

The PREMIER: One is in connection with cattle for the meat stalls, and the other is for horses.

The Minister for Lands: The Stock Department buy all the horses for the various departments.

The PREMIER: In lieu of the various departments buying horses which may be required, this is now done through the Stock Department. When a department has used a horse for a certain period and has no further need for it, that horse is returned to the Stock Department, and they supply it to another department that may require it. The Stock Department therefore must have an account to operate.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported; and the report adopted.

Committee of Ways and Means.

The House having resolved into Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. Holman in the Chair,

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) moved—

That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding £223,145 be granted from the Public Account.

Question passed.

Resolution reported; and the report adopted.

Supply Bill introduced, etc.

In accordance with the foregoing resolutions Supply Bill introduced, passed through all its stages, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

House adjourned at 10.32 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 23rd September, 1913.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: Regulations, forms, and specimen account books, and directions for keeping same, in connection with roads boards.

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew): Last week the Hon. D. G. Gawler asked a question as to when the report of the Chief Electoral Officer in connection with proportional representation would be laid on the Table of the House. There is only one spare copy and that has been in Cabinet, but I got the permission of the Premier to bring it away for about a fortnight as the subject would not come up for discussion until about a fortnight's time. I will not officially place it on the Table of the House, but will leave it here so that hon. members can peruse it.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: Can you not have it printed straight away?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It would cost a tidy sum to print.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: You do intend to have it printed?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Not straight away, in view of the voluminous nature of the document. However, that matter will doubtless come up for consideration. In the meantime hon. members will know where to find the report.

BILL—RIGHTS IN WATER AND IRRIGATION.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 18th September.

Hon. F. CONNOR (North): I think it is well understood that a Bill of the nature of this one is not only necessary, but will be received with *éclat* by the people of certain parts of Western Australia. Before I enter into a criticism of this Bill as it is presented before the House, I want to say that whatever criticism I may give to it will not be with the object of trying to stop the progress of this movement, but I am afraid my friend, the Colonial Secretary, will think that perhaps some of my criticisms are strong. However, I will at least be fair so far as I can be. I am forced to make a few general remarks on this question, and then I will take some of the principal clauses of the Bill and discuss them afterwards. As I said before, this Bill is necessary for certain parts of the State. In certain parts I would not say it would be unnecessary, but not required, and in saying that in a general way, I will put it first that the North and the North-West of Western Australia do not require this Bill. I am going to vote in favour of the second reading and discuss the Bill very freely in Committee. If, however, it passes in its present form the people in the far North and the far West of Western Australia will be taxed in connection with it and get no benefit from it, because it is no use saying there is no taxation coming out of this. There will have to be money borrowed for the development of those districts where irrigation is going to eventuate, and every citizen of this State will have to put up with and share his portion of the taxation. There will be interest on borrowed money and there will be the necessary amount to find for payment of the money when it becomes due. My honest conviction in connection with this measure, and it is a great and far-reaching measure, is that there should have been not a select committee but a Royal Commission appointed to handle the question, with an

expert in irrigation and agriculture at the head of it.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: Have not the Government an expert in connection with the measure now?

Hon. F. CONNOR: Who is he?

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: Mr. Oldham.

Hon. F. CONNOR: I give Mr. Oldham credit for what he has done, but after all he is a departmental officer.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: He is an expert all the same.

Hon. F. CONNOR: I give him the credit of saying I think he is a very excellent and conscientious one too. I give Mr. Oldham all that credit, but I think a Royal Commission should have been appointed in connection with this question, and I also say the highest expert known, whatever it would cost to this State, would not be too dear. The Minister for Works, who introduced the Bill in another place, said that the area which it was to control, or principally control, was between Perth and Bunbury, 110 miles. I quite agree with the Minister for Works that the Bill, when placed on the statute-book, should control the districts where irrigation is practically available or profitably available. I would make a suggestion, which might kill the Bill, and which I would not make if I thought it would, and that is that we should cut the State in two: leave the northern part out of the provisions of the Bill, because this legislation cannot help the people there, and the taxation in connection with it will affect them, and it will stop progress to a certain extent in the northern part of the State. A man will not put artesian bores down for stock purposes there in view of these regulations, and I will explain that later on more fully. In the northern part of the State we do not want portions of this Bill. They are of no use to us, and why should we put up with the taxation? I am going to reiterate these things a few times before I am done.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: This argument can be applied to the East too.

Hon. F. CONNOR: It applies where the hon. member likes. There is in this Bill what permeates the policy of the

present and past Parliaments. There is in this Bill what hurts the North of this State. Why should the North of this State have to stand the taxation, the responsibility of the borrowing of money for development under this Bill, and get no benefit?

Hon. R. J. Lynn: You have a smart steamship service.

Hon. F. CONNOR: Get work! Why should the northern part of the State stand its portion of the responsibility when it gets no benefit from it? I will explain my point more fully later on from notes. I presume, Mr. President, that I have the right to speak from notes, as this is a purely technical Bill, and I am only an amateur, so I crave the indulgence of yourself and hon. members of this House. The northern part of the State has to hump the responsibility of the water scheme to Coolgardie, it has to hump the responsibility of the Fremantle harbour scheme, and now the north of the State is asked to hump the responsibility of a Bill like this, which is far-reaching and means expenditure of more money than anybody here can conceive at present, to make it a success. Therefore I ask hon. members of this House to assist the members of the North, to protect them somewhat, unless they get some other *quid pro quo*. There is no *quid pro quo* that I can see showing out. The suggestion of a member of another place last week that another department should be created for the purpose of handling the North and North-West, appeals to me as being one under which, when a Bill such as this is brought before the House, a greater degree of protection would be provided for the people of the North.

Hon. J. Cornell: An excellent idea.

Hon. F. CONNOR: It is a great idea. I am going to support it, and I may even have the pleasure of being the one to introduce that question in this House. In the Bill the water-courses are given to the State. I do not think there is anyone here who has been in the far North. Anybody who knows that place will know that there are there water-courses 25 miles wide in a good season of heavy rain; yet

we are asked to give up the water-courses to the control of the Minister. In these circumstances I do not know what he is going to leave to the other people.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The Bill provides for that.

Hon. F. CONNOR: No, it does not.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Yes, in the interpretation of "bed," on page 2.

Hon. F. CONNOR: Well, I will come to that. When we get into Committee I will suggest to the Minister in charge of the Bill that Clauses 18 to 22 be struck out. I am not going to move that, but merely to suggest it. The suggestion will be made with a view to leaving the control of artesian bores to those people who put them down before the Bill was ever thought about. There are certain provisions against waste of water. I am with them all the time. With the Bill in its present form I have no hesitation in saying it is of a confiscatory nature. Why should people who, 25 or 30 years ago, came to this country and took up land on which they have since brought up their families, and the water on which then belonged to them—and still does by right—why should they be debarred the use of that water? The Bill provides that it should be left in the hands of the Minister to appoint boards, and that he is to be the one in control. Take the position of the South-West, where huge sums of money have been spent in the conservation of water, where tanks have been made and dams built, where water is conserved on a higher level; according to the Bill as before the House, it would be possible—given that the board agreed—for any cockie lower down the stream with a few acres, to say to the people who had conserved the water and who had helped to develop the country by opening it up and putting their money into it, and who had the country to be developed—it would be possible for any cockie down below to say, "Loose those dams and let the water come down to us." Now, that must not be in the Bill. I am not qualifying that. There must be some provision made for that. It must not be left in the Bill. I speak feelingly. Then

comes the question of rates. There is nothing in the Bill to show what the rates are going to be, there is no maximum, no minimum. It is purely in the hands of the Minister for Works. We will have to define something in that way. There must be a maximum and a minimum.

Hon. F. Davis : Do you find that in other Bills ?

Hon. F. CONNOR : I will come to that later on. Then there are the fines. What becomes of these fines ? How are they disposed of, and are they at the disposal of the board ? Who takes them ? Why, there are fines all through the Bill. Remember, I am not opposing the Bill, I am supporting it ; but I am criticising it with the object of getting it shaped into a workable measure. How are we to know where these fines are going to, who is to control them ? There is nothing in the Bill to show. It simply says a man may be fined, and there is nothing to show where the fine will go. It is quite right there should be fines imposed on anyone who contravenes the provisions of the Bill ; but these fines should go towards the working of the measure. To revert to the question of artesian bores. Take the people who went to the North-West. They put their money and their time into the development of the country. They risked the whole of their financial existence on the chance of getting artesian water. They spent each £2,000 or £3,000 in these bores, and got artesian water. They built drains for miles and miles all over the country. The water is flowing through those drains to-day. It is not an irrigation district. It could not possibly be an irrigation district. Yet, under the Bill the Minister can control these bores and take from these people 33 feet on each side of the drains which they have built to water their stock. That is not right, nor is it just. However, I will refer to that again later. Men who do that sort of thing ought to have certain rights. Under the Bill they are to have no rights. Again I say the Bill should not affect the North-West parts of the State, because there are no irriga-

tion propositions up there. What will be the effect ? It will stop progress, it will prevent men from putting down bores on their properties. Would any man hurt himself financially by getting money from financial institutions in order to put down a bore ; would he do that if he thought he was not to have control of the bore which he put down and the drains which he built ? If he did, he would be a fool. I will point out later on where this thing can be made easy, and the Bill can go through if the Government will take the advice I am giving them. What I am talking of now is a subject about which I am not qualified to talk, for the Bill is technical to a high degree. But I am talking as one who has studied the Bill in conjunction with a very able irrigation engineer. I will admit that I am not talking of what I know myself, so much, but after having discussed the subject with a very able engineer. To my mind so far as artesian bores or genuine water conservation is concerned nothing should apply to any works or wells that have been created before the Bill was introduced. I have some notes on the question of taxation, but I will not worry about this just now. To go back to the position of the man who arrived here 25 years ago, or better still, who was born here 40 or 50 years ago. Such a man bought his land because there was water on it : because there was a spring on it, because there was a creek running through it. The Bill gives power to an individual—of course there is supposed to be a board in connection with it, but the whole power, according to the Bill, is given to an individual—and that individual is the Minister for Works for the time being. Is it right that he should be able to say to these people who settled here 25 or 50 years ago, "This is a place which is suitable for what we want, and I shall tell you to go away and leave it. I shall take your land, use it as I like, take your water and use it as I like?" I do not believe it is in the best interests of the country that the Bill should pass in its present form. I have already said that I shall support

the second reading; but the Bill will require to be cut up pretty considerably in Committee. We have heard a great deal in connection with this question about the success of irrigation in Victoria and New South Wales. I ask hon. members if any of them have studied that question? Personally, I did not until a few days ago, but I have since read a good deal about it. It has not been a success in either Victoria or New South Wales. In Victoria, approximately, yes; in New South Wales, no, absolutely a failure. It is not my province that I should here and now go into the details of that, but I here state that it has not been a success in either of these States. In Victoria somewhat, yes, but on the whole it has been an absolute failure. In discussing the different points in connection with this Bill the question arises: can it be made a success where we have areas sufficient to warrant an irrigation scheme? I say yes it can, but under the Bill as it is at present, I say it cannot. First of all, it means that we must have an expert. We must not have a Minister for Works, be he who he may, with no technical or theoretical or scientific knowledge of the question, in sole control. We will have to start with a department having at the head a man beyond reproach. When I say beyond reproach, I do not use the term in the fancy sense, but I mean we must have a first-class irrigation engineer. Under the Bill this is not provided for. The Bill says that the Minister shall control all, and that is the worst of all the bad points. As regards irrigation, if we could irrigate everywhere it would be beautiful, and the Bill would be justified, but there is another factor to be considered, and that is the question of drainage, and Mr. Oldham will appreciate my contention that we require an expert to handle this scheme, and that not only irrigation, but drainage, will have to be considered. Irrigation without drainage is of no use. We have had an example of that surely between Waroona and Brunswick, where the thousands of pounds which the Government spent have been thrown away, be-

cause they rushed into the thing before they were ready. When the Bill is licked into shape, it should be in such a form that where smaller irrigation proposals are put before a board they should not be passed until the board has decided the district where the works will be of use. Small irrigation proposals will not be carried out under the measure as it stands at present, because the people who might desire to go in for such a scheme would hesitate before they put their money and energy into it until they knew whether the work would be carried out on a larger scale, which would render their scheme of no use if the levels did not suit. That is a very strong point to be considered in connection with the working of this Bill. Again, referring to the North, why should the northern part of this State have to carry the burdens of the whole of it? Surely as was pointed out the other day in another place, the North was the means of opening up the great mining industry of Western Australia. The North Kimberley started it and we might not have had a Great Boulder, or a Southern Cross, or any of these places if it had not been for the North leading to them being opened up and yet nothing has been done for the North.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: You might not have been here but for the North.

Hon. F. CONNOR: No. I want to touch on a point affecting the farmers, the gentlemen who will be most interested in this measure. Say that wheat is worth 3s. 6d. a bushel, and it costs, roughly 4d. a bushel, or 10 per cent. for transit, the Government have provided railways for the carriage of this produce. The mining industry is served in the same way if the miners require public batteries, which in all cases do not pay. The people of the North do not get any concessions like these. They get no railways; they get no batteries; they get nothing done for them. I will not labour that question, but I wish to point out to the Colonial Secretary that it is time something was done for the North, or if it is not I do not think many Irrigation Bills will be passed. As regards this measure, the interpretation clause defines "irrigable" as

being applied to land of such situation as to be capable of being irrigated. Any land can be irrigated, whether it is of use or not. In Committee I will ask that the word "beneficially" or "profitably" be inserted. The word "profitably" would suit me better, because if the Bill is passed in its present form the powers will be given to an individual, and even if that individual were an archangel I would not agree to leave it to him to say that certain land is irrigable and shall be developed. In Part II.—that is the crux of the measure—I will suggest in Committee that an alteration be made somewhat to this effect: that instead of the Act being under the control of the Minister, it shall be under a commissioner, as in Victoria, who shall be a thoroughly qualified hydraulic engineer with experience in irrigation and agricultural engineering, and he should be empowered to prepare comprehensive designs—the cost would not be very much—for the irrigation and drainage of all lands which can be beneficially irrigated and drained. Clause 4 makes a proposition, provided the flow of water in any watercourse or any lake, lagoon, swamp, or marsh is not sensibly diminished. I have some notes on this point, which may cause hon. members to think. Rights in natural water should certainly vest in the Crown, except as regards that water which rises in springs or the water which falls on private land, which in each case should belong to the owner, and the owner should be allowed to construct tanks, ponds, or retaining walls to conserve such water so long as he does not interfere with the water which does not rise or fall on his property, although it does sensibly diminish the flow of the stream. He should be entitled also to a portion of the flow of any stream which does not rise or fall on his property, if he has held, prior to the passing of this measure, the freehold of the land over which such stream flows, or he should receive compensation for the loss of such water. That is only British fair play. We must not confiscate individual rights. A man who is now entitled to the water should still have a right to it unless he is criminal in his use of it. I will refer to Clause 5 in Committee,

and shall suggest that it should not apply to the North, and the crux of my remarks is that the North should not be included in the full scope of this Bill. Clause 14 stipulates that five acres shall be the extent of a garden. This clause as it stands, means that the owner of riparian rights of ten miles of a creek will get no more water as compensation than the owner of the riparian rights of ten yards. That is manifestly unfair.

Hon. F. Davis: That only applies to domestic use, and not to the total.

Hon. F. CONNOR: It applies to the operation of this Bill; that is how the measure will operate. I suggest that the right to the water necessary for the irrigation by four floodings, each three inches deep, of one-tenth of an acre for each chain of stream or for each two chains of water frontage should be allowed, with a minimum allowance of 250,000 cubic feet per annum. The Colonial Secretary will have plenty of time to consider this matter. This brings me to an interesting point, and that is, what is the meaning of garden? I pause for a reply. Perhaps one of the hon. members who sat on the select committee might be able to tell me. However, the word is not defined in this measure. In Clause 15 I will suggest that a special license be granted for the use of the same amount of water as at present for a period of ten years free of charge. That is only fair to the people who own the land. If Sir Edward Wittenoom is not present at the time, I will ask that Clauses 18 to 25 be struck out, because they will interfere, and I think unduly, with the rights of the people who went to the North; at least if they will not interfere, they will give the opportunity and make it possible to interfere with the people who went to the North and opened up artesian bores. I will not move for the deletion of these clauses, but will leave it to the Minister to decide. I am not opposing the Bill in any way, but I am trying to criticise it fairly. I will vote for the second reading, and will not force any of the suggestions I have made on hon. members. But sooner than the Bill should be lost I will waive all the opposition that I am supposed to have

shown, except, of course, on one point, and that must be made clear. Where excavations have been made, or dams constructed for the purpose of conserving water, it is my intention to insist that no man shall be able to say, you must open up your dam and let the water out. In my opinion that course would be unjust, and it would not be in the interests of the country. Under Subclause 11 of Clause 60 in regard to lands which have been acquired, the Minister would have the right to say whether or not the individuals could make a deal. I do not think that should be in the clause. Wherever anything like that has occurred, land should not be given to any individual, but tenders should be called. That is another matter which I shall also refer to in Committee. I have no more to say in connection with this matter. I have not entered on a discussion of this measure with any intention of destroying the Bill. I think the Bill is necessary, but in its present form it will prove injurious. I hold definitely the view that it should not be within the province of any individual to have the power that it is proposed to give in this Bill, and the gentleman, whoever he may be, who will occupy the position of Minister for Works, will have powers which I consider will be too wide. My opinion is that the Bill should have been a machinery one and that it might have been made to apply to all the waters in the State, and then a second Bill might have been introduced under which it would have been possible to create irrigation districts. If we apply the Bill as it is before us to the whole of the State, I think we will court failure. In my opinion such a proposal will not be workable. It is my intention to support the second reading of the Bill.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE (South-East): I desire to say that the Bill which is before the House at the present time is a decided improvement on the measure which was submitted to us last session. It is not my intention to go through the clauses in detail, but there are many which I consider are still objectionable. The details, however, I will not refer to until the measure has reached the Committee stage.

It is my intention at the present time to speak on the Bill in a general way. I am not one of those who believe that if the Bill does not become law at this juncture the development of the State will be retarded. As a matter of fact the outcry for this measure has come from one part of the State only.

Several Members: Hear, hear.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: And even those people are as sorry as anyone in the State to-day that they ever asked for the Bill after having had the opportunity of considering the measure which the Government has presented. The Bill is so far reaching in its effects that it is impossible to see how it will prove successful. I maintain that even with the best irrigation Bill in the world, we will not get people to take up irrigation plots at the present stage of the development of this country. What man with a capital of £300, which it is admitted he must have, or something approaching that sum of money, if he has any love for the land, is likely to tie himself down to an irrigation plot of a limited area and face everlasting taxes and the many difficulties which will be associated with that kind of life, especially when it is remembered that he can go to the broad acres where the rainfall is sure and where he can without any doubt become successful. I spent some time in the Mildura district in its early days and told some of the young Englishmen whom I met there that they were fools to go past the shores of Western Australia, or even past the coast lands of South Australia where they could get land for £18 and £20 per acre and where the rainfall was assured. These people had gone to Mildura and taken up plots for which they had to pay £20 an acre. Those who go on land where the water supply is man-made will find it a much more expensive and difficult proceeding than that of selecting land where, for water supply, they depend on that which falls from the heavens. A man-made water supply invariably bristles with everlasting special taxes and rates, and it is only extreme need that will drive men to burden themselves with land that depends on a man-made water source for

its development. All I can say is that, if our bread is to remain unbuttered until the influence of this Bill butters it for us, we will eat dry bread for a long time. The butter supply, like the bread it is spread on, will come from our huge wheat belt. Quite two-thirds of that mighty belt is suitable for butter production and it will come at the proper time. How did it come about in Victoria? It came about with the aid of bonuses. Unfortunately under Federation we cannot give bonuses. If we gave a bonus we would soon have butter, but it would come from the same place as the bread, namely, the wheat belt. Two-thirds of our wheat belt is quite suitable for the production of butter. I take it if we can encourage the farmer to-day to go in for the production of cream, from which we all know butter is made, we will overcome the difficulty. Under the proposed methods we will not only court failure but cause extreme disappointment. There are no people here to-day who would be foolish enough to link themselves up to the slavery connected with butter production while there are easier and better avenues for their energies. Who is likely to tie himself down to the task of rising at 4 o'clock every morning, as is necessary on a dairy farm, when on a wheat farm he can rise with the sun and go out to work in an open field. On a dairy farm a man must go out and work at most unusual hours if he wishes his farm to prove a success. Some little time back I was in New Zealand and I spent a week with a family who took up dairying as a source of livelihood. They were successful, certainly, but they would not have remained on their farm if they could have helped it. The fact of the matter was that they could not get away and they were forced to stay. We know that there must be butter production, but I contend that it will come at the proper time. The irrigation proposals of the Government will not bring it about. I am positive that disappointment and dry bread is in store for all those who expect to butter their bread through the influence of this Bill. I maintain that a small measure would have met the de-

mands of the people between here and Bunbury and Busselton. If the measure goes through in anything like its present form it will become one more dangerous weapon in the hands of a Government who have again and again proved that in most matters appertaining to the land they know very little. The present Government have declared themselves, more than any other Government which have been in power, believers in agriculture, but I can unhesitatingly say that they know less about it than any Government which has preceded them. I repeat, that a measure like this and in the form we find it now, will be a most dangerous measure in their hands, particularly while we have the present Minister for Lands, who everlastingly leans towards the leasehold principle, remaining a member of the Cabinet. All that is wanted is a small measure which will give power to form irrigation boards and the right to rate. The whole thing otherwise must be left to the people, a majority to declare their wishes before a board can be formed. The State does not want a scheme of the kind proposed by the Government. Mr. Connor has pointed out how the Bill will affect a section of the community and he has referred to artesian supplies of water and shown what has been done by the pastoralists in the way of discovering these artesian supplies. I do not see what right the Government have to step in and take possession of those supplies and control them, at any rate without offering ample compensation. The important thing about the whole matter is that we have no people who are prepared to take up irrigation plots outside a few owners in the South-West who are desirous of making the most of their land. We have not heard a whisper about the small man. I would draw the attention of the Government to the fact that in yesterday's paper we noticed that Professor Paterson stated that Victoria had done very well, but not too well, and it might be pointed out that their irrigation plots were of 50 and 60 acres. I understand that the

Government here proposed that the plots shall be 5 and 10 acres.

Member : Garden plots.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE : There is plenty of land for garden purposes without the need of irrigation. Professor Paterson declares that they must be fifty or sixty acres, so what can the Government expect from five or ten acres. I would like to hear it stated by the Government that they have no intention of limiting the areas to anything like so small an acreage. It may be asked why do not our people go in for butter-making at the present time? They take the line of least resistance and they adopt methods by which they can make ends meet more easily. They prefer to go in for mixed farming. That irrigation will eventually become successful in this State is undoubted, but what we want at the present time is a simple measure to enable those in the South-Western districts to form irrigation boards, and not a measure such as the one we have before us which will affect the State from end to end. The points touched upon by most of the speakers which will have to be carefully considered are : (1) The limitation of the provisions of the Bill to country suitable for irrigation; (2) the recognition of the rights of owners of land affected to have a final say in the establishment of a district; and (3) provision for ample compensation in all cases of resumption and the removal of all possibility of confiscation. Before I sit down I want to say one word in regard to the able manner in which Mr. Colebatch dealt with the question in this House. I do trust that the outcome of these remarks will be that in future this Chamber will receive from Ministers that fair play which it always seeks to give. In all the statements that are made in this House there is nothing that is meant to be of a personal nature. I know I never intend to make statements that are personal or hurtful to the individual, and I do trust that any statements made in future with regard to this Chamber will be impersonal and based upon truth.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (in reply) : Mr. Colebatch, in his opening remarks on the second reading, strove to justify the attitude of the Council last year. I do not propose to treat with that aspect of the question. I think my time will be more usefully employed in dealing with the present criticisms of the measure. I regret that the ugly word confiscation has been imported into the debate. It was used last year, and it has been used again in connection with this Bill.

Hon. C. A. Piesse : It was there last year.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : There is nothing whatever of a confiscatory nature in this Bill in the sense in which the word is generally used. Confiscation means taking away something belonging to another to the detriment of that person. This Bill does not do that. It seizes hold of and manipulates the rights of each in the interests of all, and I fail to see how anyone can fairly regard that attitude as anything in the nature of confiscation. Mr. Colebatch stated that we were taking away the bed of the river from the man who owns the land. We are taking it away, but only for the purposes of the Act. That is the intention of the measure. That is what the Bill means, that these rights will only be taken away for the purposes of the Bill. Outside those purposes, the bed of the river will be just as much the right of its former owner as ever it was. Under Clause 7 he has a right to access and the same right to use the bed as he enjoys at the present time. He is allowed to use it for grazing, or growing pumpkins or water-melons or anything of that sort. Mr. Colebatch admits that the water should vest in the Crown. He realises that it is necessary, but how could the Crown possibly control the water unless it owned the bed? No hon. member has attempted to explain that phase of the question. How, for instance, could the Crown prevent the diversion of the water unless property in the bed of the stream was vested in the Crown? How could the Crown protect land from erosion or flood? The Government would be always at the mercy of the owner abutting on

the stream. At any time, if the Government attempted to do anything of the kind mentioned, the owner would take action for trespass and the Crown would be involved in an action for damages. Then again the owner could dam up the watercourse and interfere with the supply of those lower down, and thus upset the whole scheme.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Now he will be damning the Government.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: A question I might ask is this: for what purpose does the owner require the bed? It is of no use to him when the river is running, and when the river is dry he has full authority under this Bill to use it for his own purposes and to sue for trespass anyone, except the Crown, who uses it against his interest.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: It applies to the beds and creeks also.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If there is water in the creek the owner cannot use the land, and if there is no water in it the power is given under the Bill for the owner to use the land for any purpose which is not in conflict with the Bill. This Bill is an interpretation of common law rights. It recognises that under the common law the owner of land abutting on a stream has the right to water in luxury for domestic purposes, stock, and for garden purposes. Exactly the same rights are given under this Bill. The owner is given water in luxury for all of those purposes. If he had ten thousand head of cattle he could still water them at the stream. There would be no block on him in his efforts to obtain an ample supply of water for any number of stock he possessed. His common law right is admitted in this Bill and definitely secured to him for all time. Under Clause 38 existing riparian rights receive primary consideration. Clause 38 reads—

After providing for the requirements of riparian rights as defined in Part III. within an irrigation district, the remainder of the available water supply may be appropriated by the Minister for irrigation.

But before he does anything, he must make ample provision for existing riparian rights.

Hon. F. Connor: Is artesian water riparian?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No. We recognise five acres as more than necessary for the purposes of a garden in connection with a dwelling. Only a small proportion of riparian owners would be likely to avail themselves of the privilege conferred by this Bill. Very few indeed would require a garden in excess of five acres for household purposes. The Government, therefore, will be in a position to issue licenses for practically all the water in a stream to riparian owners who may wish to use it for industrial purposes. Water sufficient for five acres is reserved to them for domestic purposes, and the remainder will be available for industrial purposes.

Hon. E. M. Clarke: Would you allow them to sell any of the product of the five-acre garden?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I should not. I wish it to be clearly understood that the owner cannot sell any product of the garden. Hon. members ask: why not allow the five acres to be irrigated for industrial purposes? That would be entailing the right on the land for all time. Every owner of land fronting a stream would book up his five acres, and the Government would have to make due allowance for every booking before they issued their licenses, and in its very initial stages the scheme would prove abortive. What the Government wish is that they should be in a position to provide for perpetuity of supply. If all the existing land owners, even those not irrigating at the present time, could have a right to irrigate five acres of land, and could at any time demand sufficient water to irrigate that area, the scheme would be abortive from its very inception, because probably the bulk of the water would be already booked up, and that fact would be taken into consideration.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Why permit five acres at all?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is clearly stated that this water is only for garden purposes in connection with a dwelling. It is no attempt to delude hon. members.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: No dwelling wants five acres.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The contention last year was that a dwelling required five acres, and consequently we made provision for five acres.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: We did not see the catch. You might as well make it 50 acres.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Quite as well; it would never be used for a garden in connection with a dwelling.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: The idea was that they should use it for commercial purposes.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Colebatch declared that it was an anomaly to make provision for five acres all round, irrespective of the area held by the owner. It would be an anomaly if the owner had the right to use the water for industrial purposes, but it is not so. He will have ample for his family, but the area of land he holds does not govern his appetite, and if we gave him the right to irrigate 50,000 acres for household purposes he could not utilise it. Now, the fee for licenses will be very nominal, only £1 every year for ten acres or part of 10 acres. Mr. Colebatch wants to see provision made for the right of veto as against the board in connection with expenditure. He says that the people who have to bear the cost should have a voice as to the expenditure. Now, if the hon. member will read Section 113 and following sections of the Water Works Act of 1904 he will find that those provisions are almost identical with the provisions in this Bill. Under the Water Works Act, the board or the Minister as the case may be, may borrow money for the purposes of the Act, and notice of intention to borrow must be inserted in the *Government Gazette* and also in a newspaper circulating in the district. There is the same provision in this Bill, but the people have absolutely no voice. All they can do is to raise a protest. They have no means whatever of stopping any scheme; in fact, under the Waterworks Act, and also under the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act, the Minister himself can force a scheme upon any dis-

trict, and the only voice given to the rate-payers of that district is by way of a protest or objection, which no doubt would be carefully considered by the Minister for the time being. But the right to veto does not exist in connection with either of those measures.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: Under those measures you do not interfere with riparian rights.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Clarke stated that the Victorian Act provided for reclassification. That is quite correct, and it was necessary in Victoria, owing to the large acreages held by different persons. The land was rated on an acreage basis, and much of the land was non-irrigable; consequently classification was essential. I intend when the Bill is in Committee to move an amendment that land will only be rateable when the water is actually ready for use and when the land is, in the opinion of the commissioners, suitable for irrigation. That, I think covers the wish of the hon. Mr. Connor. These are not the exact words of the amendment, but they convey the meaning. Mr. Clarke stated that one million pounds of expenditure was written off by the Victorian authorities in connection with the Irrigation Act. That is not correct. The sum is three millions, and it was not written off, it was simply not saddled on the selectors, and there is very good reason why the Government should not pursue such a course. In some instances—in connection with the Goulburn Valley scheme, to give a case in point—the Government had to construct very wide channels in order to divert the river. In this case the river has been diverted to the extent, I am informed, of not less than 100 miles. That involved a very heavy expenditure, and the Government came to the conclusion that it would be very unfair and unjust to compel the settlers who would be utilising the waters to pay the cost of the scheme. They regarded the construction of the main channels as a national undertaking and decided that it should be a national burden. But the basis of taxation would be in connection with the using of the channels. If a set-

tlar wished to be connected with the main channels, he would be taxed accordingly, but as far as the cost of the whole scheme was concerned, it was decided that the country should be called upon to stand it. Then again, we were informed by Mr. Clarke that hundreds of small men were irrigating, and he desired to protect them. That is our desire too, and that is one of the reasons for the introduction of the Bill.

Hon. E. M. Clarke: But our methods are different.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: We are afraid that the man above might interfere with the settler lower down, and if he is interfered with there is nothing to prevent the man lower down approaching the Supreme Court and securing an injunction to restrain the man higher up from preventing the flow of the water. We want to bring the whole of the settlers under the protecting mantle of the State license. Mr. Gawler wants to know why we want to stick to the phrase "subterranean source of supply." That phrase does not apply to existing bores. The provision with regard to existing bores has been deleted from the Bill. The subterranean source of supply is not the bore. The bore is an artesian well and all artesian wells already in existence do not come under the operations of the measure. I think Mr. Connor is under the impression that they do. They did in the Bill that was before the House last year, but they do not come under the provisions of this Bill. We desire to exempt all artesian bores put down before the passage of this Bill, but future bores will not be exempt.

Hon. F. Connor: That is fair.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: This is no new principle. If anyone wants to put down a bore in the metropolitan area he must first get the permission of the Minister for Works. There is also a similar provision in connection with the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Act. This measure is under the same administration as this Bill will be if it becomes law, and I have never heard to date any complaint against the administration of the Acts which I have men-

tioned. Mr. Gawler and Mr. Sommers want the measure restricted to certain districts; they do not wish it to operate throughout the State, and Mr. Connor holds a similar view. Mr. Gawler quoted the New South Wales Act, but there is nothing in the New South Wales Rights in Water and Irrigation Act which does what the hon. member represents. No property owner has the right of veto in connection with the New South Wales law, but in the Water Trust Act which has been passed in New South Wales for the purpose of providing water supplies, there is such a provision, but not in the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act of New South Wales. Sir Edward Wittenoom wants Part III. to apply only to districts in which two-thirds of the people are in favour, but by that process we would establish vested interests which will have to be dealt with at a later date. Is it not far better, as the question has to be tackled now, that everything possible should be done to avoid building up vested interests to be attacked sooner or later? If it is a good thing for one part of the State it should be a good thing for every portion of Western Australia. Mr. Cullen's speech was dictatorial, uncompromising and abounding in slurs on the Minister for Works, in fact, he said he might trust the Minister's intentions, but he would not trust his ignorance.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: I did not say that.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Those are not the exact words, but it is the interpretation that anyone would place on them after a careful perusal of the speech. I do not think his speech is worthy of any serious notice, but the hon. gentleman promulgated an extraordinary doctrine. He appeared to justify our importations and continued importations of dairy produce on the ground that commerce should be encouraged. It may be a good thing to encourage commerce, but it strikes me as a bad thing to send money out of the country for goods which may be produced in our country.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: At greater cost.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Such a policy would no doubt mean a remarkable display of good-heartedness to our

neighbours, but it would be a splendid exhibition of stupidity. Last year we imported from the Eastern States £993,540 worth of dairy produce, fruit and potatoes, and we sent them very little indeed that we could not have sold elsewhere. The hon. member says, let Western Australia advance naturally. That is the sound advice and the sage counsel of the hon. member. We have been advancing naturally for four thousand years.

Hon. J. F. Cullen : And doing well.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: What did we produce. Kangaroo, bandicoots, and edible roots. We have got beyond that stage and we are now producing wheat, sheep, and cattle. It is the aim of every member of the House with the exception of Mr. Cullen, to go on extending the production until we are able to supply the whole of our requirements. Then again, the hon. member said, if our industries are coddled the market will be overrun. Seeing we have a million to make up I think it will be many years before we are in danger of overrunning the constable.

Hon. J. F. Cullen : Do you think we can compete with Victorian butter ?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: We should attempt to. The hon. member said potatoes would come down to 30s. a ton. I do not think it would be a national calamity if they did come down to something reasonable. At the present time they are £12 a ton, and when this Bill was originally introduced they were nearer £36 a ton, and because there seems to be a far distant danger of their coming down to 30s. a ton, Mr. Cullen says no effort should be made to coddle the industry!

Hon. J. F. Cullen : I am afraid the Minister did not follow my speech.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member's speech, boiled down, was, "Wait a while, sit still, do nothing, and let nature take its course."

Hon. W. Kingsmill : You are boiling it down with flavouring essences.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : Mr. Cullen objects to placing the control of irrigation districts in local boards. He

said that the House would not permit it and he seemed to speak with a considerable amount of authority behind him on this point, but the hon. member must have been aware that the Minister for Works when at Bunbury gave a promise that he would delete this particular provision from the Bill and an amendment will be placed on the Notice Paper with that intention. I hope the hon. member will not claim that the action of the Government is the result of his threat.

Hon. J. F. Cullen : Does the Minister admit that I was right ?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : I admit you had some knowledge that it was proposed to be done and you wanted to get the credit of having driven the Government to take the step.

Hon. J. F. Cullen : That is very petty.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Sommers told us that the orange trees at Mr. Fawcett's on the Murray River, and at Mr. Butcher's on the Canning River, were not irrigated, but that is not correct, they have been irrigated for some time past. They were originally not artificially watered, but eventually it was found necessary to water them in order to secure the production of the fruit. It has been proved at Harvey that orange trees can be grown for a certain time—a few years—without watering, but it is practically impossible to secure a good crop except with irrigation. Mr. Sommers made a similar statement as to Mr. Watts' orchard at Northam. This is also incorrect. Mr. Watts is using water from the Coolgardie water scheme. Mr. Sommers also stated that in Victoria the water rates went up to 4s. 8d. in the pound. I should like to know where the hon. member got his information from, because the usual method adopted in Victoria and elsewhere is not to strike a rate, and if a rate has been struck in Victoria it is not known to the Public Works Department here.

Hon. C. Sommers : Do you deny that it amounts to as much as 4s. 8d. in the pound ?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : It is news to the Government. Mr. Hamersley wished to delete the clause as to

artesian bores. I wish to direct the attention of the House to the opinions of certain eminent authorities on this subject. The necessity for assuming control of artesian water was pressed on the public mind by the report of the expert of the Interstate Conference on Artesian Water, dated 17th May, 1912. This is taken from the report—

We deem the matter of uniform legislation for controlling bores of such importance that we venture once more to emphasise it. We are of opinion that, where necessary, legislation should be enacted in order to ensure the effective control by the States of all existing and future bores within all artesian basins. Inasmuch as the interests of several States are involved with regard to more than one of the artesian basins, we would recommend that any future legislation be drafted on the lines of the Acts already in existence in New South Wales and Queensland, where provision is made for the granting of licenses for bores, for the supervision of boring methods, and for the periodic examination of all existing bores. We are of the opinion that the necessity for action in this direction to be taken in the remaining States is urgent.

Then again, previous to the passing of the Queensland Act, Mr. Mead was engaged by the Queensland Government to report on the question of artesian boring in that country. He submitted a report to the Government, and from it I shall read a few extracts. As a result of that report, the Queensland Government decided to make provision for the control not only of future bores, but of existing bores. We, however, do not intend to go so far in this Bill. We take control only of bores which come into existence at a later date. This is what Mr. Mead, the great authority, said—

It would be difficult to exaggerate the value of the State's artesian water supply. The very existence of civilised life in some sections depends on its perpetuity, and steps should be taken

at once to stop the waste now occurring from unregulated bores. This waste is not alone curtailing the State's future development, but constitutes a grave menace to existing pastoral industries. From the statistics provided by Mr. Henderson, it appears that the known expenditure on artesian bores approximates £2,000,000.

That was in Queensland; they had large vested rights in Queensland in connection with artesian bores, but in spite of that the Government decided, and Parliament agreed, that they should all come under the Bill. From those reports it will be seen that this legislation has very strong recommendations. According to the report, it is necessary not only to control future bores, but also to control existing bores. It is shown that the interests of several States are involved in regard to more than one of these artesian basins, that waste occurs from unregulated bores, that the State's future development is thereby threatened and the pastoral industry gravely menaced. We have these statements by such eminent authorities, and the fact that the Governments of Queensland and New South Wales have decided, and their Parliaments have agreed, that the whole of the bores constructed before the passing of their Acts, and those to come into existence later, shall be brought under Government control. However, we do not go so far. We have decided that the bores already in existence shall not be brought under this measure. The hon. Mr. Connor said that the North does not want this Bill. But we have had no evidence whatever that the people there do not want the Bill.

Hon. F. Connor: You have no evidence that they do.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Bill has been before the country for 18 months, and I have never read of any protest in the newspapers. The Press is not in opposition, and there have never been public meetings. I fail to see how it can be said with any degree of authority that the North-West is hostile to the Bill.

Hon. F. Connor: I say they are.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is not a question whether the North-West

wants the Bill or not, but whether in the interests of the State it is desirable that the North-West should be brought under the operations of the measure. The hon. member said the North-West is to be taxed because of the measure, but every scheme must be self-supporting and stand on its own bottom. It will be no burden on any other portion of the State. To say the North-West is going to be taxed for the development of these schemes in another part of the State is to demonstrate that the hon. member has not carefully studied the provisions of the measure. It has been stated that the Government propose to limit irrigation blocks to five and ten acres. That attitude has never been considered by the Government. The Government would permit the irrigation of 100 or 200 acres if the water is available and anybody is desirous of cultivating that acreage. I think I have dealt with a number of objections to the measure, and when we get into Committee I shall be in a better position to meet any objections that may be raised.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—SUPPLY (TEMPORARY ADVANCES), £223,145.

Received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time.

Sitting suspended from 6.10 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL—TRAFFIC.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew) in moving the second reading said: This Bill is practically the same as the measure introduced by me last year, and eventually withdrawn owing to the amendments made by this House which the Government could not accept. It is now re-submitted in the hope that in the interval of time which has elapsed since its last presentation, members have had ample opportunity of considering its provisions and of judging of their utility. The Bill repeals either wholly

or in part six measures at present on the statute-book governing the regulation of traffic. It repeals in part the Tramways Act, the Public Works Act, the Roads Act, and the Municipal Institutions Act, and it repeals *in toto* the Cart and Carriage Licensing Act and the Width of Tyres Act. But although the Bill does this it gives all the principles contained in those six Acts to which I have referred. But they are in a form more in keeping with the altered conditions of to-day, in order to keep pace with the great strides made in local government, and to meet the altered conditions brought about by the introduction of new methods of locomotion and of annihilating distance over the thoroughfares of the State. So far as the principle is concerned, the chief innovation bears on the width of tyres and the maintenance of trunk roads in the country. Under existing legislation the width of tyres is regulated, as hon. members know, by the diameter of the axle. In the Bill it is proposed that it shall be regulated by the actual weight of the load. As regards the maintenance of trunk roads, provision is made that instead of the licensing fees being collected by the various local authorities and passed into their general revenue, as is the case now, they shall be devoted entirely to the repair of trunk roads, and the Government shall furnish a subsidy of pound for pound for the amount collected in the way of licensing fees.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: The whole thing is a bagatelle.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Well, I am here to give some figures in connection with that aspect.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: Does that principle apply to the State generally?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: To all the boards?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, all over the State. As the principal points in the Bill were fully explained last year, and as the various local authorities have been circularised and the provisions of the Bill explained to them by that method, I do not think it is necessary to do more to-night than to show the need for the measure and to deal with

some misconceptions and misunderstandings, which undoubtedly exist. I think it will be generally admitted that uniformity and consolidation are called for, when I say that the six Acts of Parliament already referred to have methods designed for the regulation of traffic within the State. The regulations passed by the different local authorities under sanction of one or other of these Acts to control the traffic in different parts of the State are often diverse and conflicting, and very amusing situations sometimes arise in consequence. In some cases the boundaries of a roads district cross the main roads at right angles, and in other cases they follow the middle or sides of main roads, and in at least one case the boundary includes one-third of the road in one district and two-thirds in another. This is actually the case between the Peppermint Grove roads district and the Cottesloe municipality on the Perth-Fremantle road. But altogether apart from that aspect of the case, where there are joined together a number of local authorities with different sets of regulations, it is difficult for the driver of a vehicle to know exactly what the law is, and it is also difficult for those who have to bear the responsibility of prosecuting for breaches of the by-laws. The interpretation of Acts in relation to different vehicles is also more or less antagonistic owing to changed circumstances, and it is considered absolutely necessary to place the matter on some sound basis. That is one of the reasons for the introduction of the Bill. One of the anomalies is that municipal officers may demand the production of a license under the Cart and Carriage Licensing Act, but the roads board officials have not the power. It is an authority which only members of the board can exercise. Under existing legislation only members of the roads board can take action for breaches of by-laws; the officials of the board have no such power. If the driver of a vehicle be fined for any offence under the Cart and Carriage Licensing Act, the law provides that the license may be cancelled by any two justices of the peace. The result is that the vehicle is disqualified and not the

owner. That is under the existing law. In consequence of this, a very peculiar position arises in that it is impossible to dispose of the vehicle. The vehicle stands disqualified, as if it were a horse disqualified by the stewards in connection with horse-racing. That is perfectly absurd. I think all will admit some remedy is required.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: It was never taken advantage of.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, I do not think it was. Under the Width of Tyres Act passenger vehicles are exempt from its operations, therefore all special coaches and heavy 'busses escape payment of license fees, although they are fitted with narrow tyres and are used on the roads continually; whereas the farmer, who may use his vehicle once a day or once a week, has to provide a heavy charge. Under the Roads Act the licensing of motors is done by regulation, and the charge may be as high as, but not exceeding £5. Under the Municipalities Act a different system obtains; municipalities may issue licenses, but no maximum is fixed. They can charge £10 or £20 if they please, although in connection with a roads board, a maximum of £5 is fixed by law. In addition to that the municipalities may demand that a license be taken out, notwithstanding that one has already been taken out in another district. I do not know whether they have enforced their powers in that direction.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Never.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: But they can do so. It is probably because they really do not know what the law is. Then again, as I have previously pointed out, many of these regulations made by the local authorities are not only diverse, but the work involved in the compilation of the regulations, the trouble entailed in getting approval, the cost of publication in the *Government Gazette*, and the expense of printing, are altogether out of proportion to the results achieved. To get over the difficulty to some extent, it has been found necessary to issue uniform by-laws, that is to say by-laws for the regulation of lights and motor traffic for all the roads districts under the Roads

Act; and I am informed that at least two-thirds of the municipalities have adopted these regulations of their own free will. One of the principal misconceptions which have fastened themselves on the minds of opponents of the Bill is that it is intended to take away the power already enjoyed by the local authorities. That appears to be the impression. Instead of doing that the Bill simply ratifies the existing practice and enables the council to make its town clerk, or the roads board its secretary, do under the Act the same work as he is doing now.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: What about Perth?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: We are coming to Perth presently; I shall have something to say about Perth. What the Bill does is this: it gives them a distinct status. Under the present Act town clerks have a certain status, but roads board officials have none. I refer to the power to prosecute for breaches of the regulations. Under Section 9 of the Cart and Carriage Licensing Act, all local authorities must give notice of the time and place of issuing licenses and also who shall issue them. This means advertising in the *Government Gazette*, and also in one or two local newspapers. But it is altogether unnecessary, because everyone knows where to go if he wishes to obtain a license. The present Bill removes all possible ground for doubt as to who is the party to prosecute for breach of regulations, and it enables local authorities to appoint their officials as inspectors from the start. There is no necessity at all for any new appointments. From some criticisms offered by Mr. Piesse last year he was under the impression that the Bill forced local authorities to appoint traffic inspectors apart from the officials who now do the work.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: It has been dropped.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It has not been dropped. The Bill in that respect is exactly the same as last year. It is intended in amendments of the Roads Act and the Municipalities Act to make the interpretation of town clerk and roads board secretary also carry the designation of inspector under this Act. Another method which requires explanation

is the power to appoint inspectors within the metropolitan area. This is merely to confirm what has already been done and to make provision for the altered state of affairs to be brought about by the repeal of the Cart and Carriage Licensing Act and the Width of Tyres Act. The police at various intersections of the streets of Perth are now performing the duties of traffic inspectors, but they enjoy no status, and they can only take action by virtue of their position as officers of the police force. The main objection to the Bill in the Legislative Council last year was the handing over of the collection of the fees in the metropolitan area to the Minister, but this change of system is absolutely necessary to remove the injustice by which one or two local authorities collected the whole of the license fees to the detriment of the others. The injustice is accentuated by the fact that those who collect the licenses have less trunk roads to maintain than those who are unable to collect them. Through these and other anomalies, it is proposed to divide the State into two parts, namely, the metropolitan and the country, and to deal with them differently. In the metropolitan area it is intended to collect the license fees from all parts of the area and to place them in a trust fund at the Treasury. The Government will also deposit there a sum equivalent to the amount collected. If £2,000 is collected, the Government will subsidise the amount by another £2,000.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Where will the subsidy come from? Will it be part of the present subsidy?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It will be voted by Parliament.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: In addition to the present subsidy?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In addition to the present grant. Afterwards the trunk roads used by those paying the license fees, such as the Perth-Fremantle, Perth-Midland Junction and Perth-Albany roads will be declared main roads, and the amount paid to each authority from the trust fund will be on the basis of the length and width of the road in its district.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: That is only within the metropolitan area.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am dealing with the metropolitan area now.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: The Perth-Albany road would not be taken over to Albany.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Certainly not. To meet this additional expenditure £1,000 was provided on last year's Estimates, that was for six months, but as the Bill failed to pass, the money could not be paid over.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: The Bill did not fail to pass.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Bill failed to pass.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Certainly not.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was impossible for the Government to accept the Bill.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: The Government would not accept it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It will be impossible to accept it this session if similar amendments are made.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: I hope they will be.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: This year £1,400 is provided for six months for the metropolitan area, or at the rate of £2,800 for the year.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: How much for the country?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It may be increased year by year at the will of the Government for the time being in power.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: How much is to be put on for the country?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am coming to that. I cannot give the whole of the information in one sentence. As regards the roads outside the metropolitan area, it is proposed that the local authorities themselves shall collect the license fees, and the Government will subsidise the fees pound for pound. For this purpose an amount of £2,700 was provided on last year's Estimates for six months; but it was not paid over, owing to the fact that the Bill did not become law.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: That is a better way of putting it.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: That is about 1s. a mile.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: This year an amount at the rate of £7,600 is provided; that will be £3,800 for the six months.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: About 1s. a mile.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: This may be increased at any time by the Government, if the necessities of the situation justify it.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: That is the trouble.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Members will see that an additional sum of £10,400 is provided to assist the local authorities in their respective districts; that is £10,400 in excess of what they are receiving now.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Yes, but it is a very much cut-down grant at present; only about half of what it was.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If I am not greatly mistaken it is more now than it was two or three years ago.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: No.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am given to understand that is so. If the hon. member desires, it can be made a matter for investigation and it will give me an opportunity to make full inquiries regarding the point. The only condition made is that this money shall be spent on trunk roads, in respect of which the license fees are collected, and that the by-roads, the local roads, are to be maintained by the local authorities from their own rates, and they will receive subsidies just as they receive them now, altogether apart from the particular subsidy to which I have just referred. The opposition to this measure is certainly opposition to the wishes of the vast majority of the local authorities in Western Australia.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: They have all been misled.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is the first time I have heard it.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: It is a fact.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: They had ample opportunities to consider the Bill. The Bill was submitted to them and they decided in its favour. The full Bill and its principles were agreed upon by

a conference of roads boards, representative of the whole of the State, held in St. George's Hall in July, 1912, and also at another conference of local authorities in the metropolitan area when the only objectors were the Perth authorities. So far as my memory serves me, there was a majority of 18 members to 4.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Have the Perth people withdrawn their objection?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not think so. I am pretty certain that they have not. The Perth authorities at present collect £600 for motors, and nearly all of the motors are used on roads outside of Perth. For other vehicles they collect over £700 a year, a total of something like £1,300, whereas the outside local authorities, who have to maintain the roads which are used by these vehicles, collect practically no fees. In regard to Perth, I think it just as well to give an illustration as to how that particular local authority endeavours at times to evade its responsibilities. Here is an instance: the city of Perth once paid one-third of the cost of maintaining the Causeway, and rightly so, as it is one of the main arteries of southern trade to the city, but some ten or twelve years ago they got rid of this liability and since then have paid absolutely nothing. As regards the Perth-Fremantle road, they have exhibited similar close-fistedness, and I think the present condition of the Mounts Bay-road is an unenviable tribute to their policy. Although this road was originally made by the Government and was reconstructed by the Government in 1892-3, its condition became such in 1896 that it had to be again reconstructed. I am given to understand that before the Government undertook the second reconstruction, the Perth local authorities gave an undertaking that they would bear the cost of maintenance in the future, but that undertaking has never been observed. Now, when a method of distributing the revenue is devised, a just method but one that affects their finances, they are at once up in arms.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: That road was taken over again in 1901 and from then onwards.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: By the Government?

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Yes.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have no record of that. Another false impression has been created in connection with this Bill. It was stated that the measure provided for the licensing of agricultural implements. Nothing of the kind was ever contemplated. No reference to agricultural implements was made when the Bill was first introduced into the Legislative Assembly last year; but the member for Katanning, Mr. A. E. Piesse, suggested the advisability of definitely exempting agricultural implements. The Government immediately concurred. It was simply in a direction which had their approval; they at once accepted the amendment by Mr. Piesse, and a definite provision was made in the Bill totally exempting agricultural implements.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: Why not this time?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Notwithstanding this a certain amount of misunderstanding has arisen, and one gentleman who seems to be under the misconception is the Hon. Mr. Piesse. In the course of a letter, which appeared in the public press this year, the hon. member stated that the Bill took away all the powers of local authorities and gave the Minister for Works full authority to run the show with inspectors of traffic.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: That is all right.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is all wrong. Further, the letter stated that the Bill contained a provision for charging an extortionate sum of £1 a month on engine and chaff-cutting plants. The hon. gentleman should have known, and would have known if he had investigated the matter, that there was no intention to put any charge on agricultural machines, and that the Minister in charge, when his attention was drawn to the matter, immediately consented to an amendment which would remove all possibility of such an interpretation.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: Mr. President, I would like a few moments to make a personal explanation in connection with this

matter. I distinctly stated that the Government were imposing a tax of £1 per month on tractors. That is what I meant to convey. If I was not discriminating enough to make it plain that the Government were doing this in connection with ordinary engines which draw chaff-cutters about I am sorry, and if the Minister for Lands had drawn attention to that I would have put it right; but the Minister and the Colonial Secretary are not aware to-day that these tractor engines pull chaff-cutters about my district, and it was to these I referred. An insult was cast upon me by the Minister in another place, but I will have something to say about that later. These tractor engines are pulling chaff-cutters about in my province; there are four in my province and several in other districts, and for these tractors they would have had to pay £1 a month license under the measure. I want to know now which is the truth.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am simply commenting on the letter which appeared. In it the hon. Mr. Piesse said:—

Amongst its many extraordinary clauses was one that made it compulsory for a farmer who carted his neighbour's productions to take out a carrier's license at twice the ordinary cost, and made it equally compulsory for the person in charge to produce the license, which must be kept in the personal custody of the person actually using the vehicle under a penalty of £3. Provision imposing an extortionate tax of £1 per month on engine and chaff-cutting plant when such plant was in use on other than its owner's lands was also made. This extraordinary measure, which reached the Legislative Council, with this and other obnoxious provisions in it, had been made more presentable by the active opposition of the Liberal Party in the House of Assembly, but the fire of amendments that were hurled at it in the Legislative Council forced the Government to withdraw it.

The whole trend of the letter—

Hon. C. A. Piesse: Does the Minister maintain that I conveyed an untruth when I said that tractor engines, which were being used for drawing chaff-cutters about, have to pay £1 per month and be licensed? Does he mean to say that I was telling an untruth? That impression has been conveyed elsewhere.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The impression on the mind of anyone who reads that letter must be that the Government intend to tax agricultural machines. The hon. gentleman knows perfectly well that that is not the intention. I am sure he was under the impression that such was the case when he wrote the letter, and that the Government intended to compel every local authority to appoint bodies of traffic inspectors.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: I will speak about that later on.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am quite satisfied with the hon. Mr. Piesse's explanation.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: I am not satisfied yet.

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. Mr. Piesse will have an opportunity after the Minister has finished.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: Thank you, Sir.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: This Bill, in some respects, substitutes safe driving for speed limit. What is safe driving will be determined by the circumstances of each case. It also compels drivers to produce licenses to local authorities and the local authorities have power to disqualify the drivers. I think I will leave the explanation of the other provisions until we reach the Committee stage. I have any quantity of information here.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Why does not the Bill define main roads? That is a serious question.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think it is a very easy matter to define a main road. The words "trunk road" are used. There is only one meaning to trunk road. It is the main artery of traffic from one centre to another.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Why not put it in the Bill?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: We must rely on the measure being administered with a little common sense. This will not be the only important Bill administered by the department. The decision as to how grants shall be apportioned rests with the Minister for Works; it will be for him to say in what manner that money shall be distributed.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: A large amount of political patronage.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: According to the interjections of hon. members, they appear to be afraid to trust the Minister in the matter of deciding what is a trunk road and what is not. I beg to move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. W. Kingsmill, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.3 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 23rd September, 1913.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Attorney General: 1, Fifth annual report of the Commissioner of Taxation, 2, Return showing attendance of Supreme Court judges for the twelve months ended 31st August, 1913 (ordered on motion by Mr. Lander).

By the Minister for Works: Regulations, forms, and specimen account books in connection with roads boards.

QUESTION — TRANS-AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY ROUTE.

Mr. LEWIS asked the Premier: 1, Has he noticed on page 11 of the Railway Commissioner's annual report a statement calling attention to the necessity for determining the route of the 4ft. 8½in. gauge trunk railway in its coastal section? 2, Is it the intention of the Government to settle this question at an early date? 3, Before adopting any route will he give the local and other representative bodies an early opportunity of presenting many weighty and powerful reasons in favour of the adoption of a route on the south side of the river, and thus enable the Commissioner to actively proceed with the works he has in hand?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (for the Premier) replied: 1, Yes. 2, Investigations are proceeding. 3, The Government are ever ready to consider petitions on such matters.

QUESTION — PERTH TRAMWAYS TIME TABLE.

Mr. MOORE (for Mr. Wisdom) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Are the Perth tramways run to a time table? 2, Are copies of the time table available to the public? 3, If not, will he consider the advisability of making such copies so available?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (for the Minister for Railways) replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. 3, The time table is being revised, and will be issued to the public at the earliest possible date.

BILL—WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE, AND DRAINAGE AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th August.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): While agreeing with other hon. members that the departments should be amalga-