

covered the main points raised during the debate. Larger issues relating to the Main Roads Board I propose to deal with pretty fully on the Loan Estimates, giving an account of what has been done, the difficulties we are up against and what it is proposed to do. We have decentralised the work, subdividing the State into nine districts, putting an engineer in charge of each of those districts and establishing a local district office. Plans and specifications will be prepared in the respective districts, instead of an engineer having to go out and put them into a field book and that field book subsequently having to be brought back here again. We shall have a district office with an engineer located in the district with his field assistant, and the whole of the work will be done out there so that the local authority can keep in touch with the office and know exactly what is going on. When plans and specifications are complete they will come up to head office for approval, and tenders will be called from that office. That will expedite the work materially, minimise costs and allow the Main Roads Board to keep in touch with the local authorities. Approval has been given for the engagement of the staff, and that plan will be put in hand right away. As I say, I will deal more fully with it when the Loan Estimates are before us.

Item—Draftsmen and cadets ranging from £72 to £288 per annum, subject to automatic increases under Public Service and cadet regulations, £2,800:

Mr LATHAM: I should like to ask the Minister whether there is any truth in the statement that cadets from the University are unable to get engagements here, although young fellows brought from other parts of the world have no such difficulty. I hope it is not true, for since we are providing a free university for those young men, it is only fair that they should be given openings here.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We initiated a scheme some years ago, under which we take all the University students during the recess and put them on to Government work, where they are kept all through the recess. Afterwards they go back to the University, having entered into an agreement with us to work for the department for two years dating from the completion of their studies at the Univer-

sity. So we are giving them, not only theoretical training at the University, but practical work in the department. We get an undertaking from them that they will stop with us for two years after leaving the University.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 11.20 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Wednesday, 31st October, 1928.*

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

### QUESTION—STOCK REGULATIONS.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is the Minister aware that the regulations governing transhipment of stock, at Parkeston, from the Eastern States, were broken on or about the 13th inst.? 2, Is it true that the gates were removed or broken at the Parkeston yards, thereby allowing the cattle to travel a considerable distance over ground frequented by local dairy cattle? 3, Seeing that the incident was reported by the local stock inspector, do the Government intend to take action to prevent future breaches of the law, and avert the danger of pleuro being introduced among goldfields dairy cattle?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, From the inspector's report this would appear to be the case. 3, This matter is receiving consideration.

**BILL—FEEDING STUFFS.**

Report of Committee adopted.

**MOTION—MAIN ROADS BOARD,  
ADMINISTRATION.**

*To inquire by Select Committee.*

Debate resumed from 24th October on the following motion by Hon. H. Stewart:—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the provisions of the Main Roads Act, 1925, and the administration thereof.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.37]: Usually when a demand is made for a select committee or a Royal Commission it is brought about by the fact that information on a particular subject is either not available to members of the House, or for some reason or other it appears that the information is being withheld. In this particular case the position seems to be somewhat reversed, as any information that might be required by members has been made available, particularly in relation to the operations of the Main Roads Board. But apparently while that information has been made available, it has not been considered satisfactory. So much is this so that the statement has been made that the Leader of the House has given information, which has been supplied to him and which is stated to be incorrect. Judging by what has been said in the House already, the main reason for this demand for a select committee is that in the opinion of some members the Main Roads Board have been influenced in some of their actions by political considerations.

Hon. H. Stewart: That was not the main reason in the original speech I made in moving for the select committee.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER**: It has been one of the chief considerations put forward by several speakers in support of the motion. It is a perfectly fair statement for me to make.

Hon. J. Cornell: There is nothing new about that.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER**: Just so. For instance, Mr. Holmes, first of all by interjection, said that men were sent into a certain district to vote, not to work.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I never said anything of the kind. What I said was that if men were sent to vote and not to work, the

matter should be inquired into. It is not the first time the hon. member has misrepresented me.

**THE PRESIDENT**: The Honorary Minister must accept the statement made by Mr. Holmes.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER**: I will accept the statement, but at the same time I must remark that "Hansard" shows that the hon. member interjected that the men were sent to vote and not to work.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Do you accept my explanation?

**THE HONORARY MINISTER**: Yes, but at the same time I point out that for once "Hansard" must be wrong.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is not in order to quote "Hansard" of the current session.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER**: The hon. member also interjected that there was no work in that particular district. Then when he rose to speak, almost the first words he used were to the effect that a prima facie case had been made out for the appointment of a select committee. I propose to examine that prima facie case and see what it consists of. First of all, letters in the Press. One of them was from a defeated candidate at the last general elections; a gentleman who for many years has been prominent in the political party to which he belongs and who, I believe, has held official positions. Another was a letter appearing in the "West Australian" under the nom de plume of "Economist," which from its contents appeared to have been inspired for the purpose of this motion. The information contained in that letter could only have been obtained from a certain place, and I would say it could only have been supplied in a certain way. In addition to that, there was a letter addressed to Mr. Kempton from a gentleman who was engaged as organiser for the consultative council at the last general elections, and whose letter purported to convey to Mr. Kempton something the writer had been told by somebody else. Again, articles have appeared in the Press during a time of political controversy and have been quoted in this House as being another justification for the appointment of this select committee. Figures recorded at the various booths during the last general election have also been quoted in support of the motion on the ground that the number of votes received by Labour candi-

dates were much larger than had been received previously by Labour candidates. These figures, of course, have been quoted in order to show that the Main Roads Board were actuated by political considerations and that they had deliberately sent men into those districts with the object of inflating the Labour vote. That is a perfectly fair statement of the facts as they appear from the debate in this House. Mr. Kempton said, "We on our side"—whatever he may mean by that—"say that men were sent just before the last general elections to three places in the Greenough electorate." As a matter of fact, men were sent into dozens of electorates just before the last general elections. There is nothing unusual in that. The operations of the Main Roads Board cover the whole State. The particular time referred to was immediately after the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Was there not undue haste in getting them there before they had the tools?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I will deal with that later, and satisfy the hon. member if he wants to be fair. Right through the State men were sent out immediately after those holidays. Because that date coincides with the date when it would be necessary for men to be in a given electorate in order to be enrolled, it is assumed that they were sent out for political purposes.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is unfortunate.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Two or three electorates have been picked out where the Labour candidate did manage to show an improvement on the previous figures. Nothing has been said about the other electorates where the same number, and sometimes a larger number of men, were sent out, and where perhaps it could not be shown that some political aspirant had suffered as compared with a previous election. This is the sole reason put forward for the failure of certain political candidates to receive the support to which they thought they were entitled, owing to the fact that they happened to be in a country district. Mr. Kempton tried to excuse himself for quoting certain figures.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: I am hanged if I did!

The HONORARY MINISTER: That is my view of the hon. member's remarks.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: It is only your idea.

The HONORARY MINISTER: He said he was only following the example of the Chief Secretary in quoting these figures, and suggested that the question of political considerations had been introduced by the Chief Secretary himself. That is not correct.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: No. I said that the Chief Secretary, in reply to Mr. Stewart, tried to prove that the men were not sent out for that purpose.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member said he was only following the example of the Chief Secretary.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: Yes, in getting the figures from the statistics.

The HONORARY MINISTER: He suggested that the Chief Secretary was responsible for the introduction of political considerations into this debate.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: No.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member will see from his speech that no other construction than that could be placed upon his remarks.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The mover of the motion did not mention it. The Chief Secretary was the first to do so.

The Chief Secretary: No, I was not.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Chief Secretary replied to statements made by the mover.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The mover did not mention the matter.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I ask the hon. member to read "Hansard," when he will find that I am right and he is wrong. If my memory serves me right, charges of this nature were made about that time by various people, with the result that Mr. Gregory, M.H.R., took up the matter with the Federal authorities. He telegraphed to them, and took certain steps to have an inquiry made into the charges levelled against the Government for using the Main Roads Board with the object of improving the Labour vote in certain districts. Owing to Mr. Gregory's activities, the Chief Engineer for the Commonwealth, Mr. Hill, was, while in Western Australia, commissioned to investigate the charges. It is remarkable that since the investigations—he was given every facility—we have heard nothing more of those charges until the present moment. Mr. Hill reported to the Minister for Works

that there was no justification for the charges. It is another instance proving that the motion for the appointment of a select committee has been moved for no other reason than a political one. I propose to deal with a number of statements made by various members. Some of the statements were of a pettifogging nature, and I do not propose to cover the whole ground.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Deal with the South Perth-road.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I know nothing about that. I am going to deal with those things about which I know something. I believe South Perth is in the Canning electorate, one of the largest in the State.

Hon. G. W. Miles: He means the road from Canning Bridge to Fremantle.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That is a different matter. I have gone to some trouble to endeavour to ascertain the actual facts. The information I have could have been secured by any member who has referred to the subject, or to the particular points with which I intend to deal. I think I shall be able to show that if the idea is that this motion has been moved purely out of a desire to assist the Main Roads Board and improve their administration of the Act, there was no necessity to introduce into the discussion other matters referred to. If members had made their own inquiries they would have been sufficient to satisfy any impartial mind that there was no cause for complaint. I would first of all deal with the remarks of Mr. Kempton. He said, "Knowing the Chief Secretary as I do, I am firmly convinced that in his heart he is satisfied an inquiry is necessary." The Chief Secretary resents the reflection upon his integrity, and desires me to say that the hon. member apparently does not know him.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: I know him fairly well.

The HONORARY MINISTER: He dealt at some length with the Canning-road. The Government have made it clear on several occasions that they were disappointed with the work done there. They have gone to the length of stating that one of the principal engineers of the Main Roads Board is now no longer in the service of that board.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Because of that road?

The HONORARY MINISTER: That statement has been made on more than one occasion.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Was he solely responsible?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not say he was solely responsible, but he was principally responsible, and the fact that he is no longer with the board shows that he must carry the responsibility. In addition, the Government have ordered a searching inquiry into the whole matter. That is well known to members. It shows that the Government do not stand for bad or extravagant work, and that the Main Roads Board are of the same opinion. The hon. member admitted there was a difficulty in arriving at the exact cost of the work. I suggest that difficulty is in his own mind. Had he cared to make inquiry in the right place and in the right way the information could have been supplied to him.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: I took the Premier's figures.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member computed the cost at between £130,000 and £140,000. I am surprised he should make a statement like that without endeavouring to verify it. To date the actual cost of the road is £86,000.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: The Premier said it was something like £130,000.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Premier said nothing of the kind.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: He did.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The estimated cost of the completed work is £120,000. The original estimate on which the work was commenced was £91,000, not £35,000 as mentioned by the hon. member. The latter figure has never yet been quoted by anyone who knew anything about the subject. The Government did not seek to defend what had been done on that road. They have placed all their cards on the table and have instituted a most searching inquiry. What else could they do? The result of it will be available to members.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Not much publicity has been given it.

The HONORARY MINISTER: What more publicity does the hon. member want than the statement of the Premier and of the Minister for Works?

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: We have the statement of the Premier that the Canning-road cost £130,000.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member is not correct. To my knowledge the Premier has said nothing of the kind. Perhaps the hon. member will accept my statement, which is made on behalf of the Government. These are the facts. Mr. Kempton, manifestly without a knowledge of the subject, compared the cost of railways with that of roads. He said that probably £35,000, which he quoted as the original estimate of the cost of the Canning-road, would build a railway. What of it? If the hon. member had given much consideration to the subject, he would have known that the cost of roads per mile to carry modern traffic is more than the cost per mile of our railways, and in some cases considerably more. There is nothing remarkable about that. He also said that about 3ft. of gravel was being placed outside the rough kerbing, and said, "The Lord only knows why it has been put there, as the road was quite wide enough in the first place." The gravel has no connection with the width of the road, and has not been placed there to widen it. In conformity with the world's best practice, it is not an uncommon thing to place crushed metal outside the width of the road. It is looked upon by main road engineers as necessary.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: As a sort of reserve.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If the hon. member likes to call it so. I can well understand the reason for it. The hon. member ought to understand the necessity for placing gravel or stone outside a made road. It prevents the edges from fretting away, for one thing. It is not placed there with the object of widening the road, or with a view to standing up to heavy traffic such as is seen on main roads.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: I said it was probably put there to assist the other part of the road.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member may be right. If so, what is wrong with the practice?

Hon. G. A. Kempton: It seems absolutely unnecessary.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member may be a professional man in some respects, but he does not know anything about roads.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: I have seen more roads than has the Honorary Minister.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member also dealt with many other aspects of the roads and laid particular stress on drainage. He mentioned the case of an old lady who has been making a living by selling vegetables and keeping a few fowls, and whose house is surrounded by water in winter. This place happens to be in my own electorate, and judging by the remarks of the hon. member, he seemed to know more about it than the members for the district.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: I am surprised.

The PRESIDENT: I must ask the hon. member to stop interjecting.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Just how it came about I do not know, but I am sure of this: that if the hon. member had known the district as well as it is known by those who represent it, he would have been a little more guarded in the remarks he made. I desire to inform him that there is no liability on the Main Roads Board for the particular condition he referred to, that is, the house being surrounded by water in winter. The Road Districts Act makes some provision for such cases as that, but if people will incur the risk of building in positions that are liable to be flooded in the winter months, they must take the consequences. We feel very sorry for them, but I do not see any reason why the community should be mulet in expense by reason of their own shortsightedness. With regard to that particular case and similar cases, action will be taken by the Main Roads Board so far as they can, to relieve the situation, but at the same time no liability rests on the board. I know the particular place very well, and if the hon. member were acquainted with all the facts, he would not have been quite so severe in his criticism. The hon. member also referred to the section of the main road between Crampton and Bookara and to the remarks made by the Chief Secretary when speaking on the Address-in-reply. The Chief Secretary, when commenting on the cost of this road, said that the hon. member should have gone to the Main Roads Board and ascertained for himself the correct facts. What I am about to state is thoroughly justified by the latest calculation, and on behalf of the Chief Secretary I reiterate that the cost was £12,285, and not £14,636.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: I got my figures from the circular; the circular then could not have been correct.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I further make the statement in direct refutation of the hon. member's claim that the local authorities were not overcharged. The hon. member made the definite statement that if what the Chief Secretary said was correct, then the local authority was overcharged. I repeat that is not correct. It would be a long and tedious process to deal with every item mentioned by the hon. member, but I must allude to another. He said that the men who were employed on this work were sent over the Midland Railway when they could have been taken over the Wongan Hills line and landed at the locality at no expense on account of railage. It is interesting to know that the location to which these men were sent is on the Midland line. As a fact, it is 25 miles south of Geraldton. The train service over the Midland Railway to this locality takes 12 or 13 hours, whereas by the Wongan Hills route the journey takes 24 hours to Geraldton and necessitates a further train connection with the Midland line.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: But at no cost to the Government.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member knows that is not correct. I ask the hon. member which is the better proposition, to send the men by a route that will take 12 or 13 hours, or send them a way that takes 24 hours to Geraldton and then requires a change, and probably having to wait the best part of a day to connect with a train to take them back to their destination.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: There was no need to go to Geraldton.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: Crampton is only two miles from the head of the Government line.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Would it make any difference how long it would take the men to reach their destination if there was no work for them when they got there?

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: And their tools were sent by the Midland line.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I will show conclusively that Mr. Harris is entirely wrong. Mr. Kempton read a letter addressed to himself from a gentleman named Meadowcroft.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Who is he?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I have already remarked that he is or was an organiser for the Consultative Council at the time of the last election. According to Mr. Kempton, Mr. Meadowcroft said that 120 men arrived at Crampton without provisions and tools of any description. The facts are that 105 men were landed at Crampton at 7 a.m. on the 4th January, together with three truck-loads of tools, two truck-loads of tanks and 14 drays. Half the tools had been unloaded by the Railway Department. The 14 horses for the drays were then at Bookara Siding, about four miles south. The horses were unloaded and brought to Crampton; the drays were filled with the tools and taken over to the camp site on the same day. The horses were consigned to Bookara because there was a horse yard there and none at Crampton. The storekeeper, Mr. Knowler, from Dongarra, and Mr. McGhie, the baker, met the train with provisions at Crampton. The hon. member also said that the horses were consigned to Mullewa and re-consigned to Bookara instead of to Crampton. This will show the statement to be absolutely wrong.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: A select committee can prove whether it is right or wrong.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is quite easy to provide what has been described as a *prima facie* case for a select committee if one is going to act upon correspondence and articles which have been used during the course of the discussion in this House. It would be quite possible for me or any member of this House to establish a *prima facie* case for a select committee on any subject, if that was to be the basis on which *prima facie* evidence was to be built. I want to go further with regard to this particular incident, because at about this time Timekeeper Brennan received a letter from Meadowcroft asking for certain information, to wit, the number of men landed at Crampton, the rolls they were on before they went there, and the date they enrolled for the Greenough electorate. Mr. Duncan, chairman of the road board, made repeated requests for the information, and was told by Timekeeper Brennan that it was outside his province to give the information. Engineer Hardwicke instructed Timekeeper Brennan to furnish the information and send it to Meadowcroft. However,

he did not do so. Meadowcroft was quoted by the hon. member as having stated that the macadamised road close to the church had been torn up for several chains and remade. As a matter of fact, there was no road torn up within 15 chains of the church, but what was torn up was done for the necessary improvement of alignment of the road, which is a main road, and the conditions that applied with horse-drawn traffic when the original road was made had entirely altered with the advent of motor traffic, rendering better alignment an absolute necessity. Investigations showed that there was an average of only 1½ inches of metal on the road. So much for the "monument to the work that was put in" referred to by Mr. Meadowcroft.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: I know the road well.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Meadowcroft also stated that men were camped at the siding for several days and then were shifted alongside the road adjoining the church at South Greenough. That position was found to be too open, and their camp was again shifted close to the hills. The men were never camped at the siding. Half the number were shifted to the site of the work on the day of their arrival and the balance went there on the following morning. Six weeks afterwards the men were shifted to a more sheltered position in the hills. I would like to ask what is wrong with that. The cost per chain was given by the hon. member as £70. During the course of his speech on the Address-in-reply the Chief Secretary showed that the cost was £59. The repetition of the statement by the hon. member shows exaggeration and bias: every little defect has been magnified and commented upon.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: I am sorry you did not speak to the chairman when you were there; he would have given you some information.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I had no need to go to the chairman to get information on these matters. I think I have shown conclusively that the letter quoted by the hon. member was, to say the least of it, most unreliable, and in view of the circumstance I have just quoted my statements are borne out that at any rate so far as that part of the complaint is concerned, it has a

bigger political significance than anything else. With regard to Mr. Meadowcroft, I can quite understand his desire to buttress the position he took up at that time. We can prove that he was endeavouring even then, just prior to the election, to get information of this kind with the idea of using it if possible in a political, rather than any other direction.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: If you are so satisfied with your own officials, why object to a select committee?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I have not said that I object to the appointment of a select committee, but sufficient has been said in the course of the debate to call for a reply. The Government cannot allow statements like those that have been made to be broadcast throughout the State without making some reply to them. The hon. member made certain allegations with regard to roll stuffing. I have before me a statement showing the number of men who were employed in the Irwin, Greenough, Murray-Wellington and Nelson electoral districts. A perusal of the statement and the figures discloses an emphatic refutation of the charges made. In the Greenough electorate there were twice as many men engaged after the rolls were closed than were there before. If there had been any desire on the part of any person to bring about a position such as that suggested by Mr. Kempton, I think it could be relied upon that whoever was responsible would have done the thing properly instead of sending 100 or 150 men to the district after the rolls had been closed. That number could easily have been sent there before the rolls were closed if the desire had been as suggested by Mr. Kempton.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They were a bit unfortunate at Southern Cross.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not think they were unfortunate in any direction.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It worked well?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member is usually very suspicious.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You said they were not unfortunate.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It may be a good thing to be suspicious at times, but we have nothing to fear from the suspicions of the hon. member. It does not matter how the position is analysed, I think

the actions of the Main Roads Board can be justified on every occasion. It must be remembered that the time was the beginning of the year immediately after the close of the Christmas and New Year holidays, and naturally the men had to be sent on to the jobs in fairly large numbers. The figures show that from that time onward the numbers gradually increased until I believe eventually a larger number of men were employed by the Main Roads Board than have ever been employed by any department of the State. Had there been any desire to do as has been suggested by hon. members, in regard to roll stuffing, I consider that those who claimed to be responsible did not do their job very well.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It was not necessary to overdo it. You wanted some votes in other districts as well.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Irwin, I think, comes within Mr. Kempton's district. The maximum number of men were engaged from six weeks to two months before the closing of the roll, so I do not think the hon. member can use those figures. In fact, the figures speak for themselves. The hon. member said Mr. Kennedy received 16 out of the 19 votes cast at Tardun, the innuendo being that the men were sent there to help Mr. Kennedy's election chances. If Mr. Kennedy had not received 16 out of the 19 votes, we would have heard nothing about it. As Mr. Kennedy received 16 of the 19 votes at Tardun, which I suppose the hon. member regards as a country centre—it is a new centre with a large number of new settlers—I can only suggest he received the support of the people because of what he had been able to do for them in looking after their interests. If the hon. member will examine the roll at Tardun, he will find there was no necessity to send any men there from Perth or anywhere else in order to make up the total of 22. The hon. member knows it is a new district, opened up in comparatively recent years, and he knows the present member for the district is held in the highest esteem. In order to prove there is nothing in Mr. Kempton's contention regarding Tardun, I wish to quote an official letter dated the 26th May, 1927, from the Secretary of the Mullewa Road Board to the Chairman of the Main Roads Board. It read—

Following my frantic urgent wire of Monday last, I took a car trip to Tardun yesterday in search of a good water supply position for

stock at the siding. On my way I took Mr. D. Dunne and Mr. O'Loughlin, your officer in charge and second in command, with me, and we carefully examined the portion complained of from five miles south of the siding to about half a mile north of the siding, and notwithstanding the report which you may have received, both of the persons mentioned are convinced that it is the worst portion of the road between Mullewa and Morowa by far. You will understand, therefore, how pleased we would be to learn that you had decided to go on with the work instead of taking the men away as originally intended, and I have much pleasure in thanking your board for their decision. I understand that your Mr. Anketell will be passing along the road very shortly and, should he be doing so, I would suggest that he take a note of the road from about the peg about five miles south of the siding. The 306 mile peg is close to the siding. If he does this I feel sure he will agree that road is in a very much worse condition than has been reported to you and the writer. Again thanking you, Yours faithfully, (Sgd.) P. F. Rooke, Secretary.

I quoted that letter to show that men had been employed in the Tardun district for a considerable time, and I think the hon. member must be aware of the roads that were constructed there even prior to the date he quoted and prior to the election. Though there had been a large number of men employed at Tardun on road work, the whole of the votes recorded at that particular centre was 22.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: A lot of them voted at Mullewa.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It goes to show that there was work in the district, and that if the men were sent there at that particular time, they were not sent there to vote rather than work. They were there with the object of making roads in that district, so much so that the secretary of the road board was afraid the men would be taken from the district. Apparently the secretary of the road board was more anxious to have the roads constructed in the district than was the hon. member, and I was almost going to say the secretary of the road board was prepared to look after that part of the district even better than the hon. member. I have proved conclusively that the Mullewa Road Board wanted the work done. The men were in the vicinity and the road board pleaded that the men should not be taken from the district. So much for that. Speaking again about a certain section of road construction in the Greenough district, the hon. member said that after it was constructed, the Main Roads Board found it necessary to



spend £100 a mile to put it in order again. That sounds rather serious. It is generally recognised that, during the first few months after construction, the maintenance cost is heavy. The Federal authorities now allow maintenance material to be provided as part of the construction cost to the tune of 10 cubic yards per thousand lineal feet of road. At the time this road was built, no such allowance was permitted by the Federal authority, but subsequent conferences have resulted in the allowance being granted. That accounts for the subsequent expenditure on the road in question. According to information I have received, only about half of the material provided for maintenance has so far been used and the balance is available for subsequent maintenance. Such maintenance will be inevitable in the ordinary course of events. Consequently, things there are not quite so bad as the hon. member implied. Again he referred to the cost of the bridge at Upper Swan. This matter was dealt with by the Chief Secretary during the Address-in-reply. Mr. Kempton said, "We cannot have a house without an entrance and so it is necessary to build approaches to a bridge." I quite agree with the hon. member, but if he wants a long avenue as an approach to his house, he must pay extra for it. He could not include the cost of the avenue in the cost of the house. Members will agree that five miles of road cannot be regarded as a normal approach to a bridge. If five miles, why not 20 miles, or even 100 miles?

Hon. J. Cornell: It depends upon the river to be crossed.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is absurd.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: I was pointing out the cost of approaches.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member was careful not to mention the actual facts regarding the long approaches.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: I read it to you.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member has made a big mistake.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: I have not.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am informed that the five miles of road referred to is quite separate from the bridge; there is a gap between. The cost of the road, included in the figures formerly explained by the Chief Secretary.

amounted to £22,457 and not £33,149 as stated by the hon. member.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: I only quoted Main Roads Board figures. Surely they are not sending out false figures.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If the hon. member had been trained in exact science, he would never embark upon an elaborate and tedious calculation until he was sure of his basis of facts.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: I am perfectly sure of it.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Besides, it is always well to hear the other fellow before making such a statement.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: I am sure of my statement.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member must not keep up a continual fire of interjections.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not mind the interjections.

The PRESIDENT: It is not for the Honorary Minister to say whether he minds them or not. The business of the House must be conducted in a proper spirit and I ask hon. members not to interject so much.

The HONORARY MINISTER: There are so many matters hinging on this discussion that I feel it incumbent upon me to reply to what has been said. Only recently I have heard some comment publicly and privately, which could only have emanated from the reading of the discussion that took place on this motion.

Hon. J. Cornell: I could tell you a lot of the facts.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Knowing as I do from information before me that many of those statements are far from the truth, I think it only right—

Hon. G. A. Kempton: I rise to a point of order. Does the Honorary Minister mean that my statements were far from the truth? Does he mean that my statements were untruthful?

The PRESIDENT: I do not think the Honorary Minister meant that. What I think he meant was that many of the statements made to the House were far from the truth.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I said many of the statements were far from the truth and I must stand by that.

The PRESIDENT: I take it that what the Minister meant to say was that certain

statements made by members were incorrect.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I repeat that the hon. member has been badly advised on some of these matters, with the result that the figures he quoted were quite incorrect.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Not more misleading than the statement of the Chairman of the Main Roads Board to the Road Boards Conference.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am not aware that anything of that kind has happened.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It has.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member mentioned the Yalgoo-road, the expenditure on which he said, was absolutely wasted. That work was carried out after consultation with the local authority. A special visit was made by the Main Roads Board engineer for the district, when it was decided what work should be done and where it should be done. The 11 miles of road completed west of Yalgoo is in good repair to-day and is being used considerably. Nobody uses the old road at all now, so I am advised.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: I gave you their opinion.

The HONORARY MINISTER: As regards the 20-mile section east of Yalgoo, it has not been finished off. It requires blinding and rolling, and with small expenditure, it could be used considerably. In refutation of the hon. member's statement I desire to say that the money was not wasted and that the work was done to the approval of the local authorities. The hon. member went on to refer to 2,080 chains of road cleared in the Yalgoo district. The Chief Secretary dealt with that matter, informing the House that for this work tenders were called, eight being received and the lowest accepted. This should satisfy any ordinarily fair-minded man, but apparently it does not satisfy Mr. Kempton. In his anxiety not to hit the Main Roads Board below the belt, he said he supposed the lowest tender was so high because of the 22 pages of specification put up, and because tenderers were afraid that they would have to engage the services of a solicitor to see that they did not break any of the provisions. I have here the specifications of contract under which the job was advertised.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: The latest ones?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Those for the job to which the hon. member referred. The specifications are on one page, and the conditions of contract on three pages. The conditions were drawn up expressly for such jobs, and are written in the clearest language. These are the 22 pages referred to by the hon. member.

Hon. W. J. Mann: That is vastly different from some of the other specifications.

The HONORARY MINISTER: For the moment I am concerned with that particular job and nothing else. Again the hon. member was badly advised.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: I said that probably that was the reason.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I have no desire to qualify anything I have said to-day. I am speaking actual facts. On a former occasion the hon. member had quite a lot to say regarding a specification of 22 pages. The hon. member was then informed by the Chief Secretary that the specification in question had been introduced by an engineer from Victoria, and that immediately upon its coming to the knowledge of the chairman of the Main Roads Board it was withdrawn. The Chief Secretary admitted that such a document could not be defended. It has been scrapped. In this instance the contract was laid before the chairman of the Main Roads Board, and the lengthy specification was not used. That is absolutely definite. The statements made by the member clearly show his bias. It is more than probable that he will desire a seat on the select committee.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: I am not hankering after it.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I ask the House, in all fairness—

Hon. A. Lovekin: The hon. member would not want it if he knew what he was taking on.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not know anything about that. I can only say it would hardly be fair that one who has shown bias in this particular matter should be prepared to accept a seat on the select committee.

Hon. J. Cornell: Bias, after all, is only a question of degree.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The matter rests with the hon. member himself. As regards the letter which appeared in the "West Australian," setting out the cost of certain roads, a letter referred to by various

hon. members, I have already stated that the cost of the Canning-road when completed will be £120,000, not £150,000 as stated in the letter. Some of the other figures are much nearer to the mark. Still others, again, show much divergence from the actual. So far as the hon. member himself is concerned, I am convinced, notwithstanding his assertions to the contrary, that political considerations are the strongest factor actuating him in the matter.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: Not on your life!

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Chief Secretary has told the House that since the August conference between the chairman of the Main Roads Board and the local authorities quite a good atmosphere exists between the Main Roads Board and the local road boards. I am sure hon. members were aware of that even without a statement from the Chief Secretary. Mr. Kempton when speaking on the Address-in-reply referred to two roads in his province, the Georgina-road and the Macartney-road, and stated in effect that the Main Roads Board had given figures of distance which were inflated. In speaking to the present motion he said that the figures were inflated so that the cost could be kept down. He also stated that the Chief Secretary had got wrong information from somebody, and that somebody was putting up a big bluff. I think the meaning of the word "bluff" is "to deceive."

Hon. G. A. Kempton: Not to deceive, not at all.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Speaking on the Address-in-reply the Chief Secretary said the hon. member's allegations were tantamount to a charge of fraud. The Chief Secretary explained that a certain length of road had been metalled, but that other work had been done outside that, bringing the total length treated in the case of the Georgina road to 127 chains, and in the case of the Macartney road to 74 chains. The hon. member said that such lengths were neither treated nor constructed. He put the lengths down as 79 chains and 54 chains respectively. A very serious view was taken of the matter, and the figures were brought under the notice of the chairman of the Main Roads Board. Mr. Tindale has had special measurements made, and I desire to read to the House the report which has been furnished to him. It is dated the 29th October, 1928—

Georgina-road, 13Q. I have verified the measurements of the work done on the above road by day labour:—Clearing 48 chains, widen clearing 79 chains, total 127 chains. Forming 79 chains, gravelling 78 chains, side drains 3 chains, one only 24 x 12 h.p. culvert earthworks 805 cubic yards.

Now comes the important part—

I saw the Secretary, Mr. Maley, to-day and discussed the matter with him; he admitted above, and that the clearing had not been taken into account in measuring up for the information of Mr. Kempton, M.L.C. I will be attending a meeting of the Greenough Road Board on the 6th proximo. Macartney-road. I have verified the measurements of the work done on the above road by day labour:—Clearing 17 chains, widen clearing 57 chains, total 74 chains. Formation 63 chains, stone road 17 chains, gravelling 37 chains, side drains 51 chains, earthworks 1,619 cubic yards, rolling 54 chains, shifting fences 10 chains. I saw the secretary, Mr. Maley, to-day and discussed the position with him. He admitted above, and that the clearing had not been taken into account in measuring up for the information of Mr. Kempton, M.L.C.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: Did he say anything about the constructed part, and not the treated part? The circular said "constructed," not "treated."

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am not concerned with what the circular said.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: It was a Main Roads Board circular.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am concerned with what the hon. member said, a statement made by him in this Chamber.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: And perfectly correct.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member said somebody was putting up a big bluff. He made a positive statement, "without hesitation," that such lengths were neither treated nor constructed.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: Neither were they.

The HONORARY MINISTER: This report, just received from Mr. Lavater, the engineer who has consulted the secretary of the road board, admits that the Main Roads Board's figures are correct.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: The select committee will prove whether that is so.

Hon. H. Stewart: Mr. Kempton quoted the Main Roads circular.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member went further than that. He contradicted a statement made by the Leader of the House.

Hon. H. Stewart: On the basis of the Main Roads Board circular.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Chief Secretary, in replying to a statement made by Mr. Kempton, made an official statement on behalf of the Main Roads Board. Mr. Kempton, in speaking on the present motion, said he had taken a certificated engineer with him—

Hon. G. A. Kempton: So I did.

The HONORARY MINISTER: —and had chained the whole of the work done on these particular roads. He added, "without hesitation, that such lengths were neither treated nor constructed." By means of the report of Mr. Lavater, who I suppose is known to the hon. member, I am now showing that certain work was not taken into consideration when measuring up for the purposes of Mr. Kempton.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: Why did the engineer say, "It must be a mistake"? That is portion of what I said.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I know nothing about that. The hon. member made a positive statement in this Chamber that in conjunction with a certain engineer, whose credentials he said could not be doubted, he had chained the whole of the work done to those roads.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: So we did.

The HONORARY MINISTER: He said further that he could state without hesitation that such lengths were neither treated nor constructed. The document I have read proves otherwise.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: It is wrong.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The secretary of the Greenough Road Board, whom the hon. member quoted, admits that clearing of the roads was not taken into account when measuring up for the hon. member's information. Where was the bluff? The hon. member accused the Chief Secretary—

Hon. G. A. Kempton: No, no!

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member accused the Chief Secretary of using information which had been given as a bluff.

Hon. H. Stewart: Is it not a bluff to say "treated" in connection with roads?

Hon. J. Cornell: It is a play on words.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not know where the play on words comes in.

Hon. H. Stewart: I shall have something to say on that later.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I hope the hon. member will. If he does, he will

have to admit that if there has been any attempted bluffing in this case, it is not on the part of the Government.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: Hear, hear! I did not say so.

The HONORARY MINISTER: And neither has there been on the part of the Main Roads Board. But there has been too much bluffing in this Chamber on the part of those who have spoken in support of the motion.

Hon. H. Stewart: I take exception to that, anyhow. As regards my speech in moving the motion, I did not—

The HONORARY MINISTER: I have not mentioned the hon. member.

Hon. H. Stewart: You said "those," and that includes me. Now I take exception to that.

The PRESIDENT: Order! If the hon. member objects to the Minister's use of the word "bluff" as applied to him, I shall ask the Honorary Minister to withdraw it.

Hon. H. Stewart: It seems to me that in the heat of discussion the Honorary Minister—

The PRESIDENT: Does the hon. member desire the Honorary Minister to withdraw the word "bluff"?

Hon. H. Stewart: I do. There was no bluff in my speech.

The PRESIDENT: In the circumstances I am sure the Honorary Minister will withdraw the word "bluff."

The HONORARY MINISTER: I withdraw the word, Sir. Mr. Stewart, in moving the motion, made particular reference to an utterance by the chairman of the Armadale-Kelmscott Road Board. It would seem that in the relationship between that road board and the Main Roads Board everything was wrong. Now I wish to read a letter from the secretary of the Armadale-Kelmscott Road Board, dated the 19th October, 1928—

At the last meeting of the board the matter that your board—

That is, the Main Roads Board—

—had completed the 69 chains of roadway on the Dale-Kelmscott road was brought up by members. I am directed to express this board's appreciation of the splendid condition of the road now that it is finished. With the board's congratulations.

Things must have improved considerably. I believe that at the present time relations between the Main Roads Board and the var-

ious road boards throughout the country are pretty good. Yet here we have a motion for the appointment of a select committee, which can have no other than a disruptive influence.

Hon. J. Cornell: It cannot affect the chairman of the Main Roads Board.

Hon. J. Ewing: He was away from the State at the time.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, but he is not away now.

Hon. V. Hamersley: I think his reputation ought to be cleared. He was absent from the State when all this was going on.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Hon. members can look at the matter from that point of view if they wish, but I am showing that charges that have been made by various members during the course of the debate, are not worthy of consideration.

Hon. H. Stewart: Do you think that is so regarding the Armadale-Kelmscott-road?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I have shown that there is a considerable difference now compared with the position then.

Hon. H. Stewart: That is so.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yet the hon. member dealt with that matter on the strength of a letter from one individual.

Hon. H. Stewart: I will deal with that phase later on. He was a mere pawn.

The HONORARY MINISTER: There are a lot of pawns in this game! But at any rate, I do not know that there is any ground for a statement such as the hon. member has made. Anything I have said so far, has referred to matters that occurred a considerable time ago, not to matters as they are at present. I have shown conclusively that too much notice should not be taken of some of the statements that have been made, particularly as I have proved that some of the correspondence upon which the criticism has been based, was from people who were interested politically, from one point of view or another, and who, on a previous occasion, endeavoured to raise a controversy merely because certain men, who were casual workers, were sent to a certain district at a certain time, in consequence of which it was contended those men were not entitled to vote.

Hon. J. Cornell: That was merely a coincidence!

The HONORARY MINISTER: During the course of his remarks, Mr. Stephenson

said that he understood the Canning-road had cost £140,000 to date and that it was not nearly finished. I have already pointed out that the cost so far has been £86,000.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: What about the approaches to the bridges?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is astounding that responsible men will make such irresponsible statements! He also said that there were hundreds of tons of coarse metal thrown on the side of the road, and he did not know what was to be done with it. Probably he does not know because that is not his line of business.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: Probably they will lose the lot in the sand.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member could have found out if he had been desirous of doing so.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I would like to know about it.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It must be exasperating to engineers to hear such comments from laymen.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: I was interested in building roads before you were born.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What do they intend doing with that material?

The HONORARY MINISTER: If the hon. member were to ask the contractor, he would be able to find out.

Hon. H. Stewart: Was that statement true or false?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It was true to the extent that material has been placed at the side of the road. Mr. Stephenson then went on to say that quite a considerable length of the road was working into holes already, although it has been completed.

Hon. H. Stewart: Was that true?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It was not true because the road has not been completed. A relatively short length only of the road has had the bituminous surface applied to it. The coarse metal is required and the supply of that material is part and parcel of the work under the contract let to Municipal Roads Ltd. and has nothing whatever to do with the Main Roads Board. The portion of the road that has a finished surface is in excellent condition. The portion with a temporary surface, which is awaiting the bituminous coat, is being maintained, and is not in anything like the condition of potholes indicated by the hon. member.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: It is only a week ago that I was over that part of the road.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Part of the road goes through my district and I think I should know something about its condition.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Why do they limit the speed over the road to eight miles?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Because the road is not finished. The hon. member knows that unless the speed limit is kept down on a road that is unfinished, the work done will quickly go to pieces. The limiting of speed is a necessary safeguard. Then, again, bituminous road work cannot be done during the winter months and the contractors are waiting until the wet weather ceases before they go on with that part of the work.

Hon. J. Cornell: They will have to hurry up, because Christmas is not far off.

The HONORARY MINISTER: But the summer has not yet started! However, it is remarkable that a person so little informed on a subject would venture to talk at all. It is always advisable to get the facts that are available if asked for. Statements made in such circumstances as I complain of carry little weight. What weight can be placed on the utterances of an hon. member who has shown he knows so little of the subject.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: That is your opinion only.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, but it goes to show that some hon. members who have spoken on this particular motion have, to say the least of it, indicated by their remarks that they have made up their minds. I was going to say that they had shown bias, but in deference to hon. members I will say that they have made up their minds in one direction and have shown a want of understanding of the position. I have admitted that there are features about the work that cannot be defended, but instead of inquiring about the position, Mr. Stephenson started out on a general condemnation of the work of the Main Roads Board, thus indicating that he had prejudged the case. To that extent his statements should be discounted.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Will the Honorary Minister resume his seat? During the course of the debate there have been references to "bias" as applied to other mem-

bers. I have not asked any hon. member to withdraw such statements. I hope I was correct in assuming that what was meant was "unconscious bias." The Honorary Minister may proceed.

The HONORARY MINISTER: There is very little more that I desire to say. I cannot let some remarks by Mr. Glasheen go without some comment. He said that he supported the appointment of a select committee because the chairman of the Main Roads Board had been sent abroad. He contended that all the knowledge or experience that could be obtained from a trip abroad was available in a report furnished by the former chairman of the Country Roads Board of Victoria. I do not think hon. members will attach much importance to an argument of that description. Then the hon. member said that the chairman of the Main Roads Board had made a statement, by implication, that during a trip to Merredin he had learnt more than he had done during the whole course of his world tour.

Hon. J. Cornell: Who said that?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Glasheen said that about Mr. Tindale.

Hon. H. Stewart: The newspaper report was quite open to that construction.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is to be hoped that a report of that speech will not reach London or America. Neither directly nor by implication was such a statement made, and those of us who know Mr. Tindale will give little credence to Mr. Glasheen's statement. Yet that statement is put forward as a reason why we should appoint a select committee! There was one other point that the hon. member attempted to make in justification for the select committee. He said that a contract let to a local authority in his province at £7 10s. per chain had been sublet at £2 10s. per chain. It would be interesting to have that statement supported by documentary evidence, because I have been unable to elicit any particulars of such an incident from the inquiries made by the Main Roads Board. I am in a position to say positively that there is no provision in the Main Roads Act, as stated by Mr. Glasheen, that prescribes that any profit made by a local authority on road work must be expended on the same road.

Hon. H. Stewart: That is quite right. I was going to point that out to the hon.

member. But there is still the difference between £7 10s. and £2 10s. to be explained.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That may be so. Mr. Glasheen said that because of that provision in the Act, which does not exist, the local board was compelled to spend a profit of £400 on a road that did not require the expenditure.

Hon. H. Stewart: At any rate, the hon. member said it occurred in his province, and he should be able to explain the point.

The HONORARY MINISTER: But the statement is utterly wrong and without any foundation whatever. The Act does not contain any such provision.

Hon. H. Stewart: You do not say it is wrong about the £400 profit.

The HONORARY MINISTER: How in the name of goodness would it be possible for the Main Roads Board to dictate as to how profits made out of a contract entered into by a local authority should be spent? No such instructions have ever gone out from the Main Roads Board. However, it would be extremely interesting to have documentary evidence in support of the hon. member's statement regarding the sub-letting of the contract for £2 10s. If there is nothing more to support the statement than there is in support of the assertion he made regarding the Act, then I do not think the House should take any notice of it. In concluding my remarks I wish to make one other point. Similar statements to those that have been made during the course of the debate were heard at a conference which was convened, I understand, by the Mayor of Perth. It was a conference of local authorities and was held a few days prior to the meeting of the delegates to the conference of the Road Boards Association of Western Australia. I understand that Mr. Kempton had something to do with the arranging the first conference, on behalf of the various road boards.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: I had nothing whatever to do with the Road Boards Association.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am informed that the hon. member had something to do with the first conference.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: No, that is wrong.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I understand the hon. member acted on behalf of the Northern Road Boards Association.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: No. There was the northern districts conference and the federated conference. Delegates came from the different parts of the State.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It does not matter much, but I believe the hon. member was associated with the calling of the first conference and that he acted for some particular body in his province.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: You ought to be sure of your statements.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not want to play with words as the hon. member does. At the first conference a lot was heard about the Main Roads Board and eventually a motion was tabled calling upon the Government to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the various charges against the board. In a desultory sort of way the motion was discussed and was then put to the vote. The meeting was so wobbly that the chairman did not know which way to give his decision.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: That is not correct.

The HONORARY MINISTER: He called to his aid the services of someone else, and finally a decision was given in favour of the motion for the appointment of a Royal Commission. The majority was very small and two or three days afterwards, when the real conference of road board authorities met in the metropolitan area—

Hon. G. A. Kempton: Why do you say the "real" conference?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Because that conference represented the only body with authority to speak on behalf of all the road boards throughout the State.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: But the other conference dealt not only with road board matters.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The first conference was called by the Mayor of Perth and was attended by various local authorities. It was at the instigation of the same authority that they carried this resolution asking for a Royal Commission and even recommended an individual whom they thought should be on the Royal Commission as representing the local authorities. Two or three days afterwards, when the annual road boards conference met, a conference that was representative of the whole of the road boards throughout the State, this matter was given another airing. After going into the pros and cons and hearing what was to be said by those who had been pre-

sent at the first conference, and also after hearing the chairman of the Main Roads Board, the conference unanimously carried the following resolution:—

That this conference do not approve of the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the administration of the Main Roads Act.

Hon. J. Cornell: Now they crave a select committee.

The HONORARY MINISTER: At that time they were satisfied that there was no necessity for any inquiry.

Hon. H. Stewart: They were certainly not unanimously satisfied.

The HONORARY MINISTER: They were satisfied that they did not want the appointment of a Royal Commission, and they carried the vote unanimously.

Hon. H. Stewart: They certainly were not unanimously satisfied.

The HONORARY MINISTER: They were completely satisfied. The hon. member has no right to say that they were not unanimously satisfied. In view of the fact that the vote was a unanimous one he is implying that some, at least, of the delegates at that conference voted against what they thought.

Hon. H. Stewart: What evidence have you that every man voted?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member will have an opportunity to reply.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If there is any representative body capable of giving an opinion as to the operations of the Main Roads Board under the Main Roads Act, that body is the annual road board conference of Western Australia. It is representative of the whole of the road boards throughout the country, and if they are satisfied that no inquiry is needed, I fail to see why other people, not so closely associated with the matter, should be so keen on demanding a select committee, unless, indeed, there is some other motive behind it. And I have, I think, shown conclusively that there is some other motive behind it. The Government say they have nothing to fear.

Hon. J. Cornell: Well, why worry?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Because it is necessary to reply to the many statements made which, I think, I have shown to be absolutely incorrect. Personally, I am not opposing the motion, but I have taken

the opportunity to give the other side of the question respecting the statements made by members. At the same time I look on the motion for the appointment of a select committee as nothing more nor less than a fishing expedition. I think that is the only way in which it can be described. In view of all that has been said in this Chamber, I want to ask just what importance will be attached by impartial men to the finding of the proposed select committee. Almost every member who has spoken has shown that he has pre-judged the position.

Hon. G. W. Miles: May it not be necessary to amend the Act? Could we not get evidence on that?

The HONORARY MINISTER: You may be able to do that, but on the other hand, in view of all that has been said, no impartial individual could accept a seat on the proposed select committee of this Chamber in the same way as he could do if that select committee were appointed from men known to be impartial.

Hon. H. Stewart: I protest against the Honorary Minister reflecting on the Chamber. He has no right to cast imputations and say that because a member cites certain things that member's view of the case is prejudiced. It is a reflection on the Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: I am sure the Honorary Minister does not intend to reflect on this Chamber, and I should like an assurance from him on that point.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I can assure you, Sir, and the House that I have no wish to reflect on the Chamber. My only desire is to correctly state the position. If I may use other words, I will put it this way: members who have spoken on this motion—

Hon. H. Stewart: All or some? Just be careful!

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask the hon. member to allow the Honorary Minister to proceed.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not know why exception should be taken to my remarks in this regard. I have said I have no desire to reflect on the Chamber. Members who have spoken on this motion, in my opinion, have so expressed themselves that I can come to no other conclusion than that there is behind the demand for a select committee some other motive than the mere de-



sire for an inquiry into the administration of the Main Roads Board and the Act. In view of what has been said, very little importance will be attached by impartial persons to the finding of the proposed select committee.

Hon. H. Stewart: That is your personal opinion of a select committee of this Chamber.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Your personal opinion is that this motion is loaded.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That it is a fishing expedition.

Hon. E. H. Harris: And they think they are going to get a schnapper.

The HONORARY MINISTER: In view of all these circumstances it will be nothing but a waste of time. Further than that, it can have but one effect, which will be to interfere with the smooth working of the Main Roads Board, just at a time when the best relationship exists between that board and the various local boards throughout the State.

Hon. J. Cornell: If the committee find nothing, it will strengthen the Main Roads Board.

The HONORARY MINISTER: In the meantime, I gather, the idea is that this proposed select committee shall inquire into so many things that it will not be possible for them to complete their task before the end of the session.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Why not make it a Royal Commission?

The HONORARY MINISTER: There will be no Royal Commission. One hon member asked that the Government should agree to convert the select committee into a Royal Commission. I honestly believe that at the present time the best possible relationship exists between the Main Roads Board and the various local boards. The Main Roads Board have had a big contract in establishing their system throughout the State. They have been responsible for the expenditure of large sums of money, and in view of the fact that they were starting what can be regarded as a new institution in this State, it was only to be expected that flaws would be discovered. But as those flaws were discovered they were rectified. The board has even gone so far as to dispense with the services of one or two of its professional officers, because they were not able to come up to the standard.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Have the members of the board been able to come up to standard?

The HONORARY MINISTER: At the present time, when the utmost good feeling exists between the Main Roads Board and the local boards, I cannot see why it should be disturbed by the appointment of a select committee that must have the effect of preventing the Main Roads Board from operating during the next few months as satisfactorily as it has done during the last few months; for the time of the responsible officials will have to be given up in the interests of this select committee. While the Government have nothing whatever to hide, at the same time on the evidence produced I cannot see any justification for the appointment of the select committee desired by the mover of the motion.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [6.11]: I am inclined to think that in putting his case the Honorary Minister not only overstated it, but developed a frame of mind that was calculated to draw wrong inferences from both inside and outside the House. Were I as certain that this committee was not going to be appointed, as I am that it is going to be appointed, I should remain silent. But here are a few points I wish to touch upon. From any remarks I may make I desire to dissociate the chairman of the Main Roads Board, for I will be referring to a period when he was not in the State. It has been urged by the Honorary Minister that the real purpose of the motion for the appointment of a select committee is a fishing expedition in order to bring out political propaganda. The Honorary Minister went to great lengths to explain that the charges levelled against the Main Roads Board respecting political stunts were entirely without foundation. Anything I may say in that regard can be substantiated. If the political atmosphere should be introduced into the deliberations of the select committee, I hope they will inquire why a good number of men were landed in Southern Cross 24 hours after the closing of the rolls prior to the last election, and why a person more vitally interested than Mr. Meadowcroft was responsible for witnessing the claim cards of a number of the Main Roads Board workers, which was later on substantiated in a court of law.

Hon. E. H. Harris: He admitted it.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It was directed by the warden that those men, although on the roll, should be starred, and would have to make a declaration.

The Honorary Minister: You are suggesting they were sent there by the Main Roads Board for that purpose.

Hon. J. CORNELL: No.

The Honorary Minister: Well, what are you suggesting?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I was surprised at the activity exhibited, almost as soon as they landed there, to have them enrolled, and that by a person more interested than Mr. Meadowcroft. They were enrolled and subsequently appeared before the warden that it might be determined whether or not they were eligible to be enrolled.

Hon. E. H. Harris: And he displayed his lack of knowledge of the Electoral Act.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Whether they were brought there for political purposes, I am not going to suggest. I do not think the Main Roads Board sent them there for political purposes. But they were recorded for political purposes as soon as they arrived.

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

Hon. J. CORNELL: Before tea I was referring to the extraordinary coincidence of a certain number of men being sent by the Main Roads Board into the Yilgarn electorate the day after the time for electors being enrolled had elapsed. Despite that, some of those men were enrolled. The claim cards were witnessed by an interested party. I do not infer that those men were primarily sent to Southern Cross for the purpose of being enrolled for the coming election, but the fact remains that some 40 men were sent there. I am not speaking from hearsay. The facts are that they landed at Southern Cross at 11 o'clock at night. The officer in charge went to the road board secretary and asked permission to domicile the men in the Southern Cross Mechanics' Institute or Town Hall for the night. The following morning the men went out to purchase their stores. They were directed to the butcher, the baker and the grocer from whom they were to make their purchases. They were then sent to Bullfinch. Their claim cards were filled in, witnessed and lodged, and objection was taken to 17 of them. The cases went before the Revision Court, and it was admitted by some of the

men and the persons who witnessed the cards that the cards had been signed a day late. The warden adjudicated upon the cases. He did not decide that the names should be struck off the roll, but instructed the Deputy Returning Officer that if any one of the men appeared at the polling place to vote, each must be asked to sign a declaration before recording his vote. Each man's name was also starred. The records of all these things will be found in the Electoral and Crown Law Departments. I would not have referred to the matter had it not been for the manner in which the Honorary Minister tried to refute other charges, and endeavoured to convey the impression that nothing like this had occurred. I hope the select committee will not delve into that phase of the matter. This is certainly the only instance that can be accepted as definitely proved, although there may be other charges of an ex parte nature which have not been substantiated. The result of the elections was not affected by what happened. We cannot assume that by virtue of these men being enrolled, the election was affected in any way. I do not charge the Main Roads Board or the Minister with being responsible for this occurrence, but it is a fact that the road gang did start and made some of the roads at Bullfinch, but was then moved to another road. To-day that other road runs through a man's paddock and leads nowhere. He had no compensation for any damage done, and obtained no satisfaction out of the road. Some of the men were at Moorine Rock and Southern Cross. To-day in Moorine Rock there is a cleared road made by the Main Roads Board by that party of workmen, which runs through two locations almost two miles long. It is cleared a chain wide. It is also cleared on the south side of the surveyed locations, and the surveyed road runs along the north side. The clearing has given two farmers each a mile of cleared land a chain in width. The road has been fenced off, and has forced the settlers it purported to serve to go two miles round in order to reach Moorine Rock. That is one of the results of hurrying in the despatch of men to do this work, when a little time and preparation could have avoided such a thing. What I have said can be substantiated.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Is not the cleared road used?

Hon. J. CORNELL: The cleared road is within the locations, but has been fenced off as part of them. Though not obliged to do so both owners have provided gates through the fence, to allow of the three settlers affected to save themselves the extra journey of two miles. When the land is under cultivation the gates will be closed. My own opinion is that the fundamentals of the Main Roads Board require a change. Instead of a three-man board, we should have a one-man board. The select committee might well exploit that phase of the question. On the board are two engineers, and one business man or administrator. The chairman is a highly qualified engineer. He could get other engineers to work under him, and could get the necessary administrator. We would then have the same position as we have in the railway system. On more than occasion I have opposed the suggestion of three railway commissioners. Where there are three men, there is certain to be friction. The engineer may map out his work and be obliged to take the point of view of the administrator as to the expenditure, and then comes the inevitable clash with the third member of the board. Probably the chairman would be outvoted upon policy by the other members of the board, and very often out-voted as to the practicability of the work. I would give a simple illustration in support of the principle of a one-man board. After the war three railway companies in Canada fell in. In order that the portions of the Dominion affected might still be served by railways, the Canadian Government took over these lines 2,400 miles in length. Did the Government proceed to appoint three or five men to manage them? No! What did they do? They appointed one man in control and he was as highly qualified a man as it was possible to find. They paid him £12,000 a year and passed a special Act of Parliament to provide that the administration of the Canadian national railways should be absolutely free from political control. What I should like to see in connection with the Main Roads Board is one-man control. That man could get all the technical skill that was required and pay for it; he could get all the accountancy skill that was required, and again pay for it, and he would be in absolute control, just

as is our Commissioner of Railways. There is another phase that I should also like to see brought about and it is that the board should function entirely free from interference by a Minister or politicians. The position of the road system in Western Australia demands that the board shall be given every reasonable chance and that their judgment shall not be subverted by the Minister or by Parliament. The board should be given every opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities, with the least amount of criticism. There is not the slightest doubt, and I say it without any reflection whatever on either Mr. Anketell or Mr. Dibdin, that the return of Mr. Tindale at the helm, the broadminded view he takes of everything, and the commonsense he exercises, have placed the Main Roads Board on a high plane. The select committee is certain to be appointed and I hope it will find out the defects of the Act and ascertain whether there are faults in the administration. I hope the committee will try to bring in a report, the effect of which will be to raise a structure in which, in the future, we all will have the utmost confidence. During the Honorary Minister's remarks I am afraid his zeal ran away with his judgment. I think he will regret later on—as we all do at various times when we say things at the height of excitement—what he said with regard to those members who criticised the Main Roads Board not being entitled to a seat on the select committee. I feel sure that every member who has spoken on this motion, whatever views he may have given expression to, when it comes down to the real issue, will deal fairly and impartially with the witnesses that may be called. I have been in some tight corners at times and I have seen men exhibit any amount of bias, but I think it can generally be said of the British citizen that when called upon to weigh carefully evidence that may be given, he will pronounce judgment accordingly, and put aside all bias. That is all I desire to say on the motion for the appointment of a select committee, which I intend to support.

**HON. J. EWING** (South-West) [7.50]: The motion is a very simple one, it merely requests this House to appoint a select committee to inquire into the provisions of the Main Roads Act and the administration

thereof. I regret very much that I feel it my duty to support the motion. At the outset I had some doubt as to whether I should do so, but on the floor of the House so many things have been said, and in the words of Mr. Holmes, a *prima facie* case having been made out, I feel it my duty to vote for the appointment of a select committee. The Honorary Minister this afternoon, supporting what the Chief Secretary said in opposition to the motion, made a long speech. It occupied, I think, an hour and three-quarters. He found it necessary to reply to a hundred and one things that were said by some hon. members. I have been in the House for some years and I have yet to learn that an hon. member will make assertions here that he does not believe to be true. The attitude of the Honorary Minister this afternoon was not calculated to do his case any good. If the accusations made against the Main Roads Board are not true, then the sooner a select committee is appointed to prove them to be untrue, the better will it be for the Government and the board. The Government cannot possibly allow the board to rest under the stigma that has been cast upon it without permitting an inquiry to be held. One thing I was astounded to hear the Honorary Minister say was that if the committee were appointed, the verdict of that committee would not be worth anything. He did not exactly use those words, but that is the effect of what he said. I do not think any member of this House or of the Government themselves believe that to be the case. The mover of the motion had a hand in the framing of the Main Roads Act. I submit that the amendments for which he was responsible were in the interests of the people, and particularly the various road boards throughout the State. Bearing that in mind, the hon. member takes up the dignified position of declining to accept a seat on the committee. The Honorary Minister told the House that Mr. Kempton should not be elected to the committee. I fail to see why that hon. member should not be included in the personnel of the committee.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Honorary Minister's zeal ran away with his judgment.

Hon. J. EWING: We should be satisfied that what was said by Mr. Kempton was the result of experience he gained and the knowledge he was about to acquire. I consider it would be a pity if the select committee

were deprived of his experience and knowledge merely because he had the courage to express himself in the way that he did on the floor of the House. I do not care too much about interfering with the good work being done by the Main Roads Board, but we cannot close our eyes to many things. When the Legislative Council elections were taking place, the administration of the board was made a live question in order, I suppose, to condemn the Government and to bring about the return of members opposed to the Government. I have no actual knowledge that that was the case because nothing of the kind occurred in the district I represent. I was, however, asked to attend a conference of road boards and to do certain things in opposition to the Main Roads Board. There is no question that about 18 months or two years ago the various road boards throughout the State were totally opposed to the work of the Main Roads Board. I attended many meetings and promised to do many things, and the present seems to me the opportunity for me to justify the promises I then made, namely, to assist to bring about the appointment of a committee composed of impartial members of this House to go thoroughly into the administration of the Main Roads Board. The Honorary Minister went to great lengths to attempt to disprove what had been suggested in this, as well as in another place, to the effect that things were done that should not have been done. I pass all that to one side and express the hope that whatever is done now will be in the interests of the Main Roads Board, so that they may eventually be free to carry on their work in the best manner possible. What appeals to me most is the fact that in connection with the Act that is now the law of the land great dissatisfaction has been caused by Section 30. I hope the select committee will give full consideration to that. It seems to act detrimentally to a great number of the road boards. I have personal knowledge of that. I do not know who will be appointed to the committee but I am sure that whoever is chosen will work thoroughly and well. The way is now open also for the consideration of the question of the nationalisation of main roads. The various road boards do not see why they should be mulet in a certain amount to pay towards the upkeep of those roads. They now pay 7s. 6d. of the 15s. contributed by the State towards the main-

tenance of roads that are used to a considerable extent by people from the metropolitan area and other parts of the State. Thousands of cars pass over those roads, and naturally they must do a great deal of harm. So the question has arisen and it will come within the purview of the select committee for their consideration as to whether the Government should not pay the whole of the 15s. and not debit the country road boards with half that amount. If the road boards can escape that payment, they can devote greater attention to the work of making and constructing subsidiary and developmental roads. I have no desire to debate the motion at any greater length. I have no wish to bring up any case against the Government, or in any way attempt to injure the administration of the Main Roads Board. I believe that since Mr. Tindale's return the work of the board has gone along more smoothly and better than was the case during his absence. We know the extent of Mr. Tindale's influence, and we have only to recall his address to the conference of road boards held a few months back when he convinced that conference that there was really no necessity for the appointment of a Royal Commission. Only his action and the regard of the conference delegates for Mr. Tindale and his work led them to hold their hand. A majority of the members here seem to think that a select committee should be appointed not only in the interests of the Government but in the interests of the Main Roads Board itself. It is necessary that the board should be cleared from the statements made in this House and given a free hand so that it may proceed with its work in the most efficient manner. The Honorary Minister this afternoon referred to a letter from the secretary of the Armadale board regarding work being done at present. I know that the statement regarding Mr. Briggs made by Mr. Stewart, when moving his motion, is correct. Mr. Briggs told me the statement was absolutely true. I say that in fairness to Mr. Stewart. The records might show the Minister to be correct, but I have the emphatic assurance of those who were at the deputation that Mr. Stewart's statement was correct. I hope the Minister will inquire further and see that the aspersion he cast upon Mr. Stewart is removed. I support the motion, believing that an inquiry by select committee will be

in the interests of the Main Roads Board as well as of the State.

**HON. G. W. MILES** (North) [8.2]: I support the motion for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the working of the Main Roads Act. This afternoon, by way of interjection, I inferred that the Chief Secretary was the first member to introduce the political aspect into the debate. On looking up "Hansard" I find that the mover of the motion was the first to mention the number of men employed on the Armadale-road. I wish to make it clear that I was wrong in my interjection regarding the Chief Secretary.

Members: Hear, hear!

**HON. G. W. MILES**: I regret that so much has been said about the last election. With Mr. Glasheen, I think that matter should have been inquired into immediately after the election. If a select committee is appointed, it should investigate the administration of the Main Roads Act, and it might be able to offer suggestions for amending the Act. Mr. Cornell made a very good suggestion regarding the appointment of one commissioner. I think that would be an excellent idea. At any rate, it is a question the select committee might well consider. I regret the statement of the Honorary Minister that the Government would not on any consideration appoint a Royal Commission. If a select committee be appointed and cannot complete its work before the close of the session, it is the duty of the Government to convert it into an honorary Royal Commission in order that the inquiry may be carried to a conclusion. More particularly is that so when we remember what has been said by Ministers themselves. For instance, the Premier said that the Canning-Fremantle-road was at first estimated to cost £35,000, and he now admits that when it is completed it will have cost considerably over £100,000. That in itself is sufficient to warrant an inquiry and I think the Government, as well as the Main Roads Board, should welcome an inquiry.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Gray, debate adjourned.

#### **BILL—JURY ACT AMENDMENT.**

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

**BILL—DOG ACT AMENDMENT.***Recommittal.*

Resumed from the 24th October; Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; Hon. C. F. Baxter in charge of the Bill.

Clause 3—Insertion of a new section after Section 6:

The CHAIRMAN: At the previous sitting an amendment was moved as follows:—

Insert a new subclause to stand as Sub-clause (2), as follows:—"When the dog, the registration of which is applied for, is the property of an aboriginal, registration shall not be refused except with the consent of the nearest protector of aborigines."

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

Clause 4—Insertion of a new section after Section 22:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That after "aboriginal" the words "or half-caste, except with the consent of the nearest protector of aborigines" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I have an amendment to offer at the request of the R.S.P. C.A. I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added:—"Provided that such poison shall not be laid within one chain of a public road."

The object is that poison shall not be laid indiscriminately along public roads on which an innocent dog may be travelling with its master and may pick up a bait. It will be ample protection for the owners of sheep if they lay baits a chain from the road instead of right on the road.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Mr. Lovekin suggested something on these lines previously but I understood the amendment was to be confined to main roads. Now he wants it to apply to public roads.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Why not?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Mr. Gray is safe in his back yard at Fremantle; he is not in the country with stock to protect. I agree with the amendment if it be confined to main roads, but the effect would be too wide if it were applied to all public roads.

Hon. J. R. Brown: So long as a dog is on the road it is not doing any harm.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I cannot follow Mr. Baxter's argument. Why should owners of

stock be allowed to lay poison on public roads?

Hon. H. Stewart: That is a misrepresentation of your amendment.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I wish to provide that if they lay poison it shall be a chain away from a public road.

Hon. H. Stewart: That would not be on a public road.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: But Mr. Baxter suggests that we should allow it to be laid on a public road and not a main road.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Nothing of the sort.

Hon. H. STEWART: Mr. Lovekin inferred that Mr. Baxter was in favour of poison being laid on public roads.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: That is prohibited under the Act.

Hon. H. STEWART: The amendment would mean that an owner could not lay poison on his own land even half a chain from a road. Many roads run through properties and are not used, but the Lands Department will not close them. I move—

That the amendment be amended by striking out "public" and inserting the word "main" in lieu.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Would "main road" cover it?

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I shall accept that.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I do not know that the amendment should be carried. The object of the Bill is to protect stock owners who are troubled by dogs. I fail to see why a stock owner should not be allowed to lay poison on any part of his property if dogs stray there.

The CHAIRMAN: The question before the Chair is the amendment on the amendment.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I oppose both.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I support the original amendment, and regret that Mr. Lovekin has agreed to alter it. When the measure has been in operation for 12 months, there will such a howl of execration from persons whose dogs have been destroyed by unscrupulous persons that Parliament will be glad to repeal it.

Amendment on amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. STEWART: I agree with Mr. Miles. Farmers are not going to spend their time laying poison on their properties to kill valuable dogs belonging to other people. On certain farms sheep are worried by tame dogs which have gone wild and stray on properties. Because of the risk of having their sheep worried, farmers cannot go to the expense of putting up dog-proof fences as suggested by Mr. Lovekin; the cost would be uneconomic. The farmer should be permitted to lay poison within his own fence boundaries. Another statute contains ample provision to prevent people from laying poison on roads.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The one-chain distance is merely a point by way of fixing a limit, but the object is to prevent a person laying baits all along his fence-line close to the main road, so that they can be picked up by a dog just pushing his nose under the fence. If the dog chooses to go in and pick up a bait, that is a different matter.

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

New clause:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: On behalf of Mr. Nicholson, I move—

That the following clause be added to the Bill:—"Section 23 of the principal Act is amended by striking out the words 'five pounds,' at the end of the first paragraph, and inserting 'twenty pounds'; and by inserting the following after the word 'pounds':—'When a dog has actually bitten any person the court or justices, in addition to inflicting a penalty, may order that such dog be destroyed forthwith, and may give all necessary directions to make such order effective.'"

The object is to exterminate dogs which have actually bitten or worried a person. Dogs with such propensities are better out of the way.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I accept the new clause, which is quite different from the one proposed by Mr. Lovekin previously. Moreover, the question whether a dog should be destroyed is left to justices. If Mr. Gray had thoroughly examined the Bill, he would recognise that it does not make the position easier for unscrupulous persons.

New clause put and passed.

Bill again reported with further amendments.

## BILL—POLICE OFFENCES (DRUGS).

### *Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [8.28] in moving the second reading said: The object of this Bill is to give effect to the decisions of the Convention of the League of Nations dealing with traffic in opium and other dangerous drugs. Article 23 of the Covenant of the League of Nations specifically entrusts the League with the general supervision over the execution of agreements with regard to the traffic in opium and other dangerous drugs. Before the war attempts had already been made to bring the Governments of the world into close co-operation in the control and suppression of the drug traffic. Largely owing to the initiative of the United States of America, an International Conference had met at the Hague in 1912, and had concluded an International Opium Convention. This Convention may be said to have provided principally for three things—

1. The control of the production and distribution of raw opium (Article 1).

2. The gradual suppression of the manufacture of and internal trade in prepared opium (Article 6).

3. Adequate pharmacy laws or regulations to confine to medical and other legitimate purposes the manufacture, sale and use of morphine, cocaine, and their respective salts (Article 9).

The signatories of the Convention undertook to introduce in their several Parliaments, effective legislation for the manufacture, import, sale, and use of medicinal opium; crude cocaine and eugonine; morphine, and their respective salts to be restricted exclusively to medical and scientific purposes. The position of Australia in regard to the International agreement is as follows:—

(a) The Hague Convention of 1912 was signed on behalf of the Government of the Commonwealth by Great Britain on June 25th, 1913, the British ratification taking place on July 15th, 1914.

(b) The Commonwealth of Australia has not been a party to the "Agreement, Protocol, and Final Act" of the First Opium Conference (signed February 11th, 1923), chiefly because its provisions do not directly affect a country which does not itself produce opium and other drugs. The Agreement, Protocol, and Final Act in question were, however, signed and ratified by the British Government and by the Government of India.

(c) *The Commonwealth of Australia*, together with all the other Dominions, signed the Convention and Protocol of the Second Opium Conference, the Australian ratification being made effective on February 17th, 1926.

By virtue of this ratification, the several Governments of Australia are thus morally, if not legally, bound to introduce legislation along the lines already mentioned. Until legislation has been introduced in every State along lines similar to the provisions of the New South Wales Act of 1927, Australia cannot be said to be playing her part in the great task of the control and suppression of the drug traffic, in which so much valuable preparatory work has been done through the medium of the League of Nations since 1920. The Government of New South Wales have already passed legislation giving effect to the Covenant, and this Bill is based entirely upon the New South Wales measure. The Commonwealth Government have been urging us strongly to introduce legislation to meet the position. In a letter to the Premier, Sir George Pearce, under date 14th January, 1927, wrote as follows:—

I forward herewith copy of the Opium Convention signed at Geneva on 19th February, 1925, to which, as you are aware, the Commonwealth Government is a party. You will observe that the Convention not only aims at controlling more effectively than has hitherto been the case the international trade in the drugs to which it applies, but also at establishing an effective limitation on the production and manufacture of these substances. In this latter respect your attention is invited, notably, to the provisions of Chapter III. of the Convention relating to the internal control of manufactured drugs. Under this chapter, the Contracting Parties undertake to enact effective laws and regulations to limit exclusively to medical and scientific purposes inter alia the manufacture, sale, distribution and use of certain substances therein set out. In order that the provisions of the Convention may be complied with, the co-operation of the States with the Commonwealth will be necessary. The Commonwealth Government is particularly desirous that full effect should be given to the Convention throughout Australia, and it would be much appreciated if your Government could therefore see its way to co-operate with it for this purpose. I should be glad to know whether the provisions of the Convention which come within State jurisdiction are already fully covered by the legislation of your State, and, if not, whether your Government would give consideration, at as early a date as is convenient, to the measures necessary to give effect to them. The provisions of the instrument concerning which Federal action will be taken relate, of course, more particularly to the import and export of and international trade in the substances that are therein set out. Yours faithfully, (Sgd.) G. F. Pearce, for Acting Prime Minister.

I understand that that letter was replied to, and later on the Premier was again pressed by the Commonwealth Government to take action. We received the following letter from the Prime Minister, Mr. Bruce, the letter being dated from Canberra on the 5th June, 1928:—

In connection with previous correspondence concerning the question of co-operation between the States and the Commonwealth in carrying out the provisions of the Opium Convention of 19th February, 1925, to which the Commonwealth is a party, I have to inform you that it is considered most desirable that full effect should be given to the Convention in all the States as early as possible. The Commonwealth Government would therefore be glad if action could be taken by your Government in the direction of any additional legislation that may be required to cover any provisions of the Convention that may not be already covered by legislation in Western Australia. With regard to your question as to uniformity of legislation, I may mention that the legislation in force in the various States has not been reviewed, the intention being that each State Government should take such action as it considers necessary to amend or add to its existing legislation so as to provide for the effective control of dangerous drugs within the State as required by the Convention. The New South Wales "Police Offences Amendment (Drugs) Act, 1927," and the Regulations made thereunder, copies of which have recently been received, appear to satisfy the provisions of the Convention and to provide for the effective control of dangerous drugs in that State. As finally passed, it applies to "any preparation, admixture, extract or other substance containing not less than one-fifth per centum of morphine or one-tenth per centum of egonine, cocaine, or diamorphine," and in this respect is in agreement with the provisions of the Convention. No provision has been made in the Act regarding Indian Hemp, but no action on the part of the States appears necessary in this respect since the Convention relates only to international traffic in this drug, which is a matter for action by the Commonwealth. Yours faithfully, (Sgd.) S. M. Bruce, Prime Minister.

The Bill defines the drugs to which the Act will apply and restricts it to morphine, cocaine, egonine, and diamorphine, commonly known as heroin, and their respective salts, etc., and provides also for the manner in which percentages of these drugs shall be calculated. Under the Bill the Governor may declare the Act to apply to any new derivative or alkaloid, or other drug, in the same manner as it applies to the drug already mentioned. The Bill prohibits the manufacture for sale or possession of prepared opium except by persons licensed under the regulations to sell, manufacture, etc., the drugs dealt with in the Bill. It provides that regulations may be made by the Gov-



error prohibiting the manufacture of the drugs mentioned except on premises licensed for the purpose, prohibiting the manufacture, sale, etc., except by license, and regulating the issue by medical practitioners and others of prescriptions containing such drugs and for other purposes necessary to give effect to the provisions of the Bill. At the present time the law on the subject is dealt with in the Pharmacy and Poisons Act of 1910, which deals with the sale of drugs and poisons and is, in short, legislation to regulate to whom such drugs and poisons may be sold. So far as this State is concerned, it is considered that there are practically no drug addicts in Western Australia, so that the proposed legislation may be regarded as being designed to prohibit the growth of the drug-taking habit. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the harmful practice of taking drugs does exist in the larger cities of the Commonwealth. The principle is also to be found in the Prohibition of Smoking Opium Act, the repeal of which is provided for in this Bill, because all the ground will be covered by the new legislation. The matter of the importation of opium suitable for smoking is dealt with by the Commonwealth authorities. We have no power to deal with that question. For the information of hon. members I desire to say that the drugs quoted in the Bill are those set out in the Convention which was signed by 23 representatives of various countries. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir William Lathlain, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—BUNBURY ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from 23rd October.

**HON. H. SEDDON** (North-East) [8.40] : Although the Bill is simply for the purpose of allowing the Bunbury Council to increase the amount of their loan authorisation, it nevertheless involves a good many questions that vitally affect the future of one of the most important industries in Western Australia, in view of the fact that, associated with this question, is a

proposal by the Bunbury Municipal Council to introduce oil fuel and to use it in the form of Diesel engines for the production of electric current. Those who have been following the trend of power development during the last few years will have realised that there has been a most fierce struggle between the Diesel engine on the one hand, and the production of power by steam on the other hand. The fundamental cause of the struggle is due to the fact that the thermal efficiency of the Diesel engine is so much higher than that of the steam engine that power can be produced much more cheaply by Diesel engines as compared with steam. In order to cope with the situation, the steam engineer has embarked upon a series of advances with regard to utilising the largest number of heat units associated with steam engines, in the direction of increased power and pressure of boilers until at the present time pressures are actually being used that a few years ago would have been regarded as the extreme dream of some visionary. There are being constructed in the Old Country to-day two power stations, one of which will work boilers at the enormous steam pressure of 800 lbs. to the square inch, while the other will work with a pressure of 1,200 lbs. to the square inch. When I mention that fact, hon. members will realise the tremendous efforts the steam engineer is putting forth to cope with the serious competition of the Diesel engine. The field in which this struggle has been most marked has been in the development of power for marine engineering. It is in that field that the largest Diesel engine units have been employed. There are two ships that have been placed in commission recently that carry units capable of generating 15,000 screw horse power. That demonstrates the fact that the Diesel engine is capable of developing huge power. One of the criticisms against the Diesel engine was that it could not be used in large units. I have quoted this information and would stress it further by indicating the heat units contained in boilers that are converted into power by various types of engines. Hon. members will realise that in arriving at the efficiency of the generator one has to determine just how much heat can be drawn from the fuel and converted into power at the switchboard. The following table will give an idea as to the results

obtained from different types of prime mover. A non-condensing

*Heat Consumption and Thermal Efficiencies of different types of Prime Movers at Continuous Full Load.*

Type of Prime Mover, all steam plants including boiler losses.	Heat consumption per BHP hour in BTU.	Overall Thermal Efficiency.
Non-condensing steam engine ...	40,000 to 28,000	6.3 to 9.1
Condensing steam engine using superheated steam ...	28,000 to 16,500	9.1 to 15.4
Steam turbine superheated 200 to 2,000 h.p. ...	24,000 to 15,500	10.6 to 16.2
Steam turbine superheated 2,000 to 10,000 h.p. ...	15,000 to 14,000	16.2 to 18.1
Producer Gas Engines including producer losses ...	14,000 to 11,200	18.1 to 22.7
Diesel Engine ...	8,000 to 7,200	32.0 to 35.3

So it will be seen from these comparisons that there is a tremendous advantage in favour of the Diesel engine from the standpoint of thermal efficiency alone. That, however, is not the only factor. Associated with the generation of power by means of steam is the inevitable factor of handling large quantities of coal. Unfortunately it is impossible, except on the largest type of station, to handle that coal other than by hand firing. When we get to a large-scale power station, you can introduce those refinements of chain grate and Riley's stoker, and mechanical handling of the coal, or even introduce pulverised firing, which is associated with the highest form of efficiently and economically utilising coal fuel. The Diesel engine handles the whole of its fuel by pumping and so serves to cut down the enormous stoking staff and has a remarkable effect on the cost. I have quoted these facts because it appears to me the Bunbury people, by introducing the Diesel engine, are justified by the saving in cost to themselves, but I consider they are short-sighted in view of the fact that they are thereby introducing the most serious rival to the local fuel and jeopardising the construction of the large-scale power plant which it is hoped to establish at Collie. There can be doubt that once the facts in connection with oil are demonstrated, the introduction of the oil engine will progress tremendously, and our local fuel industry will be in serious danger.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: That has already been done.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Yes, in certain parts of the State. But for a local authority

to go so far as to introduce within 30 miles of our large fuel field the oil engine, is taking a step which they themselves I fear will in future regret. if only for the fact that a great deal of the prosperity of Bunbury is derived through the shipment of large quantities of coal from that port. The Bunbury people were compelled to take their action from the fact that it seems to be an impossibility for the bodies concerned to come to an agreement in regard to the establishment of a power scheme. There is also the fact that their load has increased to such an extent that the time factor comes in and they have to provide a necessary increase to their plant immediately. I have no doubt of the advantages they will gain from the introduction of oil, but I suggest that by doing so they will offer a most serious challenge to the coal people of Collie. There is no doubt the coal people can only compete against oil by introducing the refinements I have quoted. But a large power station can only operate if it is able to find a market for the power it produces; and it looks to me as if the action of the Bunbury council in that respect is short-sighted. I raise these points because I believe the Collie power scheme is in the best interests of the State. I think the facts ought to be placed before members in order that they may realise the serious position set up between the two rival fuels, steam power generated by coal and the Diesel engine, which is rapidly coming to the fore. In those circumstances I hope to hear something more from the sponsor of the Bill before it is finally passed.

HON. H. A. STEPHENSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.52]: To me this Bill appears to be an ordinary business proposition. I have received a letter from the Bunbury Municipality in which I think they set out their case very clearly indeed. I do not intend to follow Mr. Seddon through a theoretical discourse on the production of steam and so on. In passing I want to say that to-day research work in regard to the production of oil from coal is going on at a very great rate. With that object in view, already a company has been registered in the State, and there is another in the Eastern States, while the Federal Government have at least three scientists in the Old Country working along those lines. So it is quite possible that in the near future we shall be

producing oil from coal in Western Australia. Some years ago the Bunbury Municipality discovered that their plant for generating electric current was about at the end of its tether. Its load was then as much as it could carry, and it was likely to break down at any time. It was then thought that a national scheme might be brought about, in fact an Act of Parliament was passed giving certain powers in that direction. Unfortunately that scheme has fallen through and so the Bunbury Municipality has been thrown back on their own resources and to-day are in a very difficult position. All they ask under the Bill is how to raise another £10,000 which will enable them to carry on. Some time ago they made certain investigations and in their letter to me they point out that those investigations brought forth two alternatives, namely, either to increase the present steam plant, replacing worn-out units, and continuing to use Collie coal, or to instal an up-to-date crude oil plant. The whole subject was most thoroughly investigated and some remarkable results as to generating costs came to light. It was found that by continuing to use steam as the prime mover, very little reduction, if any, could be made in the cost of generating current. On the contrary, by installing crude oil engines of a type suitable for the work the present cost of production could be reduced by more than 60 per cent., thus enabling the municipality to sell current for lighting and power purposes at practically Perth prices. The council had no doubt as to which prime mover to adopt. A crude oil plant was unanimously decided upon. By its adoption the municipality will be able to provide power at a considerably reduced cost to the consumer and, in addition, make sufficient profit to liquidate all liabilities on the new and the old plants well within the life of the former. There is a lot of sound reason in their proposal. We have before the House a motion for a great national scheme. Most members are agreed upon that, but Bunbury cannot wait till that is brought into being. Even if the motion is passed, the chances are it will be five or six years before we shall have that scheme in operation. Personally, I do not think we shall have it inside of ten years. So it would be rather hard on the Bunbury Municipality if we were to refuse to assist them out of their present difficulties. The proposition is

thoroughly sound and they have to do something. While the grass is growing, the stock are dying. In this case they do not know from one day to another when their machinery will break down and they will be placed in a very awkward position. I will support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 8.59 p.m.*

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*Wednesday, 31st October, 1928.*

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

### QUESTIONS (2)—FRUIT TRADE.

#### *Exports.*

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: Having in mind the increasing competition for the overseas fruit trade and the importance of producing the best export varieties of apples and other fruit for those markets, will the Government take steps to prepare a census of all fruit-trees in the State, together with names of owners, thereby enabling a survey to be made respecting the production of varieties most suitable for export?