

express the hope that we shall not be expected to give away too much of our freedom. Control of finance means control of the State. From recent Press reports it does seem as if things were a little more reasonable. However, one really cannot gather from the reports what has actually happened.

The Premier: With the consent of the Loan Council the States can borrow for themselves on the basis of their own security. That was not so in the case of the first agreement; there was to be only one borrower—the Commonwealth on Commonwealth security.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We have been borrowing in Australia through the Federal Government for some years. We have had the one borrower in Australia for some years. That, however, is not an unalterable arrangement; it can be broken away from at any time. Still, it has suited us very well. We have absolute freedom now as regards borrowing, and we shall not have quite that freedom under the proposed arrangement. If the Loan Council cannot get money for us, we shall have the right to get it for ourselves. At all events, we must wait until we get the agreement before us. Then we shall be able to deal with it. The basis of distribution, however, seems to be hardly fair. There must be no giving away of our freedom to govern the country. We must have financial freedom.

The Premier: Long before the expiration of the 58 years forming the term of the agreement the balance will be against the per capita distribution. The balance will be very favourable to the Commonwealth after 20 or 30 years.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I recognise that there is no obligation on the part of the Commonwealth Government to do anything for us.

The Premier: They need not do what they have proposed.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I quite understand the position the Premier is in. I hope the hon. gentleman will let me have a copy of the agreement as soon as possible. Indeed, every member should have a copy. I have no more to say at this juncture. Many of these matters will come up for further discussion. If I could help the country by helping the Government, I should be only too happy to do so; but that has not been

possible to any large extent during the past three years. I do not know that it will be possible for this party to help the Government very much during the next three years. The party system has taken deep root in our politics. Still, whether the people we represent be workers, or farmers, or business men, we in this Parliament ought all to be equally concerned for their welfare. There can be no shadow of doubt about that. However, I know it is too much to hope for, and therefore we have to take the position as it is. We shall endeavour to do our duty by the country under any circumstances. Before the session closes I shall have opportunities for discussing many of the matters referred to by the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally).

On motion by Mr. Griffiths, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.13 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Wednesday, 3rd August, 1927.*

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

### COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motion by the Chief Secretary Sessional Committees were appointed as follows:—

Standing Orders—The President, the Chief Secretary, Hon. J. Cornell, Hon. A. Lovekin, and Hon. J. Nicholson.

Library—The President, Hon. J. Ewing, and Hon. A. J. H. Saw.

Printing—The President, Hon. W. H. Kitson, and Hon. A. Lovekin.

Joint House—The President, Hon. J. Cornell, Hon. E. H. Gray, Hon. G. Potter, and Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom.

### MOTION—TRAFFIC ACT.

*To disallow regulations.*

**HON. G. POTTER** (West) [4.36]: Before proceeding with the notice of motion standing in my name I ask leave to amend it by including routes Nos. 54 and 55 in addition to those set out in the motion.

Leave given.

**Hon. G. POTTER:** I move—

That the regulations prescribing omnibus routes Nos. 7, 16, 20, 42, 48, 54 and 55, under the Traffic Act, 1919-1926, published in the "Government Gazette" on the 22nd July 1927, and laid upon the Table on the 2nd August, 1927, be and are hereby disallowed.

I wish to bring before the notice of the House the regulations referred to and to point out the grave injustice that will be done if they be allowed, not only to the trading section of the community but to the public generally. It will be within the knowledge of most hon. members that at present motor buses and taxi motor cars travel between Perth and Fremantle. During the early stages the motor traffic I have referred to, passed through grave vicissitudes from time to time, but the fact remains that those motor vehicles have served a great public want. Had it not been so, the system would not have been permitted to continue. I wish to stress the fact that my motion does not raise the question whether this particular means of transportation comes into conflict with the railway service or with any other public utility at all. The motor service is born of public want and is maintained by public desire. As with everything else, motor routes have a beginning and an end. For many months past, it has been customary to provide for the taxis plying between Perth and Fremantle, a stand at the corner of William-street and St. George's-terrace where two taxis at a time have been permitted to remain in order to pick up passengers. That stand was in a central part of the city, enabling passengers conveniently to join the motors and proceed to Fremantle where formerly the passengers were allowed to alight in William-street, near the Town Hall. A notification

has been furnished to those concerned that the taxis will no longer be permitted to start from, or to arrive at, their former parking grounds. The taxi drivers have been informed that they must proceed to a place known as White City, at the foot of William-street. That will impose a grave disability upon people coming to Perth, or desiring to proceed from Perth, by taxi cars, because they will be compelled to walk to White City from the central parts of Perth, or else from White City in order to proceed to wherever they may be going in Perth. The walk from White City will entail an arduous climb for many women who may have babies or parcels to carry. While the walk up the William-street hill may be an arduous one during the summer months, it must be remembered that, during spells of weather such as we have been experiencing recently, this disability will involve an absolute menace to the health of people obliged to walk up the unsheltered footpaths of William-street. While that will be bad enough in the day-time, it will be much worse at night. If people are proceeding from picture shows, for instance, to White City in order to join a taxi, the dimly-lit surroundings at the new parking ground will not be satisfactory. In fact, the few lights that there are will merely serve to emphasise the darkness of the place. In addition to that, in view of the large number of motor cars coming and going, the parking ground there becomes a quagmire in winter-time and this will mean that anyone proceeding to White City to board a car or alighting from a car there, will have to plough his or her way through churned-up silt and soil.

**Hon. J. Nicholson:** Are passengers to be permitted to land at the same place in Fremantle?

**Hon. G. POTTER:** I will deal with that point as I go on. So far I have referred to the position confronting patrons of taxis in Perth. Had the City Council protested against the retention of the old taxi stand at the corner of William-street and St. George's-terrace, I could understand the reason prompting the new regulation, but I have been informed that the City Council have no objection to advance against the cars using that stand. I have been authoritatively informed that the City Council have not been consulted regarding the abolition of the taxi stand, although it is provided

in the Traffic Act that that body must be consulted. Even if the City Council had been consulted, no objection would have been raised by that body to the continuance of the old stand for taxis. In the past, when taxis have arrived at Fremantle the practice has been for the cars to deposit passengers at the Town Hall corner of William-street from which centre the tram cars radiate to all parts of Fremantle. It will be seen, therefore, that that point was a convenient place for passengers to disembark. At considerable expense to themselves the taxi drivers established a depot where they could park their cars, replenish oil and petrol supplies, and do minor repairs while waiting for their turn to run to time-table. If they are forced to comply with the new regulations, their business will be adversely affected. I am not so much concerned about the business of the taxi drivers, but rather about the convenience of the public generally. Much the same position arises with the motor buses. There is not much to grumble about at the Perth end, inasmuch as the buses are still permitted to leave from St. George's-terrace. The users of the motor buses have a serious complaint to make, however, because under the new regulations, if they are allowed by both Houses of Parliament, passengers will be compelled to alight from the buses at Fremantle, at Queen-street instead of at Short-street, as at present. That is going to be a very grave inconvenience to the travelling public, because the motor buses are mostly patronised by people travelling from the outlying districts of Fremantle either by tram cars or other motor buses. All the tram lines lead to the motor bus terminus and in wet weather passengers do not suffer from exposure to inclement conditions, as they would if they had to walk to Queen-street. Last session I piloted through this House a private Bill to give the Fremantle Municipal Council power to acquire certain property in order to extend Queen-street. The object of the council was to establish a main thoroughfare that would take the traffic from places like Beaconsfield, South Fremantle, Spearwood, Jandakot and Rockingham, and relieve the congestion in High-street. The urgency of this work is demonstrated by the fact that it has already been carried out and is meeting a long-felt want. If the motor buses and taxis have to use Queen-street further congestion will be caused without affording relief elsewhere. Members who are familiar

with the district know that Queen-street intersects Adelaide-street at right angles, and that at the point of intersection there are large two-storey buildings. The turning from Queen-street into Adelaide-street on the run to Perth is considered to be one of the most dangerous in the metropolitan area. So dangerous is it that motorists almost invariably pass Queen-street, proceed to the town hall and turn there, or pass along Quarry-street to Burt-street, rather than risk collision at the Queen-street corner. If some 100 taxis and 25 or 30 motor buses are forced to take that turning and park there, it will become a veritable death trap. It will be necessary to have traffic policemen on point duty from early morning till late at night, a thing that is not necessary at present. From this point of view the regulation is unwise. Now let us consider vested interests, for surely the people who invest capital in these services are entitled to consideration. The bus company, at an expense of £10,000 or £15,000, have bought property and constructed a very large garage and repair shop in Short-street within a few yards of the present terminal point at Fremantle. Before doing so they inquired whether there was any likelihood of the Fremantle terminal being altered, and while no official guarantee was forthcoming, they were given to understand that everything would be all right. Then they embarked upon the expenditure for a repair shop. It is absolutely necessary for buses to have a repair shop at one end or other of the run, because there are always minor repairs required by these heavy vehicles. If the terminal point is altered, that £10,000 or £15,000 will have been thrown away, the service will be hampered, the public inconvenienced, and vehicular traffic compelled to incur risks of accident at the dangerous corner of Queen and Adelaide streets. If members consider the matter I feel sure that they will be satisfied that the regulations will not serve any good purpose, but will create discomfort and inconvenience to the travelling public, who at present are loudly voicing their protests. The Routes Advisory Committee should consult the convenience of the public before indulging in some departmental whim.

**HON. W. H. KITSON (West)** [4.51] : I second the motion. It is very hard to understand why discrimination has been made between the buses and the taxis. For quite a long time both the buses and the taxis have

left Perth from practically the same point, the buses from St. George's-terrace and the taxis from William-street. Under the new regulations the buses will still be allowed to start from the terrace but the taxis will have to start from the vicinity of White City. Mr. Potter has adequately described the position. There is no doubt that the alteration will cause great inconvenience to people who desire to use motor transport between Perth and Fremantle. The Traffic Act provides that the local authorities shall be consulted when routes are being revised, and, I assume before the regulations are gazetted. I am given to understand that the local authorities in different parts of the metropolitan area have not been consulted. I am advised that the Perth City Council gave the taxi-owners authority to start from William-street, but notwithstanding that, the Routes Advisory Committee have taken the action indicated by the new regulations. At the Fremantle end the taxi proprietors have established themselves close to the town hall, where they have a depot fitted up for repair purposes. If they are compelled to deposit their passengers at Queen-street and make Queen-street their starting point, it will still be necessary for the cars to travel through Queen-street and William-street to the depot, though without passengers instead of with passengers as at present. It is strange that these regulations should have been issued. It is only right that the people who are interested in the motor service should be consulted, and that in matters of this kind an amicable agreement should be arrived at. No doubt the motor service has come to stay. The alteration of the routes has become a burning question in several districts between Perth and Fremantle. When the regulations were first gazetted there was quite an outcry from a large section of the public, as well as from the owners of motor buses and cars, that the new regulations would operate harshly in several ways. As a result, representations were made to the Minister, who eventually said the regulations would not be put into operation straight away, and nothing would be done until the local authorities had been consulted. That has not been done. I have had the honour to represent the motor proprietors on one or two deputations dealing with regulations. It is the desire of those people that the traffic should be controlled in their own interests as well as in the interests of the travelling public, but there is no desire that regulations should be promulgated that

will cause such inconvenience to the travelling public as would result from their having to walk to the southern end of William-street to get a taxi for Fremantle. No doubt it is necessary to have regulations to control the traffic, and no doubt terminal points have to be established by regulation, but they should not be fixed until the whole of the people affected by the various services have been consulted. Let me refer also to the Fremantle terminal for buses that ply to the south. The regulations provide that buses starting from Queen-street shall be moved to Collie-street. I know of no more dangerous place for the purpose than Collie-street.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Is that down towards the Trades Hall?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: Yes, off South-terrace. The Fremantle council should have been approached before the alteration was made. I feel satisfied that the regulations are not in the best interests of the community. If they are disallowed, fresh regulations can be drawn up and consideration can be given to the people who use the service, while the local authorities can be consulted so that everyone connected with the service will be satisfied.

HON. A. J. H. SAW (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.57]: I have pleasure in supporting the motion. When Mr. Potter gave notice yesterday of his intention to move this motion, I was hoping that it would include also a certain route affecting the Perth-Cottesloe taxis, but I find that his motion does not include that route, about which considerable indignation has been expressed. I intend to take an early opportunity to move that the regulation affecting that particular route also shall be disallowed.

Hon. J. Cornell: Move it as an amendment to the motion.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I have not the particulars and therefore cannot do it at present. I remember some three years ago, when the Collier Government first came into power, a deputation met the Minister for Railways on the question of motor bus and taxi routes. The Minister for Railways was new to office at the time and it proved to be the most amusing deputation I ever attended. Mr. Willcock treated the deputationists as though they were schoolboys. Instead of asking what their views were and inviting them to express their requests, he proceeded at once to read them a lecture and lay down the law as to what he was going to do.

What he was going to do practically was to sweep the buses and the taxis off the routes altogether, and have no competition with the tramways and the railways. King Canute telling the waves to go back was really no finer example of the height of absurdity than was the Minister for Railways on that occasion but, as I have said, he was new to office. Since then no doubt he has learned wisdom. But apparently the people concerned in the prescribing of routes are still under the delusion that Mr. Willcock laboured under at that time. They have not yet learned that the taxis are there for the convenience of the people, and it is chiefly the convenience and comfort of the people that have to be studied. Unfortunately they do compete with the railways and tramways, but that is because a newer method of progression has come amongst us, and there is no doubt that it will last until it is supplanted by some better form of locomotion. At the present time the people find the taxis expeditious and convenient and they will continue to use them, and no power will stop them until, as I have said, some better form of locomotion supplants those vehicles. I intend to support the motion and I trust it will meet with the approval of members generally.

**HON. H. A. STEPHENSON** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.2]: I have much pleasure in supporting the motion, and I agree with the remarks made by the three previous speakers. There is no doubt that the termini as decided upon by the regulation are very inconvenient for the travelling public. Dr. Saw has just pointed out that it is for the travelling public that we cater in this regard. As to the terminus at the foot of William-street, I do not think there is a more objectionable place in Perth. In the summer time it is five or six inches deep in black sooty dust, whilst at this time of the year it often becomes a quagmire. I go along there twice a day; I park my car in that vicinity and nearly every evening between five and six o'clock I notice a continual stream of women there, carrying babies and parcels, and those women are surrounded by heavy traffic of every description. A more dangerous place for a terminus could not have been selected. I have seen women almost run down by the traffic. Moreover, it is inconvenient to walk from the Terrace to that spot, and coming from the new terminus, there is a particularly

steep hill to climb. The motion does not require much debate; anyone conversant with the terminal points at Perth and Fremantle can come to no other conclusion than that both are inconvenient, to say the least of it, for those who use taxi cabs. I support the motion.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

### **BILL—(No. 1)—£1,913,500.**

#### *Standing Orders Suspension.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [5.4]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Supply Bill to be taken as the first Order of the Day and to pass through all stages at this sitting.

In submitting the motion, it is hardly necessary for me to remind members that this is a matter of urgency. Supply is exhausted and we have to come to Parliament to ask for fresh Supply.

Question put and passed; the standing orders suspended.

#### *Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [5.5] in moving the second reading said: Under this Bill the Treasurer is asking for two months' Supply, in other words for sufficient funds to enable him to carry on until the end of this month. There is nothing novel in the Bill; it asks for the same amount in every instance as did the Bill introduced this time last year. The authority sought is identical with that of last year. We ask for the following: From Consolidated Revenue Fund £850,000, General Loan Fund £750,000, Government Property Sales Fund £10,500, Land Improvement Loan Fund £3,000, and Treasurer's Advance £300,000, making in all £1,913,500. Sometimes the question is asked, "What do you propose to do with this money?" The reply is that the amount sought is based on last year's estimates, approximately two-twelfths of those estimates; and we require the money in order to continue the different works and undertakings, and pay the salaries and wages of those connected with the service. The result of last year's financial operations must be regarded as eminently satisfactory by all who have the interests of Western Australia at heart. For the

first time during a period of sixteen years the State can boast a surplus, the revenue for the year ended 30th June last having exceeded the expenditure by £28,245.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Was that a genuine surplus or was it fictitious?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Genuine.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: How many accounts were carried over to the month of July?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: None that I know of.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: There were a few that I know of.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Income taxation returns were, however, much below anticipation. This had an adverse effect upon the finances to the extent of £54,473. The actual reduction in taxation was, therefore, much greater than was anticipated. Dividend duty was also below the estimate. Railway results were approximately £30,000 worse than the original estimate; otherwise the estimates were fairly accurate. As compared with the previous year, there was a very large increase in the expenditure. This was mainly due to the inclusion of the appropriation of the Commonwealth grants, amounting to £365,924. Public utilities expenditure was greater by £190,314. This was offset by an increase of £330,152 in the revenue of these concerns. Those two headings absorb a large portion of the increased expenditure for the year. A most satisfactory feature of the year was the increased return from the Fremantle Harbour Trust. This reflects the growth of the State's trade. With a reasonably good season, such as present indications lead us to expect, there should be a further large increase in our trade this season. This year's Estimates are now in course of preparation, and it is hoped they will be ready for presentation at an early date. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee, etc.*

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

Read a third time and passed.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

##### *Third Day.*

Resumed from the previous day.

**HON. G. POTTER** (West) [5.13]: In reading and listening to the Speech His Excellency was pleased to deliver, one must realise that that Speech will go down in history as important, if for no other reason, that it records the visit to Australia of Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York. I am sure that all Australian citizens learned with great pleasure the fact that Their Royal Highnesses had reached their home in good health. We are all perfectly satisfied that the visit of Their Royal Highnesses to Australia has been fraught with nothing but good to the people of Australia, and indeed to the whole of the Empire. Another matter of domestic importance is referred to—the change in the Agent General's office brought about by the appointment of Mr. Angwin to succeed Sir Hal Colebatch. We all wish Mr. Angwin a pleasurable occupancy of the office, and I feel sure that he will devote his unflagging energy to the mission that has been entrusted to him. I also wish to take this opportunity of saying a word of welcome to Sir Hal Colebatch on his return to the State. Sir Hal, as has already been pointed out, has rendered faithful service not only to the State but to the Commonwealth. I do not propose to traverse in detail the paragraphs in His Excellency's Speech, dealing with the financial position of the State, for there will be ample opportunity when the accounts and statements are placed before us for dissection and further discussion. However, the financial position, so far as it has been revealed to us, affords food for criticism, which is always very healthy and desirable. Whether the money has been spent well or unwisely, it is past history. If mistakes have been made it can only mean that those who have any claim to wisdom will profit thereby. So, as I say, whether money has been spent well or spent unwisely, it cannot be recalled. But transcending in importance all reference to the present financial position is the mention of the financial relations between the States and the Commonwealth. That is something to which we can apply ourselves. It is of no use being wise after the event; far better is it to be wise before the event. When a catastrophe happens, it is no longer avoidable, but if we can do anything to

prevent an impending catastrophe, we should apply our best efforts to the task. We are all grateful to Mr. Lovekin for the illuminative, descriptive and eminently painstaking address he delivered to us last night.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Don't flatter him.

Hon. G. POTTER: I do not think anybody could flatter Mr. Lovekin; for to be successful with flattery, one requires a subject that already has swelled head or something of that nature. No, I am paying to Mr. Lovekin a sincere tribute for the masterly address he delivered here. I am looking forward to seeing it in "Hansard," for there was in the speech such a mass of well constructed detail that one would require to ponder it very closely to get a thorough comprehension of it. Foremost in the affairs of the State at all times must be the development of the State. The Treasurer himself has said that the whole of the favourable financial position of the State is attributable to the advancement and development of agricultural, pastoral and other similar areas. Anything touching the development of the State is of prime interest to us. Because if it is from those primary sources that the State's favourable position has sprung, it is from the same sources that that favourable position shall be continued. I am glad to notice that the present Government have paid a graceful tribute to previous Administrations, in so much as they have admitted that the favourable turn of the finances had its origin some time back. It is perfectly obvious that the present Government inherited a very favourable goodwill, as it were, to the business. That it is that has enabled them to make the good showing they have made. I hope they will continue the policy of seeing to it that the development of Western Australia's primary industries goes on unchecked and unabated. Mention is made in the Speech of the increased wheat yield and the increased acreage under crop. That is a very satisfactory position. But it would be even more satisfactory if, in addition, we could see a greater average yield per acre. Because if we could have a greater average per acre, the capital that has been expended in bringing those acres into fruition would return a greater profit, and so place the farmer, and with him the State, on a much better footing. It is only by the application of science and personal experience that that greater yield per acre can be achieved. In that respect I am glad to notice that the

necessity is admitted for the enlargement of the buildings at Muresk College to accommodate the students to be enrolled. I had the privilege of visiting the College, and from my limited knowledge of what is required at such institutions I should say it is eminently suitable for its purpose. I have no doubt the graduates of the College will serve to stiffen the ranks of our agriculturists throughout the State. Coincidental with the Agricultural College are the experimental farms. I have always been a supporter of that form of research. At one time experimental farms were looked upon as the product of faddists. However, real farmers appreciate an experimental farm, because they have the practical knowledge and the common sense to take advantage of the lessons to be learnt at such places. I have heard it said that there are too many experimental farms. Nevertheless I would support any measure that would establish more of them, provided of course there was a guarantee that they would be properly conducted. In South Australia experimental farms are to be found scattered all over the State. With our wide areas and acute differences in soil, it is necessary that experimental farms should be scattered all over our State also.

Hon. E. Rose: Especially in the South-West.

Hon. G. POTTER: Yes. Because what might be good at Merredin might be of no use at all a couple of hundred miles away. The Government are to be commended on pushing on with these experimental farms. The Railways have proclaimed themselves as deserving of credit for the financial showing they have made. Apart from that financial showing, I should like to eulogise the manipulation of the harvest by the railway officers, who are deserving of great commendation for the manner in which they shifted the grain. I hope the Minister for Railways will not sit back on that and stint the service in the matter of providing sufficient locomotive traction and trucks; for everything points to a vast increase in the next harvest. Also I hope that next year there will not be any necessity for the agitations and discussions we have had about the transport of superphosphate after a certain period. Unless the farmer can get cheap freight for superphosphate, his farming activities are going to be hampered; and, goodness knows,

he has enough to put up with at present. The cereal section of our primary industries is so firmly entrenched and has attained so great an impetus that it can be relied upon to carry on by its own momentum. It certainly will, provided of course it is given proper supervision and proper assistance in the way of further development and the eradication of vermin and that sort of thing. As I say, the momentum of the cereal section will carry that section on. I cannot say the same of group settlement. That settlement is very important to Western Australia, if only by reason of the fact that so much money has been invested in it. When Sir James Mitchell inaugurated group settlement, it was not to him exactly in the nature of an experiment, for his knowledge and forethought enabled him to divine something of the ultimate result.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It was indeed a very costly experiment.

Hon. G. POTTER: It was an experiment for the State and for the Commonwealth, and to that extent it was perhaps a costly experiment. But if a thing is worth having it is worth paying for. The Minister for Lands, we are told, has now made a survey of the group settlements, a very proper thing to do. Personally I should not be worried if he had to scrap a number of groups. Because after all, what would anybody do on finding by experiment that something was inefficient or was of no further use? Of course he would not waste any more money on it, but would scrap it. The money spent on what has been found to be of no further use is not altogether lost. If the lesson taught by the experiment is properly learnt, the experiment is well worth while. So I think the group settlement scheme still deserving of a great deal of sympathetic consideration.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Poor land has never warranted the expenditure.

Hon. G. POTTER: I do not know how we are going to utilise poor land unless we spend money on it.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That is a different proposition.

Hon. G. POTTER: Of course, Mr. Baxter has very decided views upon group settlement as a whole. Even in the 20 years I have been in Australia, I have seen lands not much good, light lands, lands that possibly Mr. Baxter might have said were

not worth spending money on, notwithstanding which to-day they are in fruition.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Within the last 10 years land excellent for subterranean clover has been declared useless.

Hon. G. POTTER: Certainly so. When land is once carrying permanent pasture and put under stock, it is improving all the time. The soil is being steadily created and the carrying capacity of the land must increase. So it is idle to say that because certain land is light and poor, it is not worth spending money on. Everyone knows that some mistakes were made. If a person tries to do some big thing and does not make any mistake, there is either something hidden or very little is achieved.

Hon. J. Ewing: Where are these serious mistakes?

Hon. G. POTTER: I could point to one or two of them.

Hon. J. Ewing: There are not many.

Hon. G. POTTER: They are infinitesimal compared with the ultimate good that will come out of the whole scheme. Critics will say, "Why send men on to group settlements that are within a day's run of the metropolitan area, because there is no sale for their products?" They have in their minds the criticisms that have appeared in certain sections of the Press, mostly due to the fact that the milk supply of Perth is glutted. The group settlements were never intended for the supply of milk to the metropolitan area. The farmers around Perth, at their own expense, are capable of carrying out this work, or there are the beautiful dairy farms along the South-West line as far as Harvey that could supply all the milk that Perth requires. Group settlements were originally intended to stop the flow of money to the Eastern States. We expend a tremendous sum each year in importing butter, cheese, bacon and other requisites for the breakfast and dinner table. We are getting on very well, but we are spending something like £2,000,000 in the Eastern States in this direction. This represents a very big business. Any sane person would be prepared to find a very large sum of money with which to buy the goodwill of a business that was turning over £2,000,000 a year, and turning it over in perpetuity. If someone were to work out the figures, the value that would be placed on this goodwill would astonish even Mr. Baxter.



Hon. C. F. Baxter: Why do you say it would astonish me?

Hon. G. POTTER: The crux of the whole situation lies in the establishment of permanent pastures. These cannot be established in a day or a year, or in several years. Another matter of great interest to the State is the question of soldier settlement. We hear a lot about that from time to time. Unfortunately, some very acute differences have occurred. The Commonwealth Government are now considering rendering further assistance to the State. It is very pleasing to note that the State Government have been able by arrangement with the Commonwealth to further write off the sum of over £359,000. That scheme has its critics, and sometimes they are very bitter. It is necessary to discover why so much of the over-capitalisation of soldier settlers has had to be written off. This may be due to three causes. The first is that in many cases too much was paid for the land. Secondly, there was a modicum of experience on the part of the soldier settlers. The third is a very serious reason. It is that many of the settlers have recurring physical disabilities which impair their usefulness on their blocks. As time goes on the position will be reached in which a true equity will be maintained in our soldier settlements. I hope the Commonwealth Government will recognise their continued responsibilities in this matter. It is very much more their job than the State Government's job to look after these men, and, if there are losses, to stand up to them to the extent of 100 per cent. People have criticised Sir James Mitchell for putting the men upon improved properties. They ask why the men were not put out into the bush on virgin land; why take one farmer off the land and put an inexperienced man in his place?

Hon. C. F. Baxter: To what soldiers are you referring as having been put on the land by Sir James Mitchell?

Hon. G. POTTER: Those people forget that the object of purchasing improved properties was to give the soldiers a chance of seeing something for their labour. We all know it is a long drawn out task for anyone to carve for himself a successful farm out of the wilderness.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Sir James Mitchell had nothing to do with the scheme.

Hon. G. POTTER: He had a great deal to do with it during his term of office.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: He was not in the Ministry which inaugurated the scheme.

Hon. G. POTTER: It is one thing not to be in a Ministry which inaugurates a scheme, and another thing to be in the Ministry that is carrying it on. I know of things inaugurated by a previous Administration that put succeeding Ministers to a great deal of trouble to rectify. It is quite right that these men should have had an opportunity to go upon improved properties. Certainly that amounted to placing the men before the State, but these men earned the right to be included in the soldier settlement scheme. When thousands of miles away they placed the State before themselves. That is an adequate and sufficient reply to anyone who complains about their being placed upon improved properties. I cannot pass from the varied phases of primary production without briefly mentioning the mining industry. Mining has fallen upon heavy days in Western Australia as well as elsewhere, but more particularly is the disability felt in this State. If we cast our minds back a little, we must realise that the industry deserves well, not only of the State but of the Commonwealth. Not only did the Golden Mile in its initial stages open up Western Australia, but it practically wrested the Commonwealth from the brink of bankruptcy. At the time when some of the Eastern States were in a very precarious position remunerative work was found for their people in Western Australia, and the general trade which flowed to Australia as a result of the discoveries in this State redounded to the benefit of the Commonwealth. Anything that is done to help the mining industry should have a very sympathetic hearing at the hands of the Commonwealth.

Hon. G. W. Miles: We should not have had Sir William Lathlain here but for the goldfields.

Hon. G. POTTER: That is another reason for being grateful to them. The mines in Western Australia were of material value to the Commonwealth during the war. No matter how the figures may be juggled, or what may be said from time to time, it is a fact that our goldmining industry assisted the Commonwealth in its finances during the war. Had it not been for the gold production of Australia, that

of Western Australia being paramount, it would have been far more difficult to finance Australia through the war, and we would have paid a higher rate of taxation than we are paying to-day. It needs no recapitulation on my part to show the hardships under which the industry is suffering at the present time, and has for some years been suffering. I hope the Commonwealth Government will bend their energies in the direction of providing practical relief to the industry. The Speech implies that the Government are hopeful of being able to co-operate in a co-ordinated plan of assistance, presumably from the Commonwealth. Mr. Bruce has made it abundantly clear that he is prepared to co-operate with the State, and assist it in every possible way to place the industry on a better footing. He was perfectly logical when he said, on the occasion of his recent visit, that unless he could tell the Commonwealth Parliament that Western Australia had wisely expended the £160,000 to the benefit of the industry, it was unlikely his Government would be prepared to embark upon any further scheme for the rehabilitation of the industry. I think he was sincere in what amounted to a solemn promise further to consider the question of assisting mining. Another matter of primary importance relates to forestry. It is very pleasing to note that not only the Government but the people of the State have developed a healthy forestry conscience. For many years the protagonists of forestry have had a very hard row to hoe. They have had unsympathetic audiences, and it was difficult to get any one thoroughly to interest himself in the industry. People saw the magnificent forests in the South-West, noted how extensive they were, perceived the majestic trees there, and thought the forests were inexhaustible. The great inroads that have been made since, to the profit of the State, have created a conscience, and a feeling that something will have to be done to preserve our forests and bring about a more extensive scheme of reforestation. It is a good thing to know that the Government have, through the Forests Department, embarked, on a large scale, upon the planting of softwoods for the use of the State. From what has been published in technical journals of countries whose forests have been denuded, one must recognise that it is a wise course to plant softwoods in Australia and to conserve our indigenous hardwoods. The

Forests Department have not had that sympathetic consideration which they might have received in past years. The reason of this, probably, is that they do not work in the glare of the limelight, such as attends the opening of a new school or hospital. They work away in the lonely stretches of the bush, and the public seldom have an opportunity of seeing just what the foresters are doing, and of observing the care and worry imposed on the Conservator. To my mind, there can be no doubt that any money expended on forestry as it is now being conducted here will be returned a hundredfold. After all, in our expenditure on forestry we are merely creating a heritage for future generations and replacing that which we ourselves received from nature. As to afforestation and reforestation, it is quite obvious that other States are also giving attention to these matters, because in the Press we see advertisements, and through the post we receive circulars, asking us to subscribe to the capital of various timber companies operating in the Eastern States and New Zealand. Something might be done through our Publicity Bureau to reciprocate in this respect and to let people in the Eastern States and elsewhere know of the valuable lands available here for afforestation and reforestation. From time to time I have noticed warm discussions between the Forests Department and the Lands Department as to whether certain areas should be retained for forestry purposes—dedicated as forests—or should be denuded of timber and used for agriculture. We should be careful how we approach such questions. After all they are questions for experts, and it is no for the layman to say that a certain area of land would make excellent dairying country. Let us trust the experts, and let us give every encouragement to whoever may hold the office of Conservator of Forests from time to time. Let us grant to the Forests Department as much country as may be consistent with the requirements of land for other purposes. In this regard I desire to make a passing reference to something that came under my notice recently. No very far from Perth inquiries were made for a fairly large tract of land, and in the finalising of a certain estate there was offered for sale a large parcel of land which, though fenced, had never been utilised. It was decided to sell that parcel of land, and the Government were offered it at a certain price. The Government refused to have anything

to do with it. Within a week after the Government's refusal the parcel was offered to a private syndicate, and promptly bought by that syndicate, at double the price quoted to the Government. Since then the syndicate have recouped the whole of their initial expenditure by the sale of the timber on the land.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Where is the land located?

Hon. G. POTTER: It is a large freehold in the goldfields catchment area. At present this tract of land is being denuded of its timber, which has been sold at highly remunerative rates. So tempting is the proposition that the owners are preparing to plant pine on certain portions of the land, and to cut up the beautiful alluvial flats for dairying and pig-raising.

Hon. G. W. Miles: On the goldfields water supply area?

Hon. G. POTTER: On the goldfields catchment area.

Hon. J. Nicholson: At Mundaring.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is a funny thing to go in for dairying and pig raising on the catchment area.

Hon. J. Ewing: It would not be allowed.

Hon. G. POTTER: I do not think it wise to say anything by way of anticipation in regard to projected legislation, because we really do not know what the Bills will contain. However, I was much impressed by the closing remarks of Mr. Kitson, to the effect that he hoped the House would receive such measures in a proper spirit. I submit that this Chamber has always received measures from the Legislative Assembly in a proper spirit. Does Mr. Kitson interpret a proper spirit to mean that we shall swallow holus-bolus any legislation that may be transmitted to us from another place? If so, he cannot hope that this House will receive legislation in a proper spirit of that nature. On the other hand, if the hon. member means that this House can continue to correct mistakes and supply deficiencies in legislation, he may rest assured that the Legislative Council will continue to receive legislation and deal with it in a proper spirit. I wish to say a word of emphatic commendation to the Chief Secretary for the manner in which he has conducted and is conducting the affairs of the Education Department. Throughout the schools in the West Province, at least, the work of the Minister is highly appreciated. If the hon. gentleman would like the full crown

of laurel to be handed to him, all he has to do is to make the necessary arrangements for the establishment of a high school at Fremantle. This has been asked for repeatedly, and is a very real and pressing need. I am given to understand that there is no spare room in the secondary schools of Perth. Again, many of the Fremantle lads who could attend a local high school are by the vicissitudes of circumstances prevented from attending such an establishment in Perth, and thus are denied the opportunity of further education. Therefore I request the Chief Secretary's kindly consideration to the project. I notice that in answer to a question asked in another place it has been indicated that the long-expected report of the Engineer-in-Chief on the fixing of a site for a bridge at Fremantle is to be published within a month. I trust that that prognostication is not far wide of the mark. I hope the matter will not drag on for years in the future as it has dragged on for years in the past. Until the site of that bridge is disclosed, progress in building at Fremantle is arrested.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The bridge should be at Rocky Bay.

Hon. G. POTTER: I will leave the determination of the site entirely to the engineers, but let them fix the site and go on with the job. As soon as the site is fixed, large investors who have long been waiting for such a fixing will know exactly where to build their warehouses. I trust also that the Fremantle Harbour Board will then come forward with a full and detailed plan for harbour extension. In the outlying portion of the West Province people are suffering grievously through flood waters. We all know that the water-table throughout the metropolitan area is rising steadily. In the district around Bibra Lake, Jandakot, and skirting down towards the borders of the Peel Estate, there are wonderful swamp lands, but the settlers on them are gradually being flooded off. That large sheet of water known as Thompson's Lake has been used by the Government for the drainage of various small swamps, some of them on Crown land. The 25 or 30 settlers around that lake—all of them men with large families—are finding that their living is becoming jeopardised by reason of flood waters. They are now in the position of seeing the results of months of labour destroyed by the water gradually washing up. One can easily realise the dismay of the settlers at such a prospect. I would suggest to the

Chief Secretary that there is under the administration of the Lunacy Department a large tract of land overlooking the area in question, and as the department are now well provided with all the land likely to be needed by them in the future, this tract might be released and thrown open for selection. Then the settlers whose blocks are gradually being crept over by the water could remove themselves to the tract referred to, which is safe from floods, and yet of equal agricultural value with their present holdings. From the proposal there would be some financial gain to the Government, whilst the local governing body concerned, the Fremantle Road Board, would be relieved of a large area of dead land, of which they have too much. At present that large tract of land pays no rates although roads have to be maintained in its vicinity. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. J. Ewing debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 5.56 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Wednesday, 3rd August, 1927.*

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

### SWEARING IN OF MEMBER.

The Minister for Railways (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) took and subscribed the oath, and signed the roll.

### QUESTION—ELECTORAL ROLLS.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Justice: 1, Has he read the newspaper report which states: "18,000 electors. The State roll has them. But the Federal roll hasn't"? 2, Can he explain how it is that there is such a discrepancy? 3, Is it correct that there are large numbers of names on the Legislative Assembly rolls duplicated, being on more than one roll, also large numbers that should be cancelled? 4, Is it correct that large numbers are still unenrolled? 5, Is it proposed to do anything to bring rolls up to date?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: 1, No. 2, According to the latest population returns and allowing for unqualified adults, it is estimated that the total number of persons eligible for Legislative Assembly enrolment is, in round figures, at least 210,000. 3, No. 4, No. 5, All rolls are undergoing daily revision. Between 22nd February and 30th June last the figures are—new names added, 8,538; alterations of address, 1,828; names struck off, 9,910. No further special action is considered necessary.

### QUESTIONS (2)—MAIN ROADS BOARD.

#### *Road Vehicles.*

Mr. LATHAM asked the Minister for Works: 1, What is the number of motor cars and trucks, respectively, purchased by the Main Roads Board since it came into operation? 2, What number of sulkies, if any, was purchased by the Main Roads Board during December, 1926, and January and February, 1927? 3, How many of them are in commission, and how many of them are at the Government Stores? 4, Were the sulkies obtained and purchased through the Tender Board? 5, If not, why not? 6, Does the Main Roads Board obtain all its equipment through the Tender Board? 7, If not, why not?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM (for the Minister for Works) replied: 1, Cars 15, trucks 24. 2, December, nil; January, 3; February, 2; total 5. 3, Four in commission, 1 at Government Stores. 4, Yes. 5, See 4. 6, Yes. 7, See 6.