obtaining in other countries. Those details prove that our industries are not asked to bear exceptional responsibilities compared with those of other countries. If the Bill is agreed to as it stands, it will be a serious handicap to the workers in the back country. The other day I gave the Premier an assurance, and I repeat it. I speak not only with the authority of members of the Opposition, but with the authority of trade unionists throughout the State. We will help to tighten up the law to prevent abuses, and if the Government, instead of presenting a Bill to reduce the benefits and minimise the monetary payments available to the workers, introduce legislation to control the expenditure and prevent abuses, we will accord it whole-hearted support. There is another provision in the Bill regarding which the Minister was silent. It is a most important provision. It deals with the reduction of the age from 16 to 14 years of children who will be entitled to 7s. 6d. per week when the parent is on half-pay. That provision is to bring the wages to £3 10s. per week. The most objectionable feature is the proviso that will bar youngsters unless they are wholly dependent upon their fathers. If they have a shilling or two in their money boxes, they are not wholly dependent on their fathers. If they sell a few newspapers or some boxes of matches, they are not wholly dependent on their parents. If their mothers possess a few pounds or a few shillings, they will find themselves in the same position. What kind of legislation is that? Little children under 16 years of age are not to be classed as dependent upon their fathers! At even that tender age, they are to be regarded as something apart from their fathers, and no allowance will be made in respect of them if they happen to have a shilling or two in their money boxes.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Half the children of the State have banking accounts.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Quite a considerable percentage of the kiddies have them. That system is encouraged by the State Savings Bank, and the money is collected from the children at school. It is a most noteworthy effort to instil ideas of thrift into the children's minds. Thus again, if a child has a little money in the savings bank, he will not be dependent upon his father. He will be told that he must spend the money he has saved or his mother will have to rob the money box or draw the money from the child's savings bank account before a claim for 7s. 6d. can be entered in respect of the child. To what depths have this Government sunk, this Government whose leader declared that the statement that they were going to break down the industrial conditions if returned to power was purely Labour Party propaganda. Members will remember the quotation I have used here from "Hansard" once or twice. The Premier, in reply to something I had said in the newspaper, declared it was purely Labour propaganda, that their party if returned to power would have nothing to do with the breaking down of industrial conditions. Now they are going to rob the little chap with a savings bank account. I ask Country Party members to look at that clause and see if that is not what it means. Every unemployed man applying for sustenance has to prove his dependence, and now under the Bill these children must not have a penny piece in their money boxes or in their savings bank accounts. That is what the Bill proposes, and the Minister did not mention it all when moving the second reading. The worker who may be injured in the country can be directed by the commission to be brought to Perth and put under medical treatment here. That, of course, operates now, and I am thoroughly in accord with it, because the specialists are here and, particularly when it comes to a case of eyes or of joints, it is essential that this should be done. As a matter of fact I have a suggestion to make later that something further should be done in this respect. But while the Bill will compel an injured man to come to Perth for treatment, no provision is made for his expenses. The expenses of the commission, if they are put to expense, or of the medical board, will come out of the fund, but there is no provision for the worker. He has to pay it out of his own pocket. Why should we have such one-sided legislation? The expenses of the commission or of the medical board are to come out of the fund. If the worker is to be brought to Perth for medical treatment, it is with a view to getting him back to work more quickly, so that there shall not be any subsequent claim for substantial compensation, and so it is all to the benefit of the commission and of the fund. Surely, then, the expenses of the worker should be met out of that fund.

The Minister for Works: You mean his travelling expenses? That is only reasonable.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: At Denmark I assisted to put a man on a stretcher after he had been crushed by a tree. But there was no money for an attendant for that man. Should he not have had an attendant, seeing that he had to travel by night and be fed, and had to change trains? Who is to look after such a case?

Mr. Kenneally: Well, according to the Minister for Lands the public are always prepared to guarantee an aeroplane.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: There is in the Bill no provision for an attendant for such a case, and it certainly should be in the Bill. The Bill further provides—and this is entirely an innovation, the meaning of which I cannot understand. Before I came to the House I had many years practical experience of the operation of workers' compensation. Even since I have been in the House I have had a great deal to do with workers' compensation, but for many years before coming here, when at the Trades Hall I handled cases in every industry in the country. This is what I cannot understand: The commission can call upon a worker at any stage, giving him seven days' notice, to make a choice as to whether he shall come under the First or the Second Schedule of the Act.

The Minister for Works: It is to provide for that piano-player with the injured finger.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The injured worker is not sure whether he is going to get more under the First Schedule or under the Second Schedule. Yet before he knows the full extent of his injury he has to make a choice. Many an injured man does not know for a month or even six months after an accident the extent of his injuries. Yet this commission is to have the right at any stage, even on the day of the

accident, to compel the injured man to make a choice as to whether he shall come under the First or the Second Schedule.

The Minister for Works: We can cut that out if you like.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I should think you would. It certainly will not get through with any assistance from me. To say that the worker, before he knows the extent of his injury, has to elect whether he shall come under the First or under the Second Schedule, is altogether wrong. For many years past the practice has been that when a lump sum settlement is arranged it is embodied in an agreement and that agreement registered in the court. The agreement has to lie there for a period, during which any party interested can raise an objection to its being registered. It has to be understood that there have been most unfair agreements made. I have already told the House the private insurance companies frequently use the domestic responsibilities of a worker to drive a hard bargain, and the more sorry they find his domestic affairs the harder the bargain they drive. Occasionally they get hold of a man with no one to advise him, and so they effect an agreement and have it registered. Frequently the union secretary finds out in time and lodges objection to the agreement being registered, whereupon the court has to hear the argument. It cannot be registered until the case has been heard. I could quote many such cases. I have previously quoted one in which a man lost the sight of both eyes. The insurance company was going to settle with him for £40. He was actually on his way from the Old Men's Home to the insurance company to complete the settlement. The company had sent a lawyer to the Old Men's Home and driven a bargain with the unfortunate man to sign up for £40. It was only through a friend of mine hearing the old man and an attendant discussing the business in the train that we were able to save the old man from signing a settlement for £40. Fortunately the case was brought to me, and eventually we secured for him £400. That was under the old law. But the right to object to any such agreement being registered is to go, for the provision for registration is repealed in the Bill. There is now no provision for it at all. Consequently the insurance companies will be able to induce unsophisticated men who have met with accidents to submit to a hard bargain, and nobody will be entitled to object.

The Minister for Works: How could that happen with a member of the A.L.P. on the commission?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I am not prepared to leave it in the hands of the commission at all. If that is the only argument the Minister has in favour of it, I may remind him that there would be two to one against the A.L.P. representative. And in any event a lump sum settlement is fixed, not by the commission, but by the medical board.

Mr. Kenneally: The Minister will know something about his Bill in due course.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: So the A.L.P. representative will not know anything about the lump sum settlement.

Mr. Doney: Would not the unfairness of a hard bargain be detected by the medical board?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I am not going to give that power to any board. I believe the medical board are in a better position to assess the loss of efficiency than is anyone else. I do not think there is any doubt about that. But the provision in the Bill is one that I cannot support at all. Now there is the Second Schedule. As in point of medical expenses, the public have been led to believe that our Second Schedule is extraordinarily liberal. The Minister himself thinks that, because he is offering such an enormous reduction. I want the House to understand, and I hope members will get this well in their minds, that our schedule is by no means unique. It was created by a conference of medical men convened by the Commonwealth authorities and held in Melbourne. That schedule has been adopted by the Commonwealth, by Queensland, by New South Wales, and by Western Australia.

The Minister for Works: Is it uniform in all those instances?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The only difference is that New South Wales provides £1,000 as a maximum, whereas we provide only £750. Yet we are asked to believe that our schedule is unique, different from all others. The only difference is, as I have said—the Minister quoted it last evening when speaking—that New South Wales gives an additional £250. Let members just look again at those figures I have quoted

and the enormous reduction the Minister proposes to make. It is to say that if this Bill becomes law a man who loses a leg just above the knee will get £87 less compensation in this State than he would get in New South Wales; if it is below the knee he will get £112 less; if it is at the thigh he will get £125 less; if he loses a foot he will get £135 less; if he loses an arm above the elbow he will get £200 less; if he loses a hand he will get £200 less; if he loses an eye he will get £75 less; for the loss of an ear he will get £150 less, and for the loss of a great toe £225 less.

The Minister for Works: Are the other States the same as New South Wales?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I have already told the hon. member. If a man loses a great toe at the metatarso phalangeal joint, he gets £35 less in Perth than he would get in Sydney, and for a toe other than the great toe he gets £40 less. For the loss of a thumb at the main joint he gets £45 less—and so on up to £200 less in Perth than he would get in Sydney. So instead of our being unique in having compensation greater than is to be found elsewhere, we are likely to be rated as unique in having lower compensation than is paid in other places, lower than in any leading country of the world. We shall be retrogressing to what is known at Geneva as a backward country, on a level with Chinese and Hindus, and shall no longer be classed amongst the leading nations of the earth in dealing with worker's compensation. There are in that schedule other amounts concerning which I should like some explanation from the Minister. For instance, members should compare Item 20 with Item 23. Item 20 reads—"The loss of the sight of an eye, £270," while Item 23 reads, "Loss of great toe with metatarsal, £300." The loss of the sight of one eye is to be £270, and the loss of a great toe with metatarsal is to be £300.

The Minister for Works: I put a plan on the Table, you know.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: For the loss of a toe the amount is to be £30 more than for the loss of an eye, but of course there is an explanation of that. Under this heading it is not merely the loss of a toe, but practically you have to lose half of your foot before you can get that.

The Minister for Works: The plan is on the Table.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I did not know that the Minister had put the plan there. I have looked up the matter for myself and I know what the position is. Then, if we take Items 19 and 20, we find that the former reads, "Loss of an eye by enucleation, £300." Item 20 reads, "Loss of the sight of one eye, £270." So that for the loss of an eye by enucleation—no sight in it at all—so long as the eye is lost by enucleation an individual will get £300, and for the loss of the sight of one eye he gets £270, or £30 more for the loss of a "blind" eye than for the loss of a good eye. We are told that this has been arranged by experts. The existing schedule, as I have already told the House, was drafted by a conference of experts. It has proved to be faulty in some respects, but there is no such palpable mistake as that which I have just quoted from the schedule to the Bill before us. Under the Bill it is proposed to set up a medical board and it is not to be the board the Minister would have the House believe. If one has to judge by the speech of the Minister, the board will have general supervision and control over all the medical work; they will supervise and control all major operations. I take my first exception to the board because of the fact that the Bill provides for life appointments. The members of the board are to be appointed by the Governor and can only be removed by the Governor. There would have to be something pretty serious done before the Governor would step in to remove a member of the board; there would have to be some scandal, or a member would have to be proved unfit for his work. It would be a grave reflection on a member of the medical profession to be removed by the Governor from such a board, and something very serious would have to occur before such a removal was brought about. The appointment of the members of the board is to be for life under normal circumstances, whereas the commission that is to administer the Act will be appointed for three years. First of all the board will fix the amount of the lump sum payment and they are to decide whether the worker is in a fit condition to make a choice between the First and the Second Schedules.

The Minister for Works: He has not to make the choice.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The board will decide whether he is in a fit condition to do so.

The Minister for Works: Not within seven days.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The commission will call upon the injured worker to make it within seven days, and if he does not they will make it for him. If he is unconscious, the medical board will hold that he is not in a fit condition to make a choice. The medical board decide all medical and surgical questions arising out of court cases, and will decide disputes as to the fitness of a worker to return to work, decide between the commission and the worker as to treatment by a particular medical practitioner, and decide the percentage of the loss of efficiency. These are the functions that, according to the Bill, the board will perform. Some are very important functions but they do not go as far as the Minister's speech would lead the House to believe. There is grave danger if we confine the work under this measure to the list of medical men who may be registered, and if we give power to refuse to register others. There is the further danger that with a board appointed for life, that board can have the right to select certain medical men to treat certain cases. In normal circumstances I would support the idea that the medical board should put up to a patient a panel of doctors from which panel the patient could make a selection. The panel could consist of four or five, or even six, medical men who would be recommended, and the board could say to the patient, "These men specialise in the injury from which you are suffering, and we give you this panel to select from." I would support that. But here we have a proposal that the board is to say, "This medical man, or no medical man; this doctor, or no benefits under the Act." That is altogether beyond a reasonable proposition. I said the other evening that we had given credentials to a doctor in this town who was going abroad that would give him entree to certain institutions, and that would enable him to inquire into workers' compensation in different countries through which he proposed to travel. I said also when I was speaking that we should like to see that doctor's report.

The Minister for Works: There is no written report.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Attorney General said that we would get that report on the second reading.

The Minister for Works: The report of the committee but not of the doctor.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: No, the report of the doctor.

The Minister for Works: The doctor did not submit a report. There is the report of the committee of which he was a member.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I am not going to place much reliance on that committee. With all due respect to them, they were civil servants without practical experience in injuries. Not one ever worked in a factory. I admit they might be good men at their own line of business, but when they submit to Parliament recommendations dealing with the law that enters into the life of every workman in this country, then I am not going to attach too much importance to their views. Our idea was that when the doctor who went abroad returned to the State, he should advise us of the position as he found it in other countries. Then it was intended that there should be a full and thorough investigation of the operation of our own Act. We have been denied the opportunity to do this. It appears to me that the men who should make recommendations are those with practical knowledge, and who understand the difficulties under which men work, for instance, in mines, in factories, on the roads and in workshops, men with experience and knowledge and an understanding enabling them to make recommendations. No such investigation has been made. Personally, it is not the report of the committee about which I am concerned, but I am concerned about just what the doctor had to say regarding his investigations overseas. There are three elements that are of vital interest in the operation of this law, the employers, the workers and the doctors. We know that employers and workers are the elements that make up industry. The employers complain that the premiums charged are altogether too high. The Government's method of meeting that is by State monopoly of insurance. I support that. It is a policy that we have stood for for years and which we think must result in a substantial reduction of premiums. If our policy had been adopted here five years ago—I want members to know that the State Insurance Office was established in 1926—if we had had our way and obtained a State monopoly of insurance five years ago, the employers of this country would have been relieved of paying what

they have paid, taking the present Government's policy just now to be the right one. Employers have had to pay a high impost to private insurance companies during the past five years because of the attitude of members opposite and their friends in another place who differed from us. I am glad that at last members have come round to this viewpoint, but by their action of five years ago they penalised industry and played into the hands of the insurance companies all that time. Dealing with medical expenses, it has been held by some that the workers have been guilty of imposition, whilst others have held that doctors have made a welter of it, and that between them they have inflicted heavy costs on industry for which there was no warrant. The Government propose to solve the problem by reducing the benefits. I suggest that the real solution is to devise a method to prevent abuses. The Government, by providing that the 50 guineas for medical expenses may be exceeded, admit that there should be no limitation.

The Minister for Works: We have not reduced the maximum amount of £750.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: No, that stands, but I am speaking of the medical expenses, which will be reduced from £100 to 50 guineas. By providing for the amount to be exceeded, the Government admit that the principle of a strict limitation is not sound.

The Minister for Works: I agree with you.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The great body of workers in this State, whose opinion I have no doubt I am voicing, are prepared to help in every way to prevent abuses. The British Medical Association assured me, as they have assured the present Minister, that they will help to prevent abuses.

The Minister for Works: They also assured me that £50 was sufficient for medical expenses.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I shall not subscribe to that. We have powerful organisations like the trade union movement and the British Medical Association assuring us of their assistance to prevent abuses. Why not avail ourselves of the power they can wield to prevent abuses intsead of reducing benefits? The worker knows that the existence of abuses has jeopardised the claims of the genuine man and is anxious that abuses should be eliminated. The British Medical Association know that some doctors have made a welter of the Act and have brought dishonour on the profession. Surely, then, the Government could devise means by which the help of those two great organisations could be availed of. The British Medical Association control most of the medical practitioners in the State. If the Bill becomes law, it will arouse the antagonism of the workers. Some of the benefits to which they are at present entitled will be cut out, and the men will be denied certain rights they now enjoy. Such antagonism will render the smooth working of the Act very difficult. Would it not be better to explore the whole of the possibilities and enlist the aid of those two powerful organisations to combat the abuses without reducing the benefits? When I spoke the other evening, I said I wanted to prevent the present Government from dealing with workers' compensation. I had more reasons than one for saying that. I did not speak with an eye to what was likely to happen in this House; I had in mind what I am confident will happen to the measure in another place. The one provision of the Bill that I could support, I feel sure, will be deleted in another place. Other substantial cuts will be made in the provisions of the existing law, and when the Bill is returned from another place, I have no confidence that the Government will stand their ground. I feel convinced that they will accept substantial amendments and make the position of the workers far more objectionable than it would be under the Bill as presented to us, bad and all as that is. I shall vote against the second reading, and do all that lies in my power to defeat the measure. It is objectionable that this is the one Government in the civilised world to seek to whittle away the benefits of workers' compensation. There are men working in industry just able to earn enough to keep afloat. They have no hope of saving against bad times. Of the mere pittance given to them by way of compensation when they suffer injury, they have to pay one-half, and even the present benefits are to be whittled away. If there is any other Government that is attacking workers' compensation, I should like to know of it. We here are called upon to meet the attack, and all that I can do to defeat the Bill will be done.

MR. PANTON (Leederville) [6.6]: The public have known for a long time that the party on the Government side of the House were led by a super optimist, but I was surprised the other night to find that the members associated with him have also become super optimists, at any rate in regard to this Bill. With the deputy Leader of the Opposition, I am at a loss to understand how members opposite could for one moment imagine that we would support a Bill of this kind. Association with their leader must have made them super optimists. I do not propose to traverse the ground covered by the member for South Fremantle. He has dealt very fully with most of the clauses, but there are one or two matters I desire to discuss with the object of obtaining some enlightenment from the Minister when he replies. The first concerns the composition of the proposed medical board. Like the member for South Fremantle, I am somewhat chary about the medical board. I have had a considerable amount of experience of medical boards. Almost every man who has done any soldiering has had experience of medical boards. If we are not careful in selecting the board, I am afraid we shall have a repetition of what obtained in the Army. We shall have a board of medical officers who will regard every worker that comes before them as a potential malingerer. Human nature is the same the world over and that could easily happen here. It would be inadvisable to appoint the medical board for life. I should like to know from the Minister how he proposes to constitute the board. He may have mentioned it in his speech, but he speaks so fast that I could not follow him. Does he propose to select three medical officers, or does he intend to obtain the advice of the British Medical Association as to who would make suitable members? The commission would be of very little importance as compared with the medical board, because the board would have the duty of determining what was to happen regarding an injured worker. The appointment of a board of three to deal with all the ramifications of workers' compensation will necessitate deep and grave thought on the part of the Minister. I am of opinion that it would be wrong to appoint three medical officers permanently. From my association with the Perth Hospital Board, I know that the medical profession, like most other professions and occupations, has become one of high specialisation. With few exceptions, doctors, after a few years of general practice, devote themselves to some special section of the work. In most instances the medical board would be called upon to deal with special cases. If the board were constituted of three surgeons, they might be called upon to deal with a worker suffering injury to an eye, and to do justice to the man and to the commission, the services of a highly qualified oculist should be available. If we adopt the medical board plan, the board should be composed of one man having the right to call in two specialists to determine the particular case under consideration. Otherwise there might not be a specialist on the board to deal with certain cases.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. PANTON: At the tea adjournment I was endeavouring to show that instead of a permanent board of three being appointed, the board should consist of one medical practitioner, with the proviso that on special occasions he may co-opt two other medical practitioners to act with him, such doctors to be those who are specialists in the particular cases being dealt with. I have yet to learn that it is the intention of the Government to appoint a continuous board. If that is so, there is all the more reason why there should be only one medical man upon it as a permanent official, so long as he has the right to co-opt two other medical practitioners with the special skill required in the particular cases dealt with. If there are going to be three practitioners on the board, the Bill provides that they may be paid such allowances as may from time to time be prescribed. It would be interesting to know what these allowances are going to be. The medical board provided under this Bill should consist of the best men available. When we start to prescribe the allowances sufficient to induce the best of our doctors to give up their practices to take positions of this sort, the amount must be fairly substantial. I would not care to see on the board a medical practitioner who had not a knowledge of all the ramifications of workers' injuries. He would also require to be amongst the foremost in the profession. We are quite justified in asking for the best, but a board of three such medical men would cost a great deal of money.

Mr. H. W. Mann: It would not be a full time job.

Mr. PANTON: The hon. member is not the Minister, and the Minister has said nothing about the subject. Perhaps the hon. member knows more than the Minister himself. If what he has said can be taken for granted, my argument falls to the ground. The Bill, however, does not provide for that; merely for the appointment of a medical board. If that body is to handle workers' compensation cases as they should be handled, some of its members will require to be engaged full time on the job. All the more necessity thus arises for having only one permanent official. He will be able to deal with a large number of cases, all that may be termed of minor importance that come before him, but with the more technical and more important cases involving the payment of lump sums he should be able to co-opt two other members on to the board, and these should be paid according to the number of sittings. The Bill also says that no member of the medical board who is acting professionally in relation to the person injured and claiming compensation shall come into or take part in any business of the medical board.

Mr. Marshall: How would you get on at such places as Wiluna?

Mr. PANTON: The hon. member has jumped my claim. There is no occasion to go as far as Wiluna. We need go only to Kalgoorlie, as stated by the member for South Fremantle (Hon. A. McCallum) where almost daily, accidents will come under the provisions of the Bill. Many accidents of great importance will require medical attention, and come within the scope of this legislation. I admit that the central board would not be expected to spend half its time in Kalgoorlie looking after these cases. Provision is made for the appointment of a local medical board in places that are removed some distance from the city. I have no knowledge as to how many medical practitioners there are in Kalgoorlie. I venture to say that if three of the leading doctors there were placed on the local board, very few would be left to attend to injured persons. A serious accident might happen there at any time through a fall of earth or a premature explosion, and the services of two or three doctors might be required at one time. If the principal doctors had been attending to patients who came within the scope of this legislation, they would not be able to act in any capacity on the board. This would mean that three doctors from other parts of the State or the central board itself would have to act. It appears to me, therefore, that even in the case of a local board, it should consist of only one man. In view of the vast extent of Western Australia and the great distance between those places where medical men are to be found, it would be impossible, outside of Perth and Kalgoorlie, to appoint a board of three medical practitioners, and yet prevent any of those three doctors from acting professionally on behalf of some injured person who would come within the scope of the Bill. I fail to see how the provisions affecting these boards can logically be put into effect. We are entitled to know what allowances will be paid. I should say the Minister has founded his principal arguments in favour of the Bill on the fact that it was going to reduce premiums and lighten the burden upon industry. It is very easy to say these things. It would be necessary to have a department to conduct this business. Once the Bill becomes law and the department is organised, I expect it will have a monopoly of the whole of the workers' compensation business, and a large staff will be required to conduct it successfully. If it is one of the principal arguments of the Minister that the Bill will lighten the burden on industry, we are entitled to know what allowance will be made to members of the board. Under the Constitution, in the case of a commission, the allowance is restricted to £150 a year for members other than the chairman, but there is nothing of that kind in the case of this proposed board. People are going to be examined by the board as to their fitness to return to work, and that board is to judge what lump sum they are to receive for the injury they have sustained. They are, therefore, entitled to have the best available men for that work of examination and to give their decisions. We have a right to know what it is proposed to pay the members of the board. If we knew that, we would be in a better position to judge the kind of board we would get.

The Minister for Works: The State office already does over £160,000 worth of compensation business.

Mr. PANTON: Under this Bill, the amount would soon be £360,000, and I hope it will reach half a million. That, however, is not my argument. A little more clerical assistance would overcome the difficulty of administration.

The most important part of the Bill deals with those who will be the final arbiters concerning injuries to workers. I am particularly anxious to know that we shall get the best brains upon that board, so that the members may do justice to those who come within its jurisdiction.

The Minister for Works: They must be like Caesar's wife, above suspicion.

Mr. Raphael: That is more than we can say about you.

Mr. PANTON: I have come into contact with many members of the medical profession, and I say they are all above suspicion. They will all do justice to the best of their ability. But there are medical men and medical men, just as there are Ministers and Ministers.

Mr. Marshall: There are not many on that side just now.

Mr. PANTON: I dissociate myself with that, too. The Bill contains a most remarkable provision. It may be clear to the Minister and I may be a little dense. The Bill provides for an appeal from a local medical board to the central medical board. Subclause 2 of Clause 45 reads—

> By leave of the medical board, an appeal shall lie from the decision of a local medical board to the medical board, and on the hearing of the appeal, the medical board shall have power to give such decision as the local board ought to have given in the first instance.

The language of that subclause is remarkable.

The Minister for Works: It is the language of the lawyers, not mine.

Mr. PANTON: In effect it says that when the local board has given a decision with which the central board disagrees, then the central board can demand an appeal which will be made to the central board, and they can come to a decision which they consider the local board should have arrived at. I can put the matter in another way. The Attorney General may have had a case before the local court, and the magistrate may have arrived at a decision which in the opinion of the Attorney General should have been something else. The Attorney General then takes the case to the Full Court, and obtains a decision that he thinks should have been given by the magistrate.

Mr. Raphael: That is often done.

Mr. PANTON: Yes, but with this difference, that the Attorney General goes from a local magistrate to a Supreme Court judge. In this instance the central medical board who are dissatisfied with the local medical board's decision review the case themselves and make the decision what they consider it should have been. If the subclause said that the commission, being dissatisfied with the local board's decision, should have a right of appeal to the central medical board, there would be something in it. But what the subclause proposes is absolutely absurd. Whether what I have stated represents the intention of the draftsman, I do not know. If it is his intention, I certainly disagree with it. The central board should appeal to some other tribunal than themselves for a final decision. There is another aspect of the Bill which needs investigation. Information I obtained to-day from a medical practitioner —I am not prepared to say whether it is correct or not—is that the provision for the keeping of a register and the striking from that register of the name of any medical practitioner is totally opposed to the Medical Act of 1894. Section 12 of that Act provides—

> The name of any person registered under this Act, who either before or after he is registered, shall be convicted in any part of Her Majesty's dominions or elsewhere of any felony, or misdemeanour, or of any other offence which, in the opinion of the board, renders him unfit to practise or who, after due inquiry, is adjudged by the board to have been guilty, in their opinion, of infamous conduct in a professional respect, shall be erased from the register.

The contention of the medical practitioner who spoke to me on this subject, and who I understand has been a member of the board for some time, is that the provision in this Bill for the erasure of a medical man's name from the register to be compiled for the purposes of the Bill will be in direct opposition to the Medical Act of 1894. I understand it is claimed that the only people who have any right to erase the name of a registered medical practitioner are the Medical Board constituted under the Act of 1894. Probably it will be argued that the register is to be compiled only for the purposes of the Bill.

The Minister for Works: That is all.

Mr. PANTON: That register could not omit any medical practitioner's name. The commission under the Bill would have no right to discriminate between medical practitioners eligible for registration under the Medical Act of 1894. The register for the purposes of the Bill having once been compiled, the commission should not be empowered to remove any medical practitioner's name from it. Such action would be highly detrimental to the medical practitioner for the remainder of his life. It might be that a practitioner had done something that was wrong in the opinion of the commission. They might not regard it as in accordance with what should have been done under this measure. They might consider him too lenient to an applicant under the Workers' Compensation Act. Quite possibly the commission might tell him so. Then, by reason of good nature, he might commit the offence again—an offence, that is, in the opinion of the commission; and for that reason the commission would be able to erase his name from the register. Then it would go out to the world that the practitioner in question had not sufficient ability to remain on the register for workers' compensation purposes. Thereupon people would say, "If he has not sufficient ability to remain on that register, he must be a poor old doctor." The effect on the medical practitioner would be most serious. As regards the proposed commission, I have every confidence in the Government Statistician, the chairman in view, as a fully qualified man who will mete out justice in every respect. I say nothing whatever derogatory of that gentleman, nor of his colleagues, whoever they may prove to be. I repeat that I have always had the greatest admiration for the proposed chairman of the commission.

Mr. Kenneally: We are not legislating for him.

Mr. PANTON: That is true. We are legislating for a commission; and whoever the chairman may be—good as that gentleman might be and as the present Government Statistician undoubtedly is—there will be two other commissioners, and the majority will rule. Parliament has no right to place any medical practitioner in jeopardy as here proposed. The name of a practitioner might be erased from the register on account of something that in the opinion of the workers was to his credit, although the commission might view it with great disfavour. I am opposed to the Bill, lock, stock and barrel.

The Minister for Works: Not to the first part?

Mr. PANTON: There is such a thing as holding out a piece of meat to a dog that one wants to get at, and when he bites at the meat, braining him. I do not know whether the Minister has given consideration to the point arising under the Medical Act. To me it seems to call for a great deal of consideration. I hope that in Committee the Minister will agree that the Medical Board under the Act of 1894 should be the sole judges of the conduct of a medical practitioner. Next, I object to any reduction of medical expenses, for reasons already stated by the member for South Fremantle (Hon. A. McCallum). The Bill provides for hospital charges to cover treatment and maintenance not exceeding 10s. 6d. per day. I should like to know from the Minister—though he is not here to tell me—seeing that the Bill will apply especially in the metropolitan area, where is the injured worker to be properly nursed and attended to for 10s. 6d. per day? Under the rules of the Perth Hospital and according to the Hospital Fund Act, persons under the Workers' Compensation Act are not eligible for free treatment at that hospital. Consequently they will have to seek treatment somewhere else. Perhaps I may be allowed at this juncture to explain the position, because many people are under a totally wrong impression with regard to it. It has to be borne in mind that the whole of the medical work of the Perth Hospital—I say "the whole" advisedly—is done by what is termed an honorary staff, with the exception of the C.R.M.O., who in effect is the administrator, and nine junior residents, who are really completing their medical education at the institution. The leading medical practitioners of the metropolitan area make their services available at the institution. They give wonderful service. During last year their visits to the Perth Hospital for honorary work totalled just over 40,000.

Mr. Raphael: And the present Government make them pay hospital tax in return for doing that work.

Mr. PANTON: I do not think the people of Western Australia realise what they owe to the medical profession of the metropolitan area in connection with the conduct of that

large institution. The position being as I have stated, the members of the honorary staff contend—and in my opinion quite justifiably—that any person able to pay for outside treatment—which is the professional work of medical practitioners—should not expect to receive free treatment at the Perth Hospital. A person entitled under the Workers' Compensation Act to £100 for medical treatment, and medical treatment only, cannot be regarded as in a position to ask for free medical treatment in the Perth Hospital. Therefore Parliament has provided, in the Hospital Fund Act, that persons under the Workers' Compensation Act shall not be admitted to the Perth Hospital. That being so, where shall those persons go for hospital treatment? Under the Bill they are to be allowed up to 10s. 6d. per day for that purpose. I have had a good deal of experience on the Perth Hospital Board, and unfortunately, owing to my wife and a daughter requiring operations, I have had some experience of private hospitals; and I would like the Minister to state where a person under the Workers' Compensation Act is to obtain within the metropolitan area hospital treatment for the amount proposed. Patients in the country can be treated in Government hospitals there for as little as 7s. 6d. per day.

The Minister for Works: No. The charge is 10s. 6d. per day.

Mr. PANTON: Then the Minister for Health is getting the better of his colleague, because ordinary cases are taken for as little as 6s. per day.

The Minister for Works: The position was the same under the previous Government.

Mr. PANTON: The Bill applies principally to the metropolitan area. These patients, being unable to enter the Perth Hospital, would have to go into private hospitals. Has the Minister in mind the setting-up of a special hospital for them? Or does he propose that they shall take their chance of whatever private hospital they may enter? If the latter, where is the hospital in which they can receive what they are entitled to, proper nursing and attention, for 10s. 6d. per day? The Minister will find that the current charge at private hospitals is four guineas per week, plus the cost of all medicines and every pill and every bandage, in addition to one guinea for the use of the operating theatre.

The Minister for Works: What is the charge at St. John of God Hospital?

Mr. PANTON: That institution charges all kinds of fees. They also have a free ward there.

Mr. H. W. Mann: I think two guineas is about the average charge.

Mr. PANTON: The member for Perth (Mr. H. W. Mann) ought to know that there are wards in which the charges are as much as £7 7s. a week. I have visited many patients who have paid that amount in wards there. Other than the free ward, I do not think there is any ward at the hospital in which the charge is less than £3 3s. per week. If we know that workers' compensation patients are to be sent to St. John of God Hospital, we know they will receive proper nursing, but the Minister should let us know where he intends such cases to be dealt with. I have no compunction in saying that, generally speaking, the private hospitals in the metropolitan area are not staffed with nurses as they should be.

Mr. Kenneally: You do not include St. John of God Hospital in that category?

Mr. PANTON: I do not regard St. John of God Hospital as a private hospital. I am speaking of the private hospitals in St. George's-terrace and elsewhere. I have already said that at St. John of God Hospital patients would be assured of proper nursing and proper attention. If the Government intend to make St. John of God Hospital one to which workers' compensation cases are to go, I shall have nothing more to say about it.

The Minister for Works: Under the present Act, do we tell the patients where they shall go?

Mr. PANTON: No, nor do you tell them that you will pay 10s. 6d. a day only for their hospital attention.

The Minister for Works: Yes, we do.

Mr. PANTON: I do not think so. What the Government say is that there is £100 for medical expenses. The charge of 10s. 6d. per day does not include medical attention at all but merely hospital and nursing expenses. I do not say the private hospitals are to blame for the position because, in all probability, the number of patients entering those institutions does not warrant the keeping of large staffs of professsional, fully qualified nurses, such as will be necessary if the Bill becomes an Act. In all the private hospitals the matron

probably is a qualified nurse and unless there is a particularly difficult case for which the services of a night nurse are required for a week or two, the rest of the nursing staff consists of probationers. If a man is badly mutilated in an industry, he should be entitled to the best medical advice and the best nursing procurable. From time to time I have said, and I repeat, that all medical skill possible is not worth much unless we have the advantage of the particularly good work of qualified nurses to attend to the patient between the visits of the doctors. It is just as essential to have properly qualified nurses to carry on in the absence of the doctor, as it is to have the medical practitioner in charge of a case. I hope the Minister will give the House some indication of what he proposes to do with regard to private hospitals. Is it the intention of the Minister to give the commission the right to say to which hospital a patient shall go? He intends to exercise the right to say to which medical practitioner a man must go. Will he go further and decree the hospital to which the man must go? There is another anomaly that may creep in as a result of the passage of the Bill, should it become law. I may be wrong, but it is just as well to have the matter looked into. The Minister for Health knows that the Hospital Fund Act provides for free treatment for certain people—married men in receipt of less than £232 a year, and single men in receipt of less than £150. That Act also provides that if a patient comes under the Workers' Compensation Act of 1912-24, he shall not be entitled to that free treatment. In view of the large number of unemployed, who are working for sustenance but probably receive wages equal to the amount, £1, on which the hospital tax has to be paid,—certainly they will receive less than £232 a year—what will be the position of such men who, having met with accidents, require medical attention? Seeing that such a man is entitled to free treatment, will the Minister endeavour to send him to the Perth Hospital? On the other hand, does the Minister propose to treat him as coming within the scope of the Workers' Compensation Act and send him to a private hospital? There is another anomaly. The Hospital Fund Act proposes that workers coming under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act of 1912-24 shall be ineligible for free treatment in a hospital. If the Bill becomes law, it will be a consolidating measure repealing the Act of 1912-24 and it will then become the Workers' Compensation Act, 1931. I suggest it will be necessary to amend the Hospital Fund Act so as to alter the description of the Workers' Compensation Act by deleting "1912-24" and substituting "1931." Of course I do not think that the Bill will become law.

The Minister for Works: Do not be pessimistic.

Mr. PANTON: There are times when the Minister introduces Bills that are calculated to make any man pessimistic. The points I have raised should be looked into. I am opposed to the Bill altogether. As the member for South Fremantle (Hon. A. McCallum) has indicated, Opposition members are quite willing to tighten up the present Act where necessary. Practically the only argument advanced as to the necessity for the Bill related to the exploitation, as it is called, of the £100 available for medical expenses. Strange to say, we have had no statistics presented to indicate the extent of that exploitation and I disagree with the Minister's statement when he asserted that that particular provision had been exploited by the doctors, the employers and the workers.

The Minister for Works: And by Governments, too.

Mr. Marshall: And the insurance companies.

The Minister for Works: I mentioned them.

Mr. Marshall: I will give the Minister particulars of some of their tactics.

Mr. PANTON: Notwithstanding the accusation of exploitation, when we analyse the allegations we find that they relate almost wholly to the South-West and the timber mills. By whom is it alleged the exploitation has been indulged in? By the Southern Europeans! I would be sorry to learn that any Britisher or Australian had ever attempted to exploit the medical payments under the Act by cutting off his toes. On the other hand, the whole argument has been regarding the exploitation by Southern Europeans who are alleged to have indulged in the practice of cutting off their toes to receive lump sums in order that they may return to their homes in Italy or elsewhere to live in comfort.

The Minister for Works: That suggestion came from your own side of the House.

Mr. PANTON: I do not care where it came from. The remedy for such a position is not to be found in the mutilation of the Workers' Compensation Act. During the last election I predicted that if the Nationalist and Country Party members formed a Government, one of the first measures that would be dealt with would be the Workers' Compensation Act. At that time, the argument was used about the Southern Europeans cutting off their toes. That same argument is used to-day. The mutilation of the Act will not provide the remedy. The measure has been of great benefit to the workers. The remedy lies rather with the employers, who should employ their own countrymen. If they had employed Australians or Britishers, and paid reasonable wages, instead of exploiting the unsophisticated foreigner——

The Minister for Lands: Not too unsophisticated!

Mr. PANTON: Had the employers done that, we would not have heard anything about exploitation. On the other hand, the employers made use of the foreigners, who became sophisticated only when they joined the unions and gained some knowledge regarding proper wages and proper conditions. Yet the Minister argues that the men were so unsophisticated that they cut their toes off in order to take advantage of the Act!

The Minister for Lands: The foreigners regard it as an easy way of getting money.

Mr. PANTON: Then the Minister disproves his own argument. The Minister for Lands knows that any exploitation that has been carried out has been by Southern Europeans. Let him remember the experiences of the early days in Kalgoorlie and on the Murchison. The employers in those days exploited the Italians and Austrians. As the Austrians were enemies during the Great War, we have the Jugo Slavs entering the country by hundreds, until now we have 7,000 of them. It would be interesting to know if all those who have returned have gone minus a toe.

The Minister for Lands: They are members of your unions.

Mr. PANTON: That was when they were no longer unsophisticated, and when they learnt what they should be paid.

The Minister for Lands: You surely do not teach them to do what you say they do?

Mr. PANTON: We do not find Australians and Britishers, who are members of a union, indulging in the practice of cutting off toes. That is an answer to the Minister's interjection. I repeat that the only argument in support of the Bill has been the alleged exploitation of the medical fund. If that is correct, and doctors have engaged in exploitation, why not refer them to the board set up under the Medical Practitioners Act of 1894, so that the offenders can be treated as they should be? The whole argument has been with respect to the Southern Europeans. Instead of mutilating the Act and robbing the workers of what they are entitled to, the Government would achieve their objective if they induced the employers to employ their own countrymen, men who will do the job without indulging in exploitation.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [8.13]: I oppose the Bill. I shall not go into details because previous speakers have dealt with them remarkably well. One can review the statements of the Minister and analyse the arguments he advanced in order, if possible, to ascertain whether they are correct. I do not intend to accuse the Government of following the dictates of the daily Press, because such an accusation is quite unnecessary. Our experience of the present Government has indicated that whatever may be advocated by the daily Press, is reflected in measures introduced in due course by the Government in accordance with that advocacy. In consequence we have this measure before us. The principal reason the Minister gave for introducing the Bill was that workers' compensation was such a heavy burden on industry. Emphasising that point, he said it was remarkably heavy on the agricultural industry. I agree that the impositions under the Bill in the way of premiums to be paid for various forms of insurance are particularly heavy, but why is workers' compensation insurance alone attacked? I put it to the Minister for Works, who professes to be the representative of an agricultural district, how many farmers employ labour all the year round? I am speaking of normal times. As a matter of fact, farmers are not in the habit of employing labour continually all the year round. The rural industry employs labour for the purposes of seeding, fallowing and harvesting, each in turn lasting only a brief period of

the year. In consequence, if there is any burden placed on the agricultural industry, it is not through the medium of workers' compensation.

The Minister for Works: The farmers get a little bit of it.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am aware of that. But the whole of the Minister's argument was that the Act was the cause of all the burden on the industry.

The Minister for Works: No.

Mr. MARSHALL: Of course the Minister immediately starts to retreat. I may remind him that a good retreat is a lot better than a bad beating. The Minister now admits that the reasons he gave for introducing the amending Bill have vanished.

The Minister for Works: Oh, no.

Mr. MARSHALL: He did say this, and undoubtedly it gives the Chamber a really good idea as to what form of exploitation is indulged in by the private insurance companies: the Minister himself admitted that it took 37 per cent. of the premiums paid to cover workers' compensation insurance.

The Minister for Works: That is for the administration.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes. Thirty-seven per cent. of the premiums paid is necessary to cover the administration. And this by private enterprise too, these wonderfully efficient administrators. But let me add that it takes 42 per cent. of the premiums paid to administer the other forms of insurance. Consequently those other forms of insurance are a greater burden on the farmer than is workers' compensation insurance. Yet the Minister did not hasten to relieve the agricultural industry of the greater burden of those other forms of insurance.

The Minister for Works: One step at a time.

Mr. MARSHALL: It is the principle involved which the Minister must stand up to. If insurance constitutes an obligation on the agricultural industry so heavy that the industry cannot carry it, then if the Minister were honourable and faithful to the people he represents he would attack the greater burden first. But the Press did not inform him of that; he was not instructed to do that.

The Minister for Works: I was not instructed to do this, either.

Mr. MARSHALL: The arguments advanced by the Minister cannot be accepted as being very forceful; they have not behind them the force that the Minister desires in order that members might accept them. A greater sum by far is involved in the payment by farmers of premiums on other forms of insurance, and it takes 42 per cent. of the amount paid in premiums to administer those forms of insurance, whereas in this workers' compensation insurance the Minister himself admits that the administration costs are 37 per cent. of the premiums. Hence the attitude of the Government in introducing the Bill. But the amount of money involved in the matter of insurance under the Workers' Compensation Act as against insurance in respect of fire, hail and other risks, is infinitesimal. Yet the Minister and his Government attack first the smaller matter, and still leave those he represents to carry the greater burden.

The Minister for Works: This is compulsory insurance, whereas the other forms are not compulsory.

Mr. MARSHALL: If the Minister were more strictly conscientious, he would attack the greater burdens on the farmer and would not sit there laughing while 42 per cent. of the premiums paid is still the burden the farmers have to carry.

The Minister for Works: You do not want a man to cry, do you?

Mr. MARSHALL: No, for the farmer can look after himself while the Minister occupies a very good position, seated in a comfortable chair, with three excellent meals a day and a downy bed.

The Minister for Works: With a lot of abuse thrown in.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not know about abuse, but last night I complimented the Minister. I am sorry I must now take the other side and express opinions which may be distasteful to him. Yet I have to do it.

Mr. Sampson: I hope you will tell the truth to-night.

Mr. MARSHALL: If I were to tell the truth to-night it would be more than the hon. member ever did. If I were to tell the truth I might say it was a blessing that this country refused to suffer the importation of Maltese which the hon. member advocated.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must address the Chair and confine himself to the subject matter of the Bill.

Mr. MARSHALL: As far as I can digest the Bill, it appears to me to be one applicable to the city, that if it is at all workable

it may be worked so long as it is not applied to areas at any distance from the metropolis. In the first place it is proposed in the Bill to inaugurate two distinct boards, one a board of commissioners for the purpose practically of controlling the whole of the measure, with a substitute board of a medical character for the obvious purpose of assisting the commissioners in disputes over either physical or surgical treatment of beneficiaries under the Act. Those boards will operate in Perth and will have very extensive powers which cannot be applied to what is known as the outer goldfields areas. For instance, we have fairly large areas, such as Meekatharra, Cue, Day Dawn and Wiluna, with only one doctor each. In smaller places there is no medical practitioner at all. In such instances the Bill, if it became law, could not be applied.

The Minister for Works: Why not?

Mr. MARSHALL: Because there is no power given for the creation of local boards. And it is within the power of the major board in Perth to dictate to the local doctor treating a beneficiary under the Act. If the commissioners or the medical board have the right to make suggestions as to the treatment of a patient in, say, Wiluna, they may express the opinion that the local medical practitioner is on the wrong track, and direct that he no longer continues to treat that patient. What will happen? The patient, if there is any humanitarianism at all in the measure, must come to Perth. The Bill makes no provision for his expenses, and so if he comes to Perth he comes at his own cost.

The Minister for Works: I am not too sure that it is so. We will consider that.

Mr. MARSHALL: It must not be thought that I am hostile to the medical board.

Mr. Sampson: Thank God for that.

Mr. MARSHALL: I know of cases where, probably, it would have been to the interests of the beneficiary under the Act had he secured expert treatment earlier. In the back of my mind I have a case from the North-West where, unfortunately, the remuneration paid for medical services is not sufficiently great to induce up-to-date practitioners to settle there. Consequently very frequently it would have been wiser and more economical to have brought the patient to Perth. So I am not altogether opposed to that. What I am opposed to is the forcing of a patient from, say, Wiluna, distant 715 miles by rail from Perth, to come to Perth at his own expense and, on his arrival in Perth, the forbidding of him to choose his own doctor. It would be time enough for the board to intervene when they had good grounds. I suggest that if they had good reason to remove a patient from Wiluna to Perth, at all events he should have the right to say which of the Perth doctors he would consult. There are in the city doctors that you, Sir, and I favour, because we have had experience of them. There are certain medical practitioners that I would choose above all others. Even if I were brought from Wiluna to Perth I should like to have the right to select my own doctor when I arrived here. Then of course the board could intervene if and when they thought that doctor was not advising me correctly.

The Minister for Works: Do you not think a committee of experts would have full knowledge of the best doctor for the case?

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, I agree. But as the member for South Fremantle (Hon. A. McCallum) pointed out, while I do not want to charge the medical fraternity with any wrong-doing, there is always the possibility that if a board of three have the right to dictate, without any reservation on behalf of the patient himself, a certain set of experts may get all the business under the Bill.

The Minister for Works: What we want is the best service.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is the point. The decision as to where the best service can be obtained is to be left to the board of three.

Mr. Kenneally: And they are to be appointed for life.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes. If we give that security of tenure to the medical board, we may find that we have made a mistake, but it will be too late. In justice to the injured worker and to the board, after a patient is brought to the city, he should have a right to call in any doctor he desires at the expense of the commission. If the board find that the doctor is treating him wrongly, it will be time for them to act. Whatever possibility there might be of a case being muddled in a remote centre, there is no chance of that being perpetuated for any length of time in Perth. Yet under the Bill the worker would become practically the sole property of the board.

The Minister for Works: For his own good.

Mr. MARSHALL: Perhaps so in a majority of cases, but I can quote a case where that argument would not appply. There was a doctor in Meekatharra who afterwards moved to Perth. He was, and still is, a very good man. A patient from Meekatharra came to Perth and consulted that doctor and he diagnosed the case. Both the husband and the wife doubted his diagnosis and he asked them to call in two other doctors. They had means, and were able to do so. Both those doctors disagreed with the opinion of the first. Treatment was deferred for a couple of weeks, and then an operation was performed, and the diagnosis of the first doctor was proved to be right, but the patient lost her life.

The Minister for Works: It is not only a matter of medical treatment. What about massage, etc.?

Mr. MARSHALL: I am merely pointing out that two doctors may make a mistake.

The Minister for Railways interjected.

Mr. MARSHALL: When doctors make a mistake, the patient usually dies. If any doctor happens to make a mistake with the Minister for Railways, I suppose we shall get a half holiday. Apart from the first principle contained in the measure, there is little of value to commend it.

The Minister for Works: Still, there is a little.

Mr. MARSHALL: But that cannot be considered when so many vital points are ignored. The Minister, when asking leave to introduce the Bill, several times implied by interjection that members on this side of the House, when they learnt the contents of the Bill, would vote for the second reading.

The Minister for Works: I made a mistake; I thought you were all more intelligent.

Mr. MARSHALL: I did not know that the Minister had sufficient intelligence to recognise intelligence in anyone else. Apart from the proposal to make workers' compensation a State monopoly, there is no one redeeming feature in the Bill. The embodiment of that principle indicates that the Government have concluded that ordinarily private insurance companies make excessive demands upon industry.

The Minister for Works: That is only a bribe to get the rest of the Bill through.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Opposition are numerically weak as compared with the strength on the Government side, and whatever the Minister desires will be obtained in this House. But when the Bill goes to another place, neither what the Minister requires nor what the Opposition desire will be obtained.

The Minister for Works: We shall see. Time will tell.

Mr. MARSHALL: Only in one respect is it proposed not to interfere with the amounts payable to beneficiaries, and that is the maximum rate of £750.

The Minister for Works: And the medical amount.

Mr. MARSHALL: That has not been increased. It has been reduced from £100 to £52 10s.

The Minister for Works: The board may increase it to any amount they like.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not concerned about that; I am referring to the provision in the Bill which stipulates £52 10s., whereas the amount in the existing Act is £100. Save for the maximum sum of £750, every amount payable has been reduced.

The Minister for Works: I am going to show you that I have increased that since your Bill was introduced in 1924.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister has increased nothing in his Bill. He has provided machinery with a view to increasing certain amounts to be paid, but the measure has not yet been in operation to determine how it will work. The machinery of this Bill, like that of other legislation, may prove to be faulty.

The Minister for Works: We can always alter it.

Mr. MARSHALL: If the measure becomes law I believe it will be found to be very faulty indeed. It might be workable if its operations were restricted to the metropolitan area, but in the outer areas of the State it will not be capable of smooth working.

Mr. Piesse: Tell us how you would reduce the present cost of insurance for workers' compensation.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not concerned about the present cost of insurance. In my opening remarks I mentioned the burden upon the farmer, 40 per cent. of whose premiums are absorbed in administrative costs. Those premiums have not been touched by the Minister.

The Minister for Works: One step at a time.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister has many more steps to make. I do not expect him to make many more, except perhaps one on which the Press are continually dictating to the Government. I do not know whether the Minister will live long enough politically to present that measure. If he does, it will be as far as he will go politically. The member for Leederville raised a point about hospitals. What will be the effect of the measure on hospitals in the remote parts? One of the cleverest moves made by the insurance companies when they had sole control of workers' compensation was to rate the mining industry on its pay sheet at about 16s. per cent. The workers whose names appeared on the pay sheet paid a contribution for hospital treatment. Although the insurance companies charged the full premium for the insurance of the workers, they had to avail themselves of the hospital treatment provided by their contributions of 1s. 6d. per week. The companies were cunning enough to charge the maximum premium and give the minimum amount of benefit for it. The Minister would do well to take those tricks into consideration. Private enterprise does not operate with any humanitarian leanings towards the workers or anyone else. The colossal expenditure on buildings and motor cars shows that. If the Minister had looked outside about 5 o'clock this afternoon he could have seen in what direction much of the money from farmers' premiums was spent —in silver-mounted motor cars. The insurance companies do not trouble about a 6-furrow mouldboard plough or an underground machine, but they do know how to make money out of insurance. Then there is the trickery adopted by companies in the dissection between hospital treatment and maintenance. They deduct so much per week for food and bedding, leaving a balance for hospital treatment. All the trickery possible has been devised by these companies. I am surprised that the Minister has not included in the Bill other forms of insurance.

The Minister for Works: This relates only to compulsory insurance.

Mr. MARSHALL: Unfortunately for the community the balance of insurances is not compulsory and State-owned. There would then be none of those enormous profits to devote to beautifully decorated motor cars in which to tour the State in search of business. Unfortunate wretches who are compelled by economic pressure to eke out an existence on £3 17s. a week, will have to do with less money in the event of an accident occurring than was previously available, because of this so-called burden upon industry. The Minister falls for the proposition and permits this sort of thing to go on. We remember that the daily Press gave forth some information that the private companies might quickly get together, and save the position for themselves by creating a fund on which to operate.

The Minister for Works: Evidently the Press are not supporting this Bill. I thought you told us that we had our instructions.

Mr. MARSHALL: All the instructions the Minister has received are embodied in this Bill.

The Minister for Works: Are they?

Mr. MARSHALL: In every article that has appeared in the Press the same language was used as has been used by the Minister in introducing the Bill, namely, that this compulsory insurance is a burden upon industry.

The Minister for Works: Of course it is.

Mr. MARSHALL: What about the other burdens on industry? Does he intend to attack them?

The Minister for Works: One step at a time.

Mr. MARSHALL: Let the Minister bring down a measure to control other forms of insurance and see whether the Press will support him.

The Minister for Works: They have not supported me in this.

Mr. MARSHALL: It is not difficult to visualise what has happened. There is no doubt that in bringing down this measure the Government have been subordinate to the dictation of the Press. This is the third measure they have brought down under that subordination, and there is another to come. When that is brought down Ministers will have done their work faithfully and well. In two other cases, they have attacked every bit of legislation that is beneficial to the workers, and now we have this one. Yet another Bill is to be brought down to round the whole thing off. This measure cannot apply to the settlers outback either equitably or fairly; or nearly as well as the present Act does. I foresee many troubles and anomalies if it is passed. This reduction of premiums paid in the case of injury represents the last straw on the camel's back. Every particle of legislation that has taken years to build up on

behalf of the workers is to be whittled away. There is nothing extraordinary about the Act when it is compared with similar legislation in other parts of the world, but it has to go because it is said to be a burden on industry. There are other things which constitute a far greater burden and are a far greater injury to the community than workers' compensation. The sooner the Government attack other forms of insurance and leave the protection now afforded to the workers unassailed, the more they will be appreciated by the toiling masses of the State. I hope the Bill will be defeated.

On motion by Mr. Kenneally, debate adjourned.

BILL—COLLIE RECREATION AND PARK LANDS.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the previous day of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—SPECIAL LEASE (ESPERANCE PINE PLANTATION) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. T. WALKER (Kanowna) [8.55]: I congratulate the Minister on bringing down this Bill. It is merely one that was left over by the Collier Government. I believe it to be important to the district I have the honour to represent. It was hoped some time ago that the great belt of sandplain concerned could be made profitable and could be utilised by our citizens, thus lessening the cost of pine to the community in general. A pine forest was authorised by the previous Government, and some steps were taken to bring this purpose into effect. To a certain extent that has been done. There are, however, some local conditions in connection with the place that prevent pine growing immediately or prospectively from becoming the profitable industry that was originally anticipated. The company that was started spent a considerable sum of money on behalf of the shareholders, but the enterprise has not, in every sense of the word, been successful. Difficulties have been encountered and large expenditure for the shareholders has already been incurred. In consequence of some local conditions which have to be overcome, and which take time to overcome, failure was imminent or looked so to the shareholders, and those immediately concerned in the turning of that large sandplain just north of Esperance into fertility. The company which took up this large area under an Act of Parliament discovered that the sandplain was capable of being put to very valuable service. Profitable work can be undertaken there, and with intense cultivation this enormous sandplain can become a great asset. When the Collier Government were in office they were approached for a variation of the Act which vested this enormous tract of country in the company, at that time for the purpose of creating a pine forest. The Government of the day had a Bill prepared, practically the Bill we now have before us. I congratulate the Minister on having taken over from his predecessor the work that had been done. I am very pleased, for the sake of the State, and particularly of my electorate, that the Government have brought down this Bill. It has the great merit of providing the means for bringing into profitable cultivation and the service of the State a very large area of land which otherwise would be neglected and useless for years to come. The Bill has my support and sympathy. I trust that it will receive the favourable consideration of hon. members, and will pass without amendment, inasmuch as it is practically the measure in which I have been interested from the very inception of the pine forests scheme. I believe I should only be wasting the time of hon. members if I did more than commend the Bill to their consideration.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

In Committee.

Mr. Richardson in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 10:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (i), line 4, the words "wool growing" be struck out, and "grazing" inserted in lieu.

As I said last night, the word "wool-growing" is too restricted.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Will the Minister accept the amendment placed on the Notice Paper by the member for Mt. Magnet? Every argument used in favour of prospecting can be used in favour of sandalwood-getting.

Mr. MARSHALL: I have an earlier amendment to move. It refers to an anomaly which the Minister has agreed should be rectified. I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (ii) the words "a person certified by an officer of the Department of Mines to be" be struck out.

This amendment remits to the decision of the local authority the question whether the user of a motor vehicle is a bona fide prospector. It is all very well for Parliament to reduce the revenues of local authorities, as that does not interfere with Consolidated Revenue. Under the amendment the bona fide prospector will be relieved of the necessity of negotiating with an officer of the Mines Department in Perth. This would involve delay, even if an applicant was not obliged to travel to Perth from a mining centre. The local authorities know the men who are bona fide prospecting in their districts. Moreover, some of the roads affected are the property of the local boards, and not of the Main Roads Board.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no objection to the amendment. The matter affects local governing bodies more than the Government, and that is why I drew the attention of hon. members to that phase. The local governing authority will certainly know whether an individual is a bona fide prospector.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Paragraph (ii) refers to a motor vehicle used "solely or mainly" in connection with prospecting. I suggest that the inclusion of "solely or" is unnecessary and that the removal of those words will make the provision more clear.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not draft the Bill nor am I a lawyer, but in my opinion it is advisable to retain the words.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I will not press the matter. I wish to move to add a further proviso setting out that the reduced fee shall be payable on account of licenses required for motor vehicles owned by a person certified by the Sandalwood Board to be a bona fide sandalwood puller. The amendment is set out on the Notice Paper.

The Minister for Mines: Why not be consistent? We have deleted the reference to the certificate by an officer of the Mines Department. Why not cut out the reference to the Sandalwood Board?

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I have no objection to moving the amendment in that form. The amendment, which was framed by the member for Mt. Magnet, included a reference to the Sandalwood Board because, whereas anyone can go out prospecting, a person cannot engage in sandalwood cutting unless licensed by the Sandalwood Board.

The Minister for Mines: He could get the license from the local authorities.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: That is so. I will move the amendment in the following form:—

That a further proviso, to stand as Paragraph (iii.) be inserted as follows:—"Or (iii.) That the license is required for a motor vehicle which is owned by a bona fide sandalwood puller and which will be used by such person during the currency of the license solely or mainly in connection with the occupation of sandalwooding."

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

Clause 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 42:

Mr. H. W. MANN: I move an amendment—

That in lines 5 and 6 the words "prohibit, either absolutely or subject to prescribed" be struck out and the word "prescribe" inserted in lieu.

Prohibition is wrong in principle and I object to it. I am opposed to monopolies whether controlled by a Government or by a company. In this instance, the Government seek power to prohibit absolutely any motor traffic along prescribed routes. Extraordinary conditions may arise when it may be necessary to alter the law.

Mr. Kenneally: Then the Government can alter it.

Mr. H. W. MANN: It may not be convenient to do so. My amendment will still leave the Government sufficient power to control motor traffic on prescribed routes. Why should the Minister ask for power to prohibit? Much of the law to-day is against motor traffic, but the Bill will deal it a sledge hammer blow.

Mr. Barnard: If the motors are running along a tram route, why not?

Mr. H. W. MANN: If the trams are not catering adequately for the public, motor transport should have an opportunity to supply the want.

Mr. Marshall: You ought to stick up for motor transportation! It does you justice.

Mr. H. W. MANN: It is a crime not to agree with the hon. member. The Minister has not advanced any good reasons for granting the power of prohibition. It is reasonable to ask for power to control motor traffic along prescribed routes and that should be sufficient. Members have talked about the State funds invested in tramways and railways and I agree with what they said. But is it not also an asset to the country to have private enterprise investing money in providing transport facilities?

Mr. Marshall: It is an investment in Yankeeland, not in this country. The money goes to Uncle Sam for rubber, spare parts and so on.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The money is spent by our own citizens.

Mr. Corboy: You want to turn Western Australia into a bowser for the U.S.A.!

Mr. H. W. MANN: If what hon. members interjecting suggest is the object, why not say so and prohibit motor transportation altogether?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: One would assume from the remarks of the member for Perth that I was asking permission to do something new. As a matter of fact, this regulation was passed by this House some years ago, and has been put into operation both by me and by my predecessor, so this is nothing new. The only reason for bringing it before the House is that the Full Court has decided that one of our regulations made under the Act is ultra vires. I have had this clause very carefully drafted by the Crown Law Department, and I think it will be found to be flawless. For five years we have thought the regulation was perfectly legal, but the Full Court now says it is wrong. Parliament, by passing this clause, will put the regulation in order. All that we are asking is to have put into right form something that Parliament agreed to five years ago.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I cannot understand the new-born zeal of the member for Perth for motor transport services. Does the hon. member want to take away the right of the Government to prohibit the picking up of passengers by motor buses in competition with the tramways? Particularly at a time like this, when railway revenue is falling, should we take the right to say that our tramways and railways shall not be open to competition by private enterprise.

Mr. MARSHALL: One has to view the position from the State point of view.

The Minister for Railways: That is a brain wave.

Mr. MARSHALL: Then it is more than the hon. member ever developed. I am surprised that any member should endeavour to secure protection for those who desire to compete with the State tramways. All our tramcars are made locally.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Are not the buses made locally?

Mr. MARSHALL: Only the bodies, and most of them are imported from South Australia.

Mr. Parker: Do not the motor buses provide employment for many in maintenance and repairs?

Mr. MARSHALL: Not nearly so many as are employed in maintaining and repairing our railways and tramways. Apart from labour, the whole cost of maintaining the buses represents money going out of the State for petrol and rubber and spare parts. Even if the buses were completely built in this State, their running costs are in the main supplied from America. Side by side with that, compare the production of local coal by which our railways and tramways are operated. We are in duty bound to protect the millions invested in the State utilities. I have no objection to buses run-

ning on routes where there are no tramways, but I think that buses should not be allowed to pick up the traffic that tramways were laid down to serve.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Minister for Works in introducing the Bill and explaining the clauses, especially Clause 4, said that he had acted in conjunction with a certain committee known as the Routes Advisory Board. He said that committee and himself had by joint effort produced Clause 4. But the Routes Advisory Board is a wholly illegal association. There is not a line in the Act authorising their creation or existence. To bring down a measure such as this and ask the House to accept it because this illegal association has approved of it, is an extraordinary step to take, and the only excuse the Minister can offer is that he is not the father of this illegitimate child. Another statement by the Minister to which I take exception is that he has power, without any good cause but simply at his own sweet will, to cancel any permit that has been issued to use any route. I am surprised at that statement, because these permits are issued for a certain period, and without proper cause it is not within the power of any Minister to cancel them. It would be a scandalous thing if such power were given, because by granting a permit we induce innocent persons to invest capital in a venture and so, as I say, it would be monstrous to cancel such a permit without good cause. I object to this clause for three reasons: In the first place I object to the actual form of the amendment: in the second place I object because to attain the desired object it is not necessary to insert this clause, and lastly I object to it on the ground that it creates a monopoly. Let me support each of those three reasons in turn. To begin with, if the Committee will look at this amendment contained in Clause 4, they will see that it gives power to the Governor to make regulations to prohibit, either absolutely or subject to prescribed conditions, the picking up or setting down of passengers for or from any omnibus at any place on any such portion of a prescribed route as coincides with or runs along or beside the route of any tramway or railway. It is not necessary that tramcars should run on the tramway or that trains should run on the railway. If a tramway is in existence, this power is to operate. It is not an impossible picture I am drawing, because it actually occurs, since the trams cease running at certain hours of the night, notwithstanding which the regulation would prohibit any taxi or bus from picking up passengers after the trams had ceased to run. Let me give an individual case. At Hollywood a child was suddenly taken seriously ill. The mother wanted to get her child as quickly as possible to a doctor. There she was, with taxis passing her door only too ready to take her, but on account of this regulation—there was the tramway there, consisting of two bare rails—the taxis had to pass on and refuse to help her to reach a doctor. That is what this clause means. As a monorail can exist, one old rusty rail laid from the back yard of the Works Department would be sufficient to satisfy the clause. The wording of the clause is absurd. If we sought to prohibit a motor bus running in competition with a tram that was actually using the rails at the time, it could be understood, but to prohibit it because there happened to be a tramline laid on the ground, well, could anyone justify it? It is so preposterous that I am surprised other members have not directed attention to it.

Mr. Kenneally: It is within the option of the Government not to prohibit.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: What a noble thing it would be to pass a measure giving the Government power not to do something!

Mr. Kenneally: If they did not want to do it, they need not.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Need not do something that is ridiculous! On the score of preventing any improper competition with railways or tramways, the clause is wholly unnecessary. Under the existing Act, before a route is prescribed, the Minister has to satisfy himself that there are not sufficient other facilities for the conveyance of passengers to, from or within the district proposed to be served. Thus he has complete power already not to prescribe a route when he is satisfied there are sufficient other facilities.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: People may travel from a district further out.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The power legitimately to protect the railways and tramways is adequate.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: I do not agree with that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I wish to impress upon members that the only legitimate form of protection would be against actual competition with a train or tram

running along the rails at the time. Do we want to go beyond that? I have no objection on the ground of monopoly. There are two landmarks in the history of legislation which for long years preceded the establishment of constitutional government, and they are the Statute of Monopolies and the Magna Charta. They were obtained after a bitter struggle between the Commons and the King, and represent a heritage for which we must show the greatest respect. The observance of those landmarks should never be departed from, except in special directions such as the post office and telegraph office, where a monopoly is absolutely necessary. The same argument applies to the patent law under which an inventor is given a monopoly in recognition of his service in inventing something new. Then, and then only, do we depart from the rule laid down in the whole line of history as a guiding mark for our actions. If we read the old law books, we find that various judges used the phrase that monopoly absolutely stinks. It is something repugnant to every sense of what is right and proper, and unless there is an absolute necessity for a monopoly, it should not be tolerated. Is it necessary in this instance? The Minister for Railways says that we must protect State-owned property, and the way to protect it is by granting a monopoly.

The Minister for Railways: I did not say that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I understood the Minister justified the possibility of its being termed a monopoly by saying it was State-owned, and therefore it was necessary to protect the revenue. The method of locomotion has changed rapidly within a few years. It is only a hundred years since the sedan chair was the sole means of locomotion. If the Minister for Railways had lived in those days and had been in politics, and the Government had happened to buy up all the sedan chairs, he would have said, "Let us have no other form of locomotion. We will not allow the horse-bus, the horse-tram or any other form of locomotion."

Mr. Corboy: You are the only one here who would look at home in a sedan chair.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If there were room for two, I might ask someone else to join me. Are we going to follow up the sedan-chair policy? Because existing facilities are State-owned, shall we refuse to recognise progress? The same problem has arisen elsewhere and has been dealt with in various ways. The Corporation of Leeds owned all the trams in that city, a system many times larger than ours. They scrapped the whole lot and adopted motor buses because they recognised the need for marching with the progress of the age.

The Minister for Railways: Did they allow others to compete with them? They created a monopoly.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They did not.

Mr. Raphael: Why do not your Government do the same thing?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is a good suggestion. It is the first time I have heard a good suggestion from that quarter. The motor bus is more expeditious and more comfortable and can travel on any road where traffic is required. It may be diverted at any moment for a special occasion. Why should we be tied down to a system simply because it is State-owned. For these reasons I urge the Committee to pause before passing this clause. I have not said anything, nor do I propose to say anything, of the injustice which might be done to those people who have invested capital in motor vehicles: nor am I saying anything of the grave inconvenience that would arise to many people in the outlying parts of the Perth-Fremantle district. To do so might introduce local colour, and I wish entirely to avoid local colour. What I have said I could have said with the same force, and would have said it, if, instead of being the member for Nedlands, I had been the member for Kalgoorlie. Every objection I have raised is based, not on local considerations, but on much wider considerations. I hope the Committee, before assenting to the clause, will consider the wider aspects and not allow this proposal to be an instrument, if not of retrogression, then of failure to march with the times.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I move—

That the Committee do now divide.

Motion put and negatived.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: People who are interested in the control of a public utility should have some rights in conserving the interests of the public. What the Chief Secretary has said regarding monopolies is all very well from a historical standpoint, but we have developed since those days. The difference between the monopolies he spoke of and monopolies of the present day

is that the earlier ones were sold by the King for his own personal benefit, an entirely different position from the Government endeavouring to conserve the interests of the people for the good of all. Every regulation made and every Act passed is approved of on the understanding that the Government will interpret their powers in a reasonable way.

Mr. Raphael: Did you ever know the present Government to do anything reasonable?

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: The Chief Secretary quoted a particular case to bolster up his argument, but no person or Government would launch a prosecution in such circumstances. We have laws prohibiting people from doing all sorts of things. If a man puts his hand on another, it is, by law, an assault, but if one man pats another on the back no one would think of taking action against him for assault. All sorts of ridiculous suggestions could be offered of things that might happen. The Government must have power to make regulations and to administer laws wisely and properly in the interests of the people. So long as they do that we would be wise to give the Government power to make regulations to conserve the interests of the people. As a representative of a country district, I do not want the State to be faced with a loss of £10,000 or £15,000 on the trams, because my electors would have to pay their share of the extra taxation to make good the loss. It would not be right of me to permit something to happen that would place my electors in that position. I am satisfied to trust the Government to make regulations. If they use their powers unwisely we can take action in this House, but I think they will use them in the interests of the public generally.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I was interested to hear the Chief Secretary explain the use of sedan chairs 100 years ago. I would remind him that not many years ago I rode in a sedan chair, which was the only means whereby I could arrive at my destination. In these circumstances a sedan chair in 1931 is also a useful means of transport. That is not what we are called upon to decide. From the funds of the community over a million sterling has been invested in our tramways. It is no use the Chief Secretary suggesting that because in recent years other means of transport have come to light we should not be concerned with the investment of public money. Apparently we should not restrict the methods that may be employed by the owners of buses and taxis lest they should not result in a profit to those who have invested their money. If he were the chairman of directors of a company he would not allow some other enterprise to step in and deprive his shareholders of their capital. There is no intention to preclude buses and taxis from operating in the metropolitan area, so long as in giving service to the community they do not injure something in which the community is directly interested. The law provides that if a tram ceases to operate along a pair of rusty rails, as the Chief Secretary puts it, buses and taxis may resume the work of picking up and setting down passengers. The Town Planning Commission, which investigated this matter, said that bus routes and taxi routes should be prescribed away from the trams. It is not possible to do that entirely. When the route between Perth and Fremantle was permitted, it was not intended that the vehicles should run along the tram track and deprive the trams of their legitimate business. Our desire is that when these buses and taxis reach a certain point along the tram route they shall be prevented from setting down and picking up passengers. If any other route can be prescribed there is no reason why it should not be done. But there would be a great noise if any route away from settlement was prescribed on the ground that these settlements were already provided with tramway facilities. There is no comparison between buses and trams when it comes to handling big masses of people. It is not right that buses should be allowed to operate in a district that has already been pioneered by the tramway services.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Fully 80 per cent. of the buses are away from the tramlines.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: They are not. It is not their place to run along tram tracks upon which so much public money has been spent. I do not suggest they should go off the road, nor am I suggesting a monopoly. What we want to do is to protect these public investments. A certain section of people in Claremont clamoured for a tramway service and made certain promises which they have not fulfilled. They now suggest that the buses should operate against the trams. They want to

transfer their obligations to other centres where the trams are operating, but, if the same privilege were accorded to those other parts as well, the tramways would be thrown on the hands of the general community. I have no objection to the buses operating in a legitimate manner, but I do object to their being allowed seriously to affect the revenue of the tramways. Already the people cannot afford the facilities they have in the metropolitan area. They must have trams. Last year these shifted 35½ million people and to do this ran only 2,604,000 car miles. But the buses and taxis required 6,800,000 miles to carry 7,000,000 passengers, almost a mile per passenger, thus overcrowding our thoroughfares. We could not possibly get through without the trams.

Mr. H. W. Mann: It is strange that London gets through without them.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We did not, as has been suggested by the Chief Secretary, invite the motor bus companies to invest their money. Once a bus or taxi line is allowed to operate, the Government are up against vested interests and public clamour often originating from those interests. Our duty at the moment is to protect the interests of the community, and while giving reasonable facilities of transport to see that there is no loss.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

That progress be reported.

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

Ayes	.. ..	19
Noes	.. ..	15
Majority for	.. ..	4

AYES.	
Mr. Angelo	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Barnard	Mr. Parker
Mr. Brown	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Doney	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Latham	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Wells
Mr. H. W. Mann	Mr. North
Mr. J. I. Mann	(*Teller.*)

NOES.	
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Willcock
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Millington	Mr. Withers
Mr. Panton	(*Teller.*)

PAIRS.	
AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Teesdale	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Munsie
Mr. J. M. Smith	Mr. Cunningham
Sir James Mitchell	Mr. Collier
Mr. Davy	Mr. Johnson

Motion thus passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.16 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 26th May, 1931.

	PAGE
Condolence, letter in reply	3069
Questions: Railways overtime, withdrawn	3069
Pine plantation, Ludlow	3070
Leave of absence	3070
Papers: Forestry, goldfields, mining, and firewood supplies	3070
Motion: Motor accidents, to amend Traffic Act ...	3070
Bill: Road Districts Act Amendment, order discharged	3074

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

MOTION—CONDOLENCE.

Letter in Reply.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I have received the following acknowledgment from Mr. Russell Stephenson in respect of the motion of condolence forwarded by hon. members:—

Will you please convey to the members of your Council our sincere appreciation of their sympathy contained in their motion of condolence, and also accept our thanks for your personal message of sympathy on behalf of our family. Believe me, yours sincerely, (Sgd.) Russell Stephenson.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, OVERTIME.

Withdrawn.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Notice of Question No. 1 has been given by the Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom.