

Clause thus negatived.

Clauses 13 to 15—agreed to.

New Clause:

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

I move:—

That a new clause be inserted to stand as Clause 3 as follows:—"Nothing in this Act shall affect or be construed to derogate from the operation of the Forests Act, 1918-31."

New clause put and passed.

New clause:

Mr. SAMPSON: I move:—

That a new clause be inserted to stand as Clause 5 as follows:—Any person who, in any locality, area, or part of the State specified in a proclamation under section four, wilfully picks, during the protected period mentioned in the proclamation, any protected wild flower or protected native plant to which the proclamation relates, commits an offence; provided that this subsection shall not apply where such wild flower or native plant is picked on any private land with the consent of the owner, lessee, or licensee thereof.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I move an amendment:—

That the words "with the consent of the owner, lessee or licensee thereof" be struck out.

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

Schedule:

Mr. HEGNEY: I am not clear whether the schedule contains the names of the only plants that are to be proclaimed.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I move:—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

Schedule put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 9.43 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 7th November, 1935.

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

QUESTION—JUDICIAL AND ANALOGOUS POSITIONS.

Hon. W. J. MANN asked the Chief Secretary: Will he supply a return showing— (i) The names of all persons holding judicial positions, commissions, or membership on statutory boards or commissions in Western Australia; (ii) the following information in respect to each of such persons— (a) designation of position held; (b) age; (c) date of appointment; (d) remuneration; (e) other allowances, gratuities, or emoluments; (f) privileges and immunities enjoyed, and (g) travelling expenses actually drawn during the three years preceding 30th June, 1935?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The preparation of such a return would involve infinite research, considerable loss of time and great expense. Therefore, it is regretted that this information cannot be supplied without the strongest justification. Perhaps the hon. member would be as well served by compressing his requirements into a much narrower compass. And may I suggest to the hon. member that if this information, involving important matters, is required, he should move for a return, and give reasons?

QUESTION—HOSPITAL TAX AND BUDGET.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Under what heading of revenue in the annual financial returns submitted to Parliament with the Budget does the item of hospital tax appear? 2, Will the Government arrange to have this item separately shown on the revenue page of the quarterly financial returns published with the "Government Gazette"?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Collections of the so-called Hospital Tax are Hospital Fund Contributions imposed by Act No. 40 of 1930, which is incorporated with the Hospital Fund Act No. 39 of 1930. The Act provides—(a) a Hospital Fund shall be established, to be administered by the department (i.e., Medical Department); (b) all moneys belonging to the fund shall be paid into a special account, to be kept at the Treasury. The contributions are therefore not Revenue, and consequently the amount collected cannot appear under Revenue in the Annual Financial Returns submitted to Parliament. Return No. 12 of the Budget sets out the transactions on the Hospital Fund for the year 1934-35. 2, For the reasons given in No. 1 the item cannot appear as Revenue in the Quarterly Financial Returns.

BILL—WORKERS' HOMES AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Recommendation.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Angelo, Bill re-committed for the further consideration of Clauses 2 and 3.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Nicholson in the Chair; Hon. J. Cornell in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Workers' dwellings on certain goldfields (as amended):

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

That the words "the Coolgardie, East Coolgardie, Dundas, Murchison, East Murchison, North-East Coolgardie, and Yilgarn goldfields," lines 3 and 4, be struck out, and "any proclaimed goldfield" inserted in lieu.

Last night names of several goldfields were proposed by various members for insertion in the clause. What do we know as to the possibilities of all these goldfields proving permanent? Workers' homes are to be built

only after the board have satisfied themselves as to the advisableness of doing so and have reported accordingly to the Minister. We would be quite safe, therefore, in leaving the decision where homes are to be built, entirely to the board.

Hon. J. Cornell: The board have that power under the Act.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Under the Act the maximum amount is £800. Under the Bill the maximum is £450, with a 10-years term for repayment. Why not leave the whole question to the board, who have time to make the necessary inquiries? The passing of the amendment would, I consider, make the matter much clearer for everybody. After the Bill has been passed, some new goldfield might be found to be permanent. On the other hand, an existing goldfield might be found, upon investigation, to be not quite an area on which workers' homes should be built; and then the board would have the unpleasant duty of refusing applications from that goldfield while its name appeared in the measure. If it is made to read simply, "any proclaimed goldfield," it will be much clearer.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment. I considered it when I was having the Bill drafted and I deliberately left out two goldfields, namely Phillips River and Broad Arrow, from the draft because there is no justification for the extension of the workers' homes scheme to those fields. To leave it, "any proclaimed goldfield," would more or less reduce it to a farce. We might as well say "east of the rabbit-proof fence," because the country east of the rabbit-proof fence consists largely of proclaimed goldfields. On behalf of Mr. Seddon, Mr. Elliott and Mr. Richard Moore, if this amendment be defeated I will move for the inclusion of two other goldfields inadvertently omitted. We should not go beyond areas where the prospects are such as to justify immediate attention on the part of the Workers' Homes Board. I understand that Mr. Miles has no desire that the Bill should extend to the North.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is so, we do not want it there.

The HONORARY MINISTER: There is something in what Mr. Cornell has said, although, as I remarked previously, I do not think it matters much what is in the Bill because the Workers' Homes Board already

have power to erect homes in any part of the State. I am speaking really to give a little information to the Committee arising out of yesterday's discussion as to the rate of interest charged by the Workers' Homes Board. It will be remembered that I said the rate charged on a leasehold property was $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Mr. Cornell contradicted that and said it was five per cent. Since the last sitting I have communicated with the board and have received this reply—

In reply to your inquiry re interest rates, I have to advise that the present interest rate charged by the board on leasehold properties is $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. net.

Assistance under the leasehold section of the Act up to the year 1927 was granted at an interest rate of 5 per cent. net. In 1927 the interest rate was increased to 6 per cent. net, and on the 1st January, 1935, a reduction of $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. was approved, making a net interest rate on leasehold business of $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

All leasehold business approved prior to 1927 carried an interest rate of 5 per cent. net. The increase was not, of course, retrospective, and all clients whose security documents had previously provided an interest rate of 5 per cent. continued without alteration. Mr. Cornell was amongst the number.

All new business since 1927 has been charged, as previously stated, 6 per cent. net to the 1st January, 1935, and $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. net since.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Is there not a rebate bringing it down to five per cent.?

The HONORARY MINISTER: No, $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. is the net rate.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: I hope members will not be misled by Mr. Cornell's remarks. From what he said it might be thought that if this amendment be carried, workers' homes will be built on any goldfield in the State. But members should read the concluding line of the clause, namely, "under and subject to Part III." Part III. prescribes that the Minister can cause workers' homes to be built only after a recommendation by the Workers' Homes Board. So, if the amendment be carried no workers' homes will be built in any place of which the board do not approve. The reason for the amendment is to leave the question entirely in the hands of the Workers' Homes Board. The onus should be on them to say in which goldfields homes should be built. The amendment would simplify the position.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I do not agree with Mr. Angelo that the Workers' Homes Board should be the authority to determine whether any given goldfield is going to be permanent. Like Mr. Cornell, I think it is within the

province of the Committee to enumerate the districts in which workers' homes may be built. If the amendment be carried, it will mislead a lot of unfortunate people in outlying goldfields districts who will expect that workers' homes may be built in their district. Those people will be put to a lot of trouble and finally will be disappointed.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I will oppose the amendment. It is not a right function for the Committee to recommend the expenditure of money for this purpose on any goldfield. The very members behind this proposition to extend the scheme to the goldfields are doubtful as to the permanency of the goldfields, and so they suggested that houses be built which would be capable of removal. Mr. Thomson suggested that the lining should be screwed on, so that it could be taken down without damage. It is ridiculous for the Council to suggest that the Government should find public money to be put into this proposed speculation. And the taxpayers are really the Government, for it is they who have to find the money. Presently some member will come along and ask the taxpayers to find money to develop wild-cat gold mines. The Bill should be defeated.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I regret that Mr. Miles should have become an ardent disciple of Jeremiah, as his lamentations show. Only a week ago I would not have believed it of Mr. Miles, and even now I think it is only a momentary lapse.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. J. CORNELL: To meet the wishes of the North-East Province members, who desire to have included Menzies, Leonora, Gwalia and Laverton, I move an amendment—

That after "North-East Coolgardie" there be inserted "North Coolgardie and Mt. Margaret."

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

Clause 3—Advances for homes in certain goldfields:

The CHAIRMAN: The clause will be consequentially amended in accordance with the amendment just made to Clause 2.

Clause, as consequentially amended, put and passed.

Bill further reported with further amendments.

BILL—LOAN, £2,627,000.*Second Reading.*

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [5.0] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this Bill is to give the Government the necessary authority to raise money for carrying out the works detailed in the Loan Estimates. The Bill does not authorise the expenditure of the money raised: it merely provides the authority for raising the money, and is a necessary preliminary to the actual flotation of loans on the market. The functions of the Loan Council do not override the requirements under State and Commonwealth laws, and, consequently, an annual Loan Bill is necessary to meet the requirements of our statutes. Furthermore, the amount set down in the Loan Bill is not necessarily the amount that the Loan Council is requested to raise during the year, as that body raises the total amount of the anticipated Loan expenditure and deficit requirements, less the estimated amounts of repayments and local raisings. The Loan Bill amount depends upon the position of authorisations under previous Loan Acts. It is necessary to have sufficient authority in hand to enable works to be carried on until further Loan Act authority can be obtained, and, for that reason, the balance of authority should always be equal to about six months' expenditure. The Bill now before the House will ensure the maintenance of that position. It requests authority for the raising of a total amount of £2,627,000. Of this amount £2,327,000 is required for works and £300,000 for deficits. The Loan Act for last year authorised an amount of £750,000 for deficits, and as the actual deficit was only £167,095, the balance of the authority—£582,905—was used to clear portion of the deficit accumulated to 30th June, 1933, which was not fully covered by Loan Act authority.

The Budget deficit for the current year is £255,647, but an increase in the Commonwealth Grant will reduce that amount to £55,647, and it is proposed to utilise the difference between this amount and the £300,000 provided for in the Bill, for the purpose of still further reducing that portion of the deficit at the 30th June, 1933, which was not specifically covered by Loan Act authority. The balance of the accumulated deficit at the 1st July, 1935, was £943,525, to which must be added the current year's estimated deficit of £55,647—

making a total of £999,172. After allowing for the authority of £300,000 under the present Bill, a balance of £699,172 will still require authorisation. The whole of the accumulated deficit has been financed by Treasury bills, which are treated as a short term debt of a temporary nature. Ultimately, some part, if not the whole of the amount, will have to be cleared by a funding operation, and, in that case, the terms of the Financial Agreement come into operation.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Nearly time, too.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: This will mean increased interest charges, and, in addition, a 4 per cent. sinking fund will have to be provided. Even if the amount could be funded at an interest rate of 3½ per cent., the increased cost of interest and sinking fund would represent a sum of £52,500 for each million pounds, and this would have a disastrous effect on our Budget. It would undoubtedly mean heavily increased taxation, or, alternatively, further money would have to be raised to meet deficits—thus compounding the burden.

Two loans were raised by the Loan Council last year—the first one being floated in November for an amount of £15,000,000. The issue price was £99 15s., and interest 3 per cent. over a term of 14 years. This was the lowest interest rate of any Commonwealth loan floated since the commencement of the Financial Agreement.

Hon. L. Craig: And will be the lowest for some time.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: Of this loan, £2,750,000 was used for funding bills and the balance of £12,250,000 was applied to the works programme. The loan was over-subscribed, and our share amounted to £1,300,300 which was allocated as follows—

	£
Available for works	998,978
Funding of Bills	290,000
Expenses and discount	11,322
	<hr/>
	£1,300,300

The second loan was floated in June for an amount of £12,500,000, at an issue price of £99 10s., and interest at 3½ per cent. for a term of 14 years. Although it carried a higher interest rate than the previous flotation, it was not fully subscribed, and the underwriters had to take up quite an appreciable amount. The allocation of the money is not yet finalised but the amount for this

State will be approximately £1,326,000, and will be applied as follows:—

	£
Works programme, 1934-35 ..	130,000
Works programme, 1935-36 ..	958,000
Deficit (estimated), 1935-36 ..	60,000
Funding Bills ..	160,000
Expenses and Discount ..	18,000
Total ..	£1,326,000

The gross public debt at the 30th June last was £88,590,176, inclusive of short term debts in London and Australia amounting to—

	£
Australia	5,550,000
London	3,031,414
Total ..	£8,581,414

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It is on the eight millions you have to pay a 4 per cent. sinking fund.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The total flotations to date amount to £104,810,948, and of that amount £60,604,468 was raised overseas and the balance—£44,206,480—was raised in Australia. The total redemptions amount to £16,220,772, of which sum £14,059,066 represents overseas redemptions and £2,161,706 loans redeemed in Australia. The sinking fund at the 30th June, 1935, amounted to £523,815, thus leaving a net debt of £88,066,361—an increase of £2,589,971 on the balance shown at the end of the previous financial year. The gross Loan programme approved by the Loan Council for this State for the current year is £2,680,000. In addition to that sum, the Council approved of the State drawing a further amount of £200,000 against last year's programme to cover commitments on machinery purchased under contract for the East Perth power house. The estimated Loan expenditure for the current year is £2,677,000. These estimates were based on the amount necessary to maintain the Government employment scheme at, approximately, the same level as operated last year. Hon. members realise, however, that the estimates are based on the supposition that the Loan Council will be able to raise the money necessary to meet the approved programmes. If the loans floated are not fully subscribed, it may be necessary to revise the estimates, and, in that case, the expenditure would have to be correspondingly curtailed.

In addition to the ordinary loan, the Commonwealth Government have made available, as a grant, a sum of £120,000 for assistance in works and £100,000 for forestry purposes, on a £ for £ basis with State expenditure, and they have also granted £50,000 for prospecting. The actual Loan expenditure for last year (1934-35) was £2,784,185. The estimated expenditure for the current year, 1935-36, is expected to be £2,677,021. The provision for railways and tramways shows an increase of £70,000 over the previous year. Part of this is necessary to enable the programme of overtaking belated repairs to be continued. Up to the 30th June last £362,596 had been expended in this direction. I explained last year that this money is by way of an advance from Loan Fund only, and that annual appropriations from revenue would be made to recoup loan moneys. Of the amount expended to the 30th June, £170,000 has already been recouped from revenue, and it is proposed to recoup a further sum of £100,000 during the current year and to continue this action until the total advance has been cleared.

The provision for rolling stock has also been increased this year. The expenditure last year was £6,724, and provision is made in the current year's estimates for an expenditure of £100,000 on this work. It is proposed to commence a five years' programme to bring our rolling stock up to date, at an estimated total expenditure of £273,000. The proposals include the provision of faster passenger services over country lines, and the introduction of rail cars for passengers and for parcel deliveries. It is intended to obtain one complete car and five chassis, together with necessary material for metal framework and panels. The bodies for the five cars will then be built locally. The principal works carried out last year were regrading, ballasting, and deviation works. These operations are undoubtedly reproductive works as they reduce grades and enable a faster and cheaper service to be maintained. The Railway Department estimates that these improvements represent a reproductive expenditure of five per cent.

An amount of £25,000 has been earmarked for the provision of a new central tramway substation for Perth. The necessity for this has been apparent for some years, and conditions now make it imperative that the accommodation be provided.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Will you not be scrapping the trams altogether within the next ten years or so?

Hon. L. B. Bolton: We should be.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot say. Tenders for machinery for the East Perth power house have been accepted, and a commencement has been made with foundations for the new building. A sum of £200,000 was provided last year for this purpose, but certain unforeseen obstacles prevented the payment of the money to the contractors, and it has been held in suspense and will be paid out during the current year. An additional amount of £175,000 is provided this year, and the total sum will be sufficient to meet all commitments for the current year, including exchange.

A small provision has been made to meet survey expenses and land resumption claims in respect of the proposed Yuna-Dartmoor and Southern Cross southwards railways, on which preliminary work has been started.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What has been the season there?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What does the preliminary work consist of? Shooting galahs?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The galahs have disappeared.

Hon. W. J. Mann: What about the emus?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The provision for harbours and rivers shows a decrease this year of £40,793, the expenditure last year being £291,293 as compared with an estimated expenditure of £250,500 for the current year. The completion of the Esperance jetty accounts for £38,882 of the decrease, and the amount provided for the Geraldton harbour is £24,800 less than it was last year. Against this, there is an increased provision of £18,315 for harbour facilities in the Roebourne district, including the construction of the approach and the jetty at Point Sampson. The preliminary work was carried out last year, and during the current year it is expected that the approach will be completed and the jetty work will be advanced to the final stages.

Then again £5,000 has been provided for additions and improvements in the North-West. The principal expenditure will be on the provision of insulated trucks, and jetty and shed accommodation in connection with the banana growing industry at Carnarvon. It is expected to complete the reconstruction of that portion of the Ashburton jetty which was destroyed by a cyclone in 1933. Further progress will be made

with the extension of the breakwater and jetty improvements at Bunbury, and work will be continued on the Victoria Quay at Fremantle. Other estimated expenditure on this class of work approximates closely to that of last year.

The provision for water supply, sewerage and drainage work covers the requirements for the whole of the State. The expenditure last year was £1,068,521, and the estimated expenditure for the current year is £1,143,500, an increase of £74,979. Provision is made for further improvements to the Geraldton water supply, and for meeting the State's share of the cost of schemes approved under the Commonwealth works programme. Improvements will be made to water supplies on stock routes. The change over from cattle to sheep in some districts will necessitate the provision of additional wells so as to reduce the travelling distance between supplies. Expenditure on the sewerage and drainage requirements for Perth and Fremantle amounted to £315,625 last year, and this year's provision is £375,000, an increase of £59,375. The main sewer for the Claremont-Cottesloe area was completed last year, and a commencement has been made in the reticulation of the district. The Perth gravitation sewer, to carry sewage from the south side of the river, was commenced, and further progress was made towards the completion of the Maylands-Inglewood drainage scheme.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Is it true that the filter beds will be done away with by June next?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I understand that will be so.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That will be a blessing.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I shall refer to that matter in a minute. It is expected that the reticulation of the Claremont-Cottesloe area will be practically completed this year, and that Pumping Stations No. 1 and 2 in the Claremont area, and a pumping station in the Cottesloe district will be constructed. The Perth gravitation sewer is advanced to such a stage that it is expected to be able to close the Burswood filter beds about the middle of next year.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Hear, hear!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The work in connection with the Canning Dam is being proceeded with satisfactorily, the present storage capacity being 80 feet, equal to, approximately, 800,000,000 gallons. This will enable a fairly large proportion of hills'

water to be provided to the metropolitan area during the coming summer, and will permit the department to close down the objectionable bores at Fremantle, with a consequent saving in pumping costs, which is estimated to amount to £4,000 for the current year. Increased storage capacity has been provided in the metropolitan area by the completion of the Buckland Hill reservoir and the continuation of the enlargement of the reservoir in King's Park. Some 32½ miles of the goldfields water main were reconditioned last year, and 19 miles of various sizes of new steel and wood pipes were laid. To the 30th June last, about one-half of the main had been either reconditioned or relaid, leaving about 140 miles still to be attended to. It is estimated that it will take three years to complete the work. Portion of the expenditure necessary to improve storage along the main is being met under the Commonwealth scheme of works, and also the cost of certain branch mains to serve mining areas. A branch main has been completed to supply water to the mines at Yellowdine. Extensions to Bullfinch and Burbidge are under construction, and the extension to Marvel Loch has been completed. It is expected that work will be commenced very shortly on the Norseman extension. Other supplies are receiving attention and will be pushed on with as soon as possible. Work was continued, and in some cases completed, in connection with irrigation areas of the South-West. It is not proposed to undertake any additional comprehensive drainage schemes in the South-West during the current year, but it is intended to devote more attention to the outlying wheat areas, by the employment of three boring plants, capable of boring to 500 feet. Although the amount of £50,000 provided for the development of gold mining this year is £9,164 less than the expenditure for last year, the amount will be supplemented by the grant made by the Commonwealth for prospecting, and so the total amount available will not be less than that expended last year. There are about 700 men engaged under the State prospecting scheme, and about 800 under the Commonwealth arrangement. Many of those assisted in the past have been successful, and about 14 per cent. of the total expenditure has been recovered. In addition to that, the value of the gold won has benefited the State indirectly. The efforts of the

State in the provision of batteries are also being supplemented by the Commonwealth grant, although the Commonwealth money is entirely for the encouragement of, and the supply of water to, private batteries.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It is just as well we did not secede from the Commonwealth.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. The expenditure on the development of agriculture last year amounted to £414,649, and the estimate for the current year is £340,500—a decrease of £74,149. The decreases are:—

	£
Abattoirs	30,569
Development of agriculture, lands, etc.	32,770
Group Settlement	5,974
Forestry	51,084
Total	£120,397

Increases of £45,579 in assistance to settlers and of £669 in land settlement of soldiers are expected. The amount of £10,000 provided for development of agriculture under the Agricultural Bank and Industries Assistance Board is mainly for the purpose of alleviating hardship caused by the drought in the north-eastern portion of the wheat belt. This amount can be supplemented by a balance of £257,000, which was standing to the credit of the Agricultural Bank trust account at the 30th June last.

Hon. J. Cornell: Is that a discovery?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot say. The amount has been standing to the credit of the trust account and can be used for that purpose.

Hon. T. Moore: It will be very useful this year.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This balance has been accumulated through the alteration in the method of collecting interest on capital money provided for the Bank by the Treasury. Repayments of principal are now preserved to the Bank for re-advancement, and it is within the power of the commissioners to decide how the funds shall be applied. There is no doubt that they will give sympathetic consideration to all reasonable requests. Their action in providing fodder supplies is an illustration of their readiness to meet any such situation.

Hon. J. Cornell: Those supplies were provided not by the commissioners but by the Government.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Is there an item for a building for the Department of Agriculture? That is needed at once.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not think so. The decrease in abattoirs expenditure is due to the completion of the enlargement of the Midland abattoirs. The amount provided this year is to finalise accounts and to carry out necessary improvements to the stockyards at Kalgoorlie. The work of reconditioning holdings and of land settlement schemes is being gradually discontinued, and the expenditure on group settlement is also being reduced as far as possible.

Although the provision for forestry works shows a substantial decrease, the amount provided will be supplemented by a pound-for-pound subsidy from the Commonwealth, so that actually an amount of £200,000 will be expended in forestation work during the current year. The arrangement with the Commonwealth has enabled an impetus to be given to this work, with a result that 49,429 acres were treated last year for the regeneration of jarrah, karri and mallet forests. The total dealt with now amounts to 260,329 acres, and over 1,000 men are employed in the work. Of mallet 1,200 acres were sown last year, and a further 673 acres have been cleared. The total area of mallet plantations at the 30th June was 6,609 acres.

The expenditure on roads and bridges, public buildings, etc., last year was £371,304, and the estimated expenditure for the current year is £230,244, a reduction of £141,000. Portion of this difference is due to the fact that amounts of £75,465 on account of roads and bridges and £20,000 on account of loans and grants were recouped to loan suspense account in respect to expenditure for 1933-34. In addition to this adjustment, the expenditure on roads and bridges has been considerably reduced for the current year, and work will be confined almost entirely to the provision of roads not covered by the Federal aid roads scheme. Now that the unemployment position has eased somewhat, it is considered advisable to divert as much loan expenditure as possible into channels that will be directly remunerative.

It has been found necessary to increase the provision for public buildings for the current year. Last year's expenditure was £97,064, and this year's estimate is £120,000. The erection of a new school for girls at East Perth was commenced last year, the

estimated cost being £60,000. The bulk of the expenditure on this building will be chargeable to this year's Vote. It is still necessary to expend money on the restoration of public buildings, but such expenditure will be recouped to loan in annual instalments.

The amount provided for State hotels is for the purpose of a loan to the Rottnest Board of Control for the provision of necessary improvements on the island. Interest and sinking fund repayments will be met out of the board's revenue. That will be the responsibility of the board. It has also been found necessary to provide a sum of £3,644 to enable the State Ferries to supplement the South Perth service by the addition of a new boat.

Hon. J. Cornell: Has Yallingup Cave House been repaired yet?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot say.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: No, and there is no vote for it either.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The Government took the fire insurance money into revenue.

Hon. J. Cornell: They took into revenue also the proceeds from the Golden Eagle nugget.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Every effort is being made to curtail loan expenditure without unduly affecting the unemployment problem. Wherever possible, expenditure is being transferred to items that will give directly remunerative returns. This presents a problem that must receive very serious consideration on account of the fact that such works usually absorb a large percentage of the expenditure in materials, thus reducing the amount available for wages and salaries. If members will give me an early indication of any further information they require, I will do my best to obtain it for them. There is no need to pass the Bill immediately, but if members desire to have any further information I should be glad to hear of it during the next week or so. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, debate adjourned.

BILL—DIVORCE AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 23rd October.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [5.40]: This is a very short Bill, and it has

certainly been so well explained by Mr. Parker that his remarks need no amplification. Although its object is to amend our divorce law, the Bill does not seek in any way to enlarge the facilities for divorce. It is intended to remedy an undesirable position which has been manifest for many years. Had the Bill been designed to extend the facilities for obtaining divorce, I think members generally would have agreed that there was no room for adding to the causes upon which a petition for divorce might be founded beyond those already provided for in the statute. We have provided various grounds for divorce, and probably we have made provision to a fuller extent than is done in many other places. When a decree nisi has been obtained by a petitioner, the respondent has often been faced with the position of the petitioner refusing to proceed to obtain the decree absolute, and so accomplish the dissolution of the marriage. So long as the decree nisi has not been made absolute, the marriage has not been absolutely dissolved, and it is competent under the existing law for only the petitioner to make application for an order absolute. Oftentimes, as Mr. Parker pointed out, petitioners having obtained the decree nisi have sat back and said, "Very well, I am content to remain here, and I will see that the respondent is not given an opportunity to remarry." Neither party may remarry until the decree nisi has been made absolute. I think it is in the interests of morality that where the petitioner proves obstinate and does not avail himself or herself of the provisions to complete the petition for divorce by obtaining the absolute order, the respondent should be given the facility to do so.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Cannot a respondent do that at present?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No; that step can be taken only by the petitioner. The result is that a respondent is often placed in a very serious position. It may have been that the respondent was guilty of adultery, and the two guilty parties may desire, if a divorce can be obtained, to marry. Is it not in the interests of morality that they should be allowed to remarry? Obviously it is. The position in which the petitioner is placed at present is a curious one, but it is unfortunate for the respondent. The only remedy the respon-

dent may have as the law stands now is to apply to the court for a setting aside of the proceedings for non-prosecution. That is not a desirable thing. The action has proceeded so far, up to the granting of the decree nisi. If the action should be dismissed for non-prosecution on the part of the petitioner, the parties will be back again at the starting point, and would have to resume de novo the application to get the nuptial knot untied. All the expense incurred by the parties in the first instance would therefore be wasted. The Bill will enable the respondent to make application to the court after a certain time so that the difficulty may be overcome, and it will also enable the respondent to ask that the order shall be made absolute.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What is the position in other parts of the British Empire?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: In New Zealand the respondent I am informed may move in this direction according to the law. I think there is a provision to the same effect in the law of one or perhaps two of the other States of the Commonwealth. The position has been recognised as a proper one to endeavour to meet. Certain amendments may be necessary, but the measure can be regarded in every way as desirable, looked at from the moral standpoint if from no other. It will provide facilities for those actions, when once they have been started, to be proceeded with to finality. I support the second reading.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.50 p.m.