

able to the Minister, and therefore no further debate is necessary.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Mr. Stewart desires the motion to be adjourned till Tuesday.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [5.34]: There is no need for an adjournment because the motion, in its present form, is acceptable to the Government. The information can be supplied without great difficulty.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.35 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 9th September, 1926.

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

QUESTION—HELENA RIVER BRIDGE, GUILDFORD.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Works: In connection with questions answered on 25th August relating to the ironwork for the Helena River Bridge, 1, did the reply concerning the ironwork include bolts? 2, If not, were all the bolts used on the bridge manufactured in the State? 3, If not, where were they made?

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS** replied: 1, Order for ironwork, consisting of straps, stirrups, and bolts, was placed with local manufacturing firms and to the best of the department's knowledge at time of replying

to previous questions, was manufactured in the State; it has since been ascertained that a proportion of the bolts was obtained from the Eastern States by the firms in question. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—PETROL TAX.

Mr. THOMSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Works: Yesterday I asked what was the amount collected on petrol by the Commissioner of Taxation for the quarter ended 30th June last. The reply I received gave figures identically the same as those for the quarter ended 30th March last. Was the reply furnished yesterday correct?

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS** replied: The figures were supplied by the accountant and an error may have crept in. I will make inquiries and let the hon. member have a reply on Tuesday next.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 31st August.

MR. LATHAM (York) [4.33]: There are many features of the Bill that will commend themselves to the House, but at the same time there are some respecting which the Minister must expect some criticism. The measure refers principally to bus traffic in the metropolitan area and it is certain that there must be regulations to control that traffic. There are some restrictive and even prohibitive powers in the Bill with which the Opposition members are not likely to see eye to eye. The Bill is essentially a Committee measure and can be better dealt with than during the second reading stage, because it consists mainly of amendments to the principal Act. It is admitted that many alterations are necessary in order to control traffic effectively, particularly in view of the tremendous growth of road transportation in recent times. I propose to leave matters relating to the bus traffic principally to members representing the metropolitan area. To a great extent the Bill relieves the Minister of control, which has been handed over to the Commissioner of Police. I do not know that that is a very wise provision. Not very long ago there was an instance where a local governing body did certain things and it was necessary for an Act of Parliament to be passed to compel them to do what the people desired. It does not

matter whether action may be taken by the department through its officials or by a local governing body, if there is the right of appeal to the Minister. I believe in the provision for an appeal to the Minister regarding many questions, and the Traffic Act is one in which it is desirable to have such a final appeal. It affords people concerned an opportunity to secure redress should the necessity arise. The power of prohibition is a dangerous one. That power is provided by the Bill in several places. Power is given to the police and to local governing bodies to prohibit certain things. I do not think it is wise to give them those powers. It would be all right to give them sufficient power to regulate, control or even to restrict, but to provide the power to prohibit is carrying matters a little too far. When the Bill is taken to the Committee stage I propose to move a few amendments. The provision for the insurance of passengers should commend itself. I have often wondered whether sufficient care is taken for the protection of passengers in case of fire on a bus. To my mind not sufficient protection is afforded. Certainly I have not noticed any fire extinguishers on buses so far. Careful attention should be given to that aspect. Under the Railways Act the State is responsible for the passengers conveyed by trains and the people in charge of buses should also be made responsible. The only way we can protect the general public is by means of compulsory insurance. As to the charge against traffic fees of certain works in the metropolitan area, I consider that such a work as that connected with the Causeway is really a national undertaking, and the Minister would be wrong in compelling the metropolitan area to maintain the Causeway out of traffic fees.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Would you contend that all bridges should be regarded as national undertakings?

Mr. LATHAM: No, but practically the whole of the traffic to the metropolitan area comes via the Causeway. I do not know of any other bridge that I would regard as a national work in the same way that I regard the Causeway. Such an expression of opinion may seem peculiar from a country member, but I wish to be fair to the metropolitan area as well as to the country areas. The Causeway would not represent a very great problem when viewed as a national work, but if the cost of all work there has to be taken out of traffic fees, it bears a different complexion.

The Minister for Works: It is only the roadway that is affected, not the structural portion of the Causeway.

Mr. LATHAM: I thought it referred to the whole work, which might involve the reconstruction of the Causeway from one end to the other.

Hon. G. Taylor: The Minister made that very clear when he moved the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. LATHAM: If that is the position, I cannot raise any objection to it. With regard to heavy traffic, I am afraid that even to-day we have spent large sums of money in constructing country roads and we have permitted heavy traffic to make use of those roads before they were properly settled. How does the Minister propose to deal with that problem?

The Minister for Works: I notice that the Brisbane City Council has accepted a tender for the construction of a bridge at a cost of over £1,000,000.

Mr. LATHAM: They do weird things in Brisbane. The Minister is quite capable of administering his part of the affairs of this State without going elsewhere for advice.

Mr. George: But one can always get information and advice from elsewhere.

Mr. LATHAM: I hope the Minister for Railways does not go elsewhere for advice. If he does, it is probable that the financial management of our railways will not be as satisfactory as in the past. Getting back to the heavy traffic question, however, I am afraid that, although we intend to spend a lot of money, a considerable proportion of which will have to be provided by the State, we will find that at the end of the five-years period we will not have value for the money so expended. Portion of the Northam-road was recently reconstructed. I do not know that we have any value at all in the work there to-day. It was hardly completed before heavy traffic was permitted to use it, although the reconstructed road had not settled down.

Mr. George: How can the traffic be maintained unless the road is used?

Mr. Sampson: The traffic could be kept on the side of the road until it had settled.

Mr. LATHAM: At any rate, something must be done. If we spend large sums of money and allow the roads to be cut up before they have settled down, we shall find ourselves in a worse position than before we spent the money. Recently I saw a big

motor lorry with a very heavy load, cutting up a road appreciably. To my mind it would pay the Government to buy and scrap these heavy motor lorries and so keep them off the road.

The Minister for Works: Is that another of your socialistic ideas?

Mr. LATHAM: No, but seeing that the State has to find so much money, I wish to assure that we get something for the expenditure of that money.

Mr. Withers: If the State bought the lorries, the owners would have to be compensated.

Mr. LATHAM: I do not believe in interfering with such people without making provision for compensation. Seeing that we have this heavy traffic, something must be done to overcome the difficulty. We are not so fortunate as they are in other States regarding road metal supplies.

Hon. G. Taylor: Just now you suggested we should not take any notice of the other States.

Mr. LATHAM: The hon. member is trying to twist my words to suit himself. I referred to road metal. In the jarrah country, for instance, the material available for road construction does not stand wear and tear, and if crushed metal has to be conveyed to those parts, it will prove a costly job. Then again, we have not the money available for road construction, as the Victorian people have. I am afraid there will have to be some restriction on the traffic until our newly constructed roads have settled down.

The Minister for Works: We have taken that power.

Mr. LATHAM: I do not know that the Minister has taken that power. I do not know where the provision for it is to be found in the Bill.

The Minister for Works: We are giving the local governing bodies the power.

Mr. LATHAM: But I notice that the local governing bodies are not able to do it. They cannot control the traffic, despite the fact that they have power to restrict speed and loadage.

The Minister for Works: They have not power to restrict the loads.

Mr. LATHAM: I think they have. If a motor wagon is licensed to carry a certain load, that is the load authorised, but we know that frequently half a ton or a ton extra is loaded on to the motor wagons.

Mr. Sampson: You can limit the tonnage over bridges.

Mr. LATHAM: I admit that, but how are we to catch the offenders and how are we to determine what the weight of the load is? I am afraid that at the end of five years we shall not have value for even the money expended by the State unless better control is exercised over the roads being constructed. I suggest to the Minister that it would be wise to consolidate the various Acts dealing with roads. We have the Main Roads Act, the Road Districts Act, and the Traffic Act, and I might also mention the petrol tax Act. I was surprised to find the other day that the money collected from the petrol tax is to be used on roads.

The Minister for Works: You were surprised?

Mr. LATHAM: Yes. I thought the taxing measure itself would impose the tax and nothing else, but it sets out how the money is to be expended. I commend to the Minister's attention the suggestion to consolidate the Acts I have mentioned. There are three different kinds of control over our roads—the Main Roads Board, the Local Government Office dealing with local authorities, and the police. If the several Acts were consolidated, we might be able to get better control over the traffic and over the use of the roads, and it might even assist those responsible to keep the roads in order. There are some proposals in the Bill necessary to bring the Act up to date. In Committee I shall move some minor amendments and I hope the Minister will see his way to accept them.

MR. C. P. WANSBROUGH (Beverley) [4.47]: I wish to voice my opposition to some of the amendments proposed in the Bill, particularly to the amendment in Clause 13 which seeks to limit the age of drivers to 19 years. While I admit that such a limitation might be a necessary safeguard against accidents in the congested areas, its enforcement in the country will impose a hardship upon boys, more particularly the boys of promise who, I might say, do not always reside in the city.

The Minister for Works: The trouble is that if a boy got a license in the country he would drive into the city. We could not confine him to the country.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: That may be so, but the Minister does not suggest a similar restriction for drivers of farm wagons.

The country boys, on leaving school, become the men of the farm and they have to cart to and from the sidings. Farmers' wagons are being displaced by motor lorries, and the boy of the farm is the driver of the motor lorry. If he is debarred from driving the lorry, it will be a serious handicap.

Mr. George: The age at present is 18.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: And the Minister proposes to make it 19.

Mr. George: I would make it 21.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I would make it 16 and thus give the boy of promise a chance. There is ample evidence of the trustworthiness and capacity of boys to handle motor vehicles. It is proposed to insert a new section to provide that the driver of any vehicle other than a horse-drawn vehicle shall stop when requested to do so by the driver of any horse or by a person in charge of a drove of animals. I am afraid the Minister has considered this proposal from only one point of view. The biggest offender is often the man in charge of stock, particularly drovers of sheep or cattle. Some of the drovers act as if they were the kings of the road. A driver approaching a drover from the front has a chance to get past, but if he is overtaking the drover from the rear, often he is not assisted to get a passage.

The Minister for Works: That proposal came from a country road board.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Then this phase of the matter must have been overlooked. Provision should be made to compel a man in charge of stock to give other traffic the right of road or assist it to pass. He should have to recognise his obligation to traffic approaching him from the rear.

Mr. Marshall: What could a man in charge of a flock of sheep do?

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Get his dog to put the sheep to one side and make room for the other traffic.

Mr. Marshall: It would depend upon circumstances whether he could do it.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I do not say that all drovers are tarred with the same brush. Some of them are reasonable, but others will keep a motor following behind them for half an hour. I agree with the proposal for the compulsory insurance of passengers in charabanes. I am more particularly concerned about certain necessary amendments that have not been embodied in the Bill. One of these affects the third schedule. Some recognition should be given to farmers' vehicles. We have made a con-

cession in the past in respect of wagons used on the farm, and the Minister might make a concession in regard to motor lorries. Let me quote a few figures of the fees a farmer has to pay in order to get his produce to the siding. I am referring to a two-ton lorry, the license fee for which will be in the vicinity of £22. On a 1,200-bag crop it would cost the farmer 1½d. per bushel to get his wheat from farm to siding. The Minister should discriminate between the farmer who is purely a feeder to railways as against the man who is in competition with the railways. It would be a mistake to charge them both the same license fee. If the Minister's proposal is adhered to, it will have the effect of driving many farmers to compete with the railways. A license fee of £22 is altogether too much to ask of a farmer who confines his attention to carting his own products and if it is persisted in, he will be compelled to do a bit of carting for his neighbours.

The Minister for Works: Would not the 1½d. per bushel depend upon the distance of the farmer from the railway?

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: No, he might be two, 10 or 15 miles from a railway; the distance would not matter. On a three-ton load basis the cost works out at 12s. 8d. per load, or 3s. 2d. per ton. That is for the license fee only, and it is too much to ask of a farmer who restricts operations to carting his own produce. A neighbour of mine bought a motor lorry to facilitate the transport of his produce. He is living a long way from a railway and the figures I have quoted are based on his experience. The Minister knows the man I am referring to—Mr. Stone—who has corresponded with the department. There are other farmers in a similar position. They have endeavoured to help themselves by purchasing motor lorries, and now they find they are to be penalised in this way. I am pleased to see on the Notice Paper an amendment in the name of the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) to deal with this matter. In addition to the license fees paid by the farmer to the licensing authority, he pays £40 in road board rates and £20 in vermin rates. Altogether he will be required to pay £100 a year for the privilege of using the roads and feeding the railways. Another necessary amendment relates to drivers' licenses. I fail to see the need for requiring from a farmer who runs a truck and owns a motor car as well, a separate drivers' license for

each vehicle. To drive a truck requires no greater experience or skill than to drive a car, and one driver's license should be sufficient.

The Minister for Works: To drive a truck is quite a different job. I can drive a car but not a truck.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Trucks and cars of the same make have similar gears, and there is no difference in the handling of them. It requires no more knowledge or ability to drive a truck than to drive a car; in fact it requires less ability to drive a truck because a car travels about three times as fast as a truck.

Mr. Thomson: If a man has a Ford truck and a Ford car he must take out a driver's license for each vehicle.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: That is so. It is an injustice that should be remedied. The member for Cue (Mr. Chesson) has given notice of an amendment to secure consideration for prospectors engaged in mining, and the Minister should give farmers similar consideration. The member for Cue and some of his colleagues, have the gold mining and sandalwood industries in view, and propose that the fees should be reduced in respect of the people engaged in those industries. We have a perfect right to ask for the same concession in the case of the people in whom we are more particularly interested.

MR. GEORGE (Murray - Wellington) [5.0]: I am glad this Bill has been introduced. Perhaps it would have been well had it been brought down earlier, but on the other hand we have had another year's experience of the working of the original Act. When that Act was brought forward the full incidence of the traffic had, in a measure, to be gauged from experience, but the lessons that have since been learned are revealed in the Bill now before us. This is really a Committee Bill, but could well be relegated to the consideration of a special committee. Many points in connection with motor traffic require careful thought. I would not say that the officers of the departments concerned have not given the fullest consideration to this Bill, but points may occur to members of such a committee which could be usefully dealt with. I have always held the view that when damage is done the person who does the damage should put it right. In this connection I take it that the whole of the income derived from those who use the roads

will be spent on keeping the roads in repair. It was an omission in the first Act that the fees for drivers' licenses were not also merged in with the traffic fees. I find that the amount obtained from drivers' licenses from the 1st January, 1920, to the 30th June, 1925, was £9,447. If that money could have been added to the vehicle licenses, and devoted to the repairing of roads it would have materially assisted the fund, and might have taken the sting out for those who had to pay. It would have been the proper thing to have added the fees for drivers' licenses to the other fees. The fines for offences amounted to £6,230 17s. That money could also have been applied to the roads. This might have lessened the sting inflicted upon those who had to pay the fines. These two sums make a total of £15,678. If that amount is added to the sum of £90,817 derived from motor vehicles, the total over the period of five years is seen to represent a total that would be an enormous aid to our revenue. I should like the Minister to consider the advisability of amending the Act to provide that drivers' licenses and fines should be added to the fund. I know there is an Act which states definitely that fines in connection with these things must be paid into Consolidated Revenue. That principle is wrong. It has been brought up by road boards time and again. They have prosecuted people for breaches of the Act, and have been unable to get even their own costs paid.

The Minister for Works: We give them the proceeds in cases where they have initiated the proceedings, but when we take proceedings the money goes into Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. GEORGE: I do not mind about the costs, but I do think the fines should be devoted towards the making of our roads.

The Minister for Lands: The State has to foot the bill.

Mr. GEORGE: The amount in question is large. I am glad the Bill takes a full grip of the situation regarding buses and taxis. That class of traffic has developed so greatly in the metropolitan area that considerable control is necessary for the safety of the public. In Committee no doubt there will be some discussion about the clauses, but there can be none about the desirability of fully controlling this class of traffic. One clause refers to the Perth Causeway, the Perth-Fro-

mantle-road, and the Karrakatta-road. This is a good provision in the Bill. During the time the Mitchell Government were in power we dealt with the reconditioning of the Causeway, the cost involved being £10,000 or £12,000. A proposition was brought forward by which, if funds had been available, the Causeway would have been put into proper order. The Causeway has served its purpose for many years, and has been improved from time to time. It is now too narrow to meet the requirements of the immense traffic that passes over it. Traffic goes from Perth on to Guildford, and through the suburbs of Victoria Park and Cannington on to Bunbury and to Albany. The Causeway is really the neck of traffic communication between Perth and these outer districts. The time will come when it will have to be put into a better condition. I think the plans that have been prepared show that the cost of the work would be about £100,000. The maintenance of the Fremantle bridge is a proper charge against these fees. I do not consider that the redesigning and carrying out of a new Causeway should be a charge upon these fees. I agree with the Minister that the Perth-Fremantle-road should be widened. Some 20 buses and between 70 and 80 taxis pass over it at frequent intervals daily. Owing to its narrowness the road in many places is a menace to the public. On Nedlands hill it is often necessary for a motor car going in one direction to run off the road into the sand in order to avoid a car coming in another direction. That should not occur. The buses are particularly dangerous for drivers of motor cars on account of their lighting system. In addition to the bright headlights they carry, they also have small lights. A motorist travelling in the opposite direction is apt to be confused as to the width of the vehicle that he is approaching, and to assume that the small lights belong to another car coming behind. Furthermore, the bright headlights of the bus prevent the approaching motorist from realising the width of the vehicle he is approaching until he is close to it. I cannot help thinking that some of these motor buses are wider than they ought to be according to the regulations. I have in mind a width of about eight feet, but some of them seem to be much wider than that. I should like to see their headlights carried out to the full width of the body. If that were done they would not be so dangerous to other traffic.

The Minister for Works: The small lights were fixed according to regulations, and were coloured also according to the regulations.

Mr. GEORGE: The drivers of buses are not very careful in respect to the room they occupy on the road.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They stick to the middle. They will not give you an inch. The other fellow has to get out of the way.

Mr. GEORGE: Sometimes they thrust the driver of a motor car nearly off the metal. That is noticeable particularly along the Karrakatta-road. If the headlights were placed so as to indicate the full width of the bus the ordinary motorist would be quite safe. As things are at present there is a great possibility of accidents occurring. The member for York (Mr. Latham) referred to the roads being cut up, because they were used before the metal was set. In country districts it is difficult to avoid that. If the Perth-Bunbury-road were being repaired, the traffic that ordinarily passes up and down that thoroughfare must travel over that road.

Hon. G. Taylor: Unless a new road altogether is made.

Mr. GEORGE: We have neither the means nor the time to do that. Ordinary motor traffic, however, is not as severe on those roads as are the motor lorries. The road from Brunswick to Australind was converted into a beautiful road, but a fortnight's traffic ruined it. I do not blame anyone in particular, but the heavy vehicles simply broke the road up.

Mr. Thomson: Could not the owners of these vehicles be made to pay for that damage?

Mr. GEORGE: The road board endeavoured to achieve that, but were not successful.

The Minister for Works: When you were Minister you took action in two or three cases of that kind, I believe.

Mr. GEORGE: I happened to catch one man. There was a bit of a joke in that. I chanced to find a man speeding along the road with a load of 5 tons. Upon my warning him he replied in lurid language. I warned him again. Eventually he had to pay £70 or £80 for the damage he did. In one place he carried away all the kerbing. The width of loads is specially laid down in the regulations, and there is also restriction as to length of loads. A great many steel girders for buildings are brought from Fremantle to Perth by road, and they may

be any length up to 35 or 40 feet. The regulations provide that such things shall be brought over the roads in the early morning, and that in connection with the turning of corners there shall be a man to see that the sweeping-round of the load does not catch any vehicle passing. I have not heard of accidents from this cause, but I have seen numerous cases where accident has been close at hand; yet I have never seen the man behind who should have been there. A long projecting girder might cause serious damage. About a year ago I saw some roofing material for the carriage of which skew-ways had to be put across a trolley, and which took up two-thirds of the width of the Perth-Fremantle-road. That was the worst case I ever saw. While the regulations provide for such traffic, still it is not possible to have police officers all over the place to see that they are observed. I can refer to such matters here, though I should not like to appear as an informer unless an accident took place. Possibly the result of mentioning them here may be to prevent their recurrence. The minimum age laid down by the original Traffic Act for a motor driver was 18 years, which I consider quite young enough. I observe that an increasing number of young boys and girls are driving motor cars. The other day I passed a car driven by a boy between 14 and 15 years of age. True, his father was with him; but under the Act that circumstance does not give the boy the right to drive.

Mr. Marshall: What about old gentlemen who have lost their nerve?

Mr. GEORGE: I know of no such old gentlemen.

The Premier: The measure should provide a maximum age of about 65.

Mr. GEORGE: If the Premier would carry that principle right through, and relieve people 65 years of age from paying taxes, I should welcome its enactment.

The Premier: I am not prepared to go so far as that.

Mr. GEORGE: At all events, the Bill does not deal with old age, either honourable or dishonourable; it deals with the age of drivers. The Minister has raised the age to 19 years, in my opinion wisely. I observe that paragraphs (c) and (d) of Section 13 are to be repealed, the idea being that if a license for a vehicle which has been transferred exists, there is no occasion to get a new license. There ought,

however, to be permission to transfer on the register. If paragraphs (c) and (d) are entirely deleted, I do not think the existing regulation would apply. I am not sure that Clause 23 may not be intended to apply to all vehicles of every description. If so, there would have to be an examination for drivers of horse vehicles as well as drivers of motor vehicles; and that would be hardly reasonable. The Minister has decided that the law as to a driver under the influence of liquor should extend to a man driving a horse, or in charge of it, and to a man driving animals. Thus, it would apply to a shepherd in charge of a flock of sheep if he had a pot of beer; and that seems to me to be going too far.

The Minister for Lands: It occurred to me the other day that it would be a good thing to have special roads for motor cars by way of insuring the safety of the general public.

Mr. GEORGE: That would be advisable, but the difficulty would be one of finance. Clause 21 deals with what is the big trouble on country roads, especially in the Darling Range. I refer to the traffic of jinkers and whims and heavy sleeper-carts. The roads from the hills downwards have been completely ruined by such vehicles. There is an especially bad case at Waroona. The road in question was built for farmers and orchardists, and it has been ruined winter after winter, for many years, by heavy sleeper-carts. I endeavoured to prevent the carting of sleepers and hewn beams and other heavy loads during the winter months. One does not want to interfere with any person's means of livelihood, but the State has a right to say that roads built for people who have settled on the land should not be ruined by heavy carting in the winter, and that such carting should be done in summer. The Bill widens the liability for damage done to various roads. My own view is that the person who does the damage should put it right, instead of relying on others to remedy it. As I said in opening, the Bill is needed, and its passage will improve the parent Act by the results of the experience of the last few years. It is generally conceded that precautions must be taken with traffic which is so powerfully propelled as motor traffic. I do not think 50 per cent. of the people who drive motors have any idea of the power of the machine, or of the damage which may be done by it even when travelling at a comparatively slow pace. The

engine power is exceedingly great, and people should be most careful of what they are doing, because accidents are apt to happen at any time. A motor travelling at 10 miles an hour can cause tremendous damage. I observed an instance in point many years ago in the Mersey, when a boat of 10,000 tons going not more than three miles an hour ran into a little steamer of 300 tons which had got in front of her. The small vessel was absolutely cut in two by the irresistible force that came along. Practically the same thing obtains in regard to motor cars.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [5.30]: I am afraid the proposed increasing of the minimum age of motor drivers will result in considerable hardship in country districts, where the farmers' sons, mere lads, are very keen on machinery and make the best of motor vehicle drivers. Of course, where a driver is plying for hire and carrying passengers, I agree that the age might well be raised to 21; but in country districts where the driver is not plying for hire or carrying passengers, the age ought to be allowed to remain at 18. Then there is the provision about stock on roads. Sometimes our country roads are very narrow, and in consequence it is difficult to get past a flock of sheep. A great deal depends upon the drover. If the drover has not much time for motor cars, he may keep a car behind his flock for miles. Many a motor driver has accidentally run into a mob of sheep, largely because he had no help from the drover. Provision ought to be made in the Bill that a drover of sheep should do his best to get his sheep off the road and allow the motor car to pass.

Mr. Marshall: And the driver of the motor car should do his best also.

Mr. BROWN: He does, invariably; but I contend that some responsibility should rest with the drover. The Bill makes provision for the insurance of passengers. I am afraid that if a heavy insurance be placed on every passenger carried, it will be the means of raising the fares charged by the motor bus proprietors. I do not know whether the Minister had it in mind that the imposition of a heavy insurance of passengers would help him to run the buses off the road. In Perth the buses are of considerable convenience to the public, running, as they do, mostly where there are no trams. If unduly heavy restrictions are to

be placed on them, probably they will have to go off the road and, in consequence, the public convenience will suffer. As for the licensing of motor trucks, the fee for a one-ton truck is not heavy, but for 2-ton trucks or 3-ton trucks it becomes very substantial. Those trucks are not competing against the railways at all. Actually they are feeding the railways for, with the advent of those trucks, more produce can be grown and carried to the sidings. I should like to see only a reasonable fee put on any motor vehicle used principally on the farm. Another clause that is likely to cause hardship is that providing for the testing of a driver's sight and hearing before a license is issued to him. Hundreds of men driving motor cars to-day have only one eye.

Mr. Marshall: A lot of country politicians are that way, too.

Mr. BROWN: If those drivers are to have each eye tested separately, they are done. Is that fair? So, too, in respect of hearing. A man might have quite good hearing in one ear and be deaf in the other. Suppose, while the applicant is going through the test, the police officer—

The Premier: Gets on his deaf side.

Mr. BROWN: Well, in such a case possibly he will not get his license, although quite a good driver. Members may laugh, but hundreds of men driving cars to-day have sight in only one eye.

Hon. G. Taylor: They are not all outside, either; we have a few here.

Mr. BROWN: Discretion should be given to the examining officer, so that if he be of opinion that the applicant's eyesight and hearing are sufficiently good, the license will issue. However, the Bill is essentially one for consideration in Committee, and so I will say no more on the second reading.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [5.36]: The great progress made in road traffic is giving everyone interested in road making a grave problem to consider. The work of the State, in conjunction with the Federal authorities, in constructing roads is going to have a very great effect on the future progress of the State. The position occupied by the Minister for Works in this respect calls for considerable diligence, and I am sure it is the desire of all sections of the House to render him every assistance. There is in the Bill provision that in the event of a carrier's vehicle being used for

the carriage of passengers, a passenger license must also be obtained. The Minister might agree that on special occasions, on written authority being obtained from the local authority, approval might be given for the carrying of passengers in that vehicle. It might happen that in a country district such a vehicle, used generally for the conveyance of goods, would be required to carry, say, a team of footballers.

The Minister for Lands: I remember that, five or six years ago, a picnic party up your way was wrecked in such a vehicle and some persons were killed.

Mr. SAMPSON: I would not advocate the giving of approval except after close examination of the vehicle. I notice provision in the Bill under which it is proposed to take from the funds provided in the metropolitan pool a sufficient amount for road decking on the Perth Causeway, the Fremantle road bridge, portion of the Karakatta-road, and various other works, including portion of the Perth-York road and portion of the Perth-Armadale road. The Minister, when replying to the debate, might inform the House whether this means that the Armadale, Kelmscott, Gosnells, and Greenmount road boards' share of the traffic fees will be affected.

The Minister for Works: It will not affect those boards alone. I suppose you wouldn't like to know whether it will affect the Perth City Council's share?

Mr. SAMPSON: The Perth City Council have rating powers, and I do not think their difficulties are nearly so great as are those of the Canning, Melville, Gosnells, or Greenmount road boards and others affected.

The Minister for Lands: Do Gosnells and Greenmount come into the metropolitan area?

The Minister for Works: Since I came into office.

Mr. SAMPSON: Only in respect of the metropolitan motor licenses pool. The boundaries of the metropolitan area vary with various Acts. In the Metropolitan Market Bill the metropolitan area is only a portion of the municipality of Perth. I have always been pleased that the pooling principle was adopted. For that, some acknowledgment has been made to the ex-Minister for Works. I am glad the principle is being maintained, and I hope it will be extended. It might be extended to meet instances where a municipality is surrounded by a road district or

districts, and the vehicles licensed by the municipality are used mainly in the surrounding road district or districts. In those instances, the Minister should arrange for the pooling and apportioning of the licensing fees between the municipality or the road district or districts concerned. In some such districts the municipality collects the great bulk of the motor licensing fees, and consequently the road district surrounding the municipality is placed at considerable disadvantage. I regret to notice that no consideration is extended to farmers who use motor trucks for the conveyance of produce, or for the conveyance of goods from the siding to the farm. This principle has been acknowledged in the case of horse-drawn traffic, and the Minister might well agree to apply it to motor vehicles. Another matter to which I desire to make reference is contained in that portion of the Traffic Act of 1924 relating to fees charged for motor buses. When such a vehicle comes within the metropolitan area a charge of 30s. per seat on its carrying capacity is imposed, conditional on the vehicle having pneumatic tyres, and this money is collected by the metropolitan license pool. No portion of this money is returned to the authority that issues the license.

Mr. Marshall: Why should it be?

Mr. SAMPSON: Some portion should be returned, because the district in which the traffic is initiated is providing the roads for most of the journey. The smaller authorities have the greatest difficulty in securing sufficient funds with which to maintain their roads. I hope even now something may be done to give greater consideration to these authorities. The position at present is not equitable. In the case of the Darling Range Road Board, for instance, the fees collected are considerably less than those collected by the metropolitan pool. No portion of the fund in the pool is distributed in that district, consequently the difficulty of maintaining the roads is very great. I am pleased that it is proposed not to give power to issue a transfer when a vehicle is out of order. The Minister is to be commended for the attention he proposes shall be paid to the keeping of vehicles in proper order. Owing to the bad state of the roads, motor vehicles very soon get out of order. The brakes require constant attention. The clause in question will prove most beneficial. Up to date the State has enjoyed a good record in regard to the paucity of motor accidents. I hope

that record will long be continued. One clause in the Bill relates to the age of persons to whom it is proposed to issue licenses. According to the Act the minimum age of a person is 18 years. Below that it is not competent for anyone to obtain a license. The Bill states that in future the minimum age shall be 19, but the Minister states that in his opinion it should be 21. I disagree with that amendment. In my opinion 18 years of age is old enough to warrant any lad of moderate intelligence and ability being placed in control of a motor vehicle.

Mr. Sleeman: They are allowed to carry a gun at 18.

Mr. SAMPSON: Boys of 18 were adjudged to be qualified to go to the war. In many respects they do the work of a man.

The Premier: Although boys under 21 were adjudged to be qualified to go to the war, they were not adjudged to be qualified to have a vote for the Council. There were thousands of these young men.

Mr. Thomson: Not very many.

The Premier: Hundreds of them went from the goldfields, but they had no vote for the Council.

Mr. SAMPSON: Does the Premier support this restrictive legislation, which would stamp the Western Australia boy as less efficient than a boy in any other country?

The Minister for Works: What nonsense! In many countries they have to be 21 before they get a license.

Mr. SAMPSON: In Germany and elsewhere on the Continent in the British Isles and in the Eastern States, the age is 18.

The Minister for Works: Not in all the Eastern States.

The Premier: The secretary of your road board has been misleading you.

Mr. SAMPSON: Can the Minister mention any of the Eastern States where the age is 21?

The Minister for Works: I could mention any number of countries where that is so.

Mr. SAMPSON: In the countries I have mentioned a boy of 18 is deemed to be qualified to have a license granted to him.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: What is the difference between driving a motor car and a motor boat?

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not know, for I have never driven a motor boat. It is easier to drive a motor car than it is to drive a team of five horses.

Mr. Thomson: My word, it is!

Mr. SAMPSON: I have driven both.

The Premier: It is not a question of toil; but one of judgment and discretion.

Mr. SAMPSON: I agree. It is a matter of temperament. A motor vehicle or motor cycle is more easily handled than a horse-drawn vehicle. In the one case there is one person in control, but in the other case there is not only the driver but the horse or horses to be taken into consideration.

The Premier: In the one case you are moving along at two or three miles an hour, and in the other at 40 miles an hour.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is all a question of the control that is in the hands of the driver.

The Premier: Of course it is!

Mr. SAMPSON: It would be safer to drive a motor car at 25 miles than it would be to drive a horse-drawn vehicle at perhaps 10 miles an hour, or less. I have acknowledged the attention that the Minister is giving to these questions generally, but I am astonished that he should desire to increase the age at which licenses may be issued. It is usually the old, who find fault with, or doubt the ability of, the young. The Minister is a comparatively young man, and has not reached the age when he should doubt the ability of a younger person. Boys of 18 drive and manipulate big aeroplanes. They are found to be qualified for this work.

The Minister for Works: The traffic is not so thick up there.

Mr. Lambert: There is no rule of the road in that case.

Mr. Thomson: Yes, there is.

Mr. SAMPSON: I would be prepared to make the age less than 18. If a boy of 18 is in good health, he is alert, capable and efficient, and is eminently suitable for the driving of a motor vehicle. I have had to do with motor cycles since 1903. I was a better motor cyclist in that year than I could be to-day.

The Premier: There was no motor cycling then.

Mr. SAMPSON: There were motor cycles in Perth in 1903.

The Premier: You are talking about push bikes.

Mr. SAMPSON: What would the Premier suggest with regard to push bikes? Does he not know that push bikes constitute one of the greatest menaces to traffic on our roads? Would he declare that no one should ride a bicycle until he was 21, or 18?

Mr. Panton: I would not allow any boy out until he was 21.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am sure the hon. member is speaking in a bantering strain. He would not like to wrap up a boy in cotton wool, and treat him as a namby-pamby person, one who was unable to ride and control either a push or motor cycle, or to manage a motor car. Of course, a boy of 18 can do these things. It is a reflection upon every boy in Western Australia to suggest otherwise. I have looked up the Encyclopaedia Britannica to see what the position is in other countries, and at what age a boy becomes a man.

Mr. Lambert: You have lived to be about 70 years of age, and yet you have to look up an Encyclopaedia Britannica?

Mr. SAMPSON: In northern countries males mature between the age of 14 and 16, and in tropical countries the age of maturity is earlier. In Western Australia it is customary, in the case of distressed widows, to give assistance to their children, and boys up to the age of 14 receive help. The State assumes that at this age a boy is able to look after himself.

The Premier: No. It assumes that he is able to supplement the family income.

Mr. SAMPSON: I suggest that at the age of 18 a boy is able to look after a motor cycle.

The Premier: What a comparison to make, that because the State ceases to help a boy at the age of 14, he can look after a motor cycle when he is 18.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is thoroughly logical.

The Minister for Works: It is logical to your illogical mind.

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not think I have made any offensive remark concerning the Minister for Works.

The Premier: That is not offensive.

Mr. SAMPSON: Assistance is rendered by the State to a boy up to the age of 14. After that it is assumed that he is partly, at least, able to look after himself, because the assistance ends then.

The Premier: That is because of the financial necessity of the Treasury. I should like to be able to assist them very much more.

Mr. SAMPSON: I want the Premier to realise the financial necessity of the people in general. If our boys are to be adjudged incapable of doing something that they are quite able to do, in what position will the parents or the boys themselves be? Is it

to be made illegal for youths to take charge of a motor car until they are 21 years of age?

The Premier: The longer boys stay out of motor cars, the better.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is not so. The earlier a boy starts to learn, the more efficient he becomes as a driver. I admit, of course, that all boys are not capable and intelligent.

The Premier: Should not capable and intelligent boys of 18 have the vote?

Mr. SAMPSON: When all is said and done, the matter is in the hands of the inspector of police who conducts the tests. Let him make the tests as severe as he thinks desirable. Let the lad who is examined be put through his paces in such a way that there will be no possibility of his being inefficient without the fact becoming manifest.

The Premier: In the time at his disposal, the inspector of police would not be able to test the boy's judgment and discretion.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Bill contains a clause providing for examination as to hearing and eyesight. I understand that a nerve test is also to be applied.

The Minister for Works: It is a question of the applicant's judgment.

Mr. SAMPSON: A youth of 18 is quick and alert. I would rather be in a car with a boy of 18 than some men of considerably greater age. The last thing I desire is to endanger the lives of the people, and therefore I suggest that the tests be as severe as the inspector can make them. I venture to say that on the average, a youth of 18 who has passed the tests will be a more capable driver than a man, who did not begin to learn driving until he was, say, 35 years of age. The younger one is, when he learns, the more efficient does he become. It is well known to motorists that the drivers who are older in years are the most dangerous on the road. As the years pass, the keenness and alertness in a measure depart, and the driver becomes comparatively careless. I hope the Minister will abandon his idea of increasing the age. In moving the second reading the Minister said he would like to raise the age to 21. Possibly next year there may be a proposal to make it 20, and after that 21. Thus for three years there would be no new lads capable of securing a license. The boys of Western Australia already have a sufficiently difficult time. It is hard for them to learn trades, and hard for them to get work; and now it is proposed that they shall not be permitted to drive motor cycles or motor cars

until they are 19 years old. One matter to which attention should be given is insistence upon efficient silencers in motor cars.

Hon. G. Taylor: I wish we had them in this House.

The Premier: Yes, those that operate by pressing a button; and we could do with accelerators, too.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am pleased that the Minister has decided to amend Subsection 2 of Section 53, which empowers a local authority to close a road if in the local authority's opinion the road is dangerous to traffic. The Minister, in my opinion very properly, proposes to add to that subsection the words "with the approval in writing of the Minister." The effect of the amendment will be to bring the Belmont-Maida Vale-road again into use.

The Premier: You must not say that. The amendment was inserted with that object. We had that road in mind.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am glad to hear it. I assure the Minister for Works that the road has never been dangerous to traffic, notwithstanding that from the time it was constructed not one penny-piece has been expended on its maintenance.

Mr. Clydesdale: The board have not got the money to spend; that is the reason.

Mr. SAMPSON: The attitude of the Belmont Road Board has been scandalous. They have prostituted their position as a local authority. They have behaved very badly indeed in closing the road. They could have made an arrangement for its being repaired to some extent by one of the firms carting over it. However, in spite of their plain public duty, the board have fenced the road across at each end. It requires an amendment of the law to bring them to a sense of their responsibilities. I am grateful to the Minister for his proposal. He has shown remarkable forbearance to the board. If I had been in his position for just a little while, I would have taken steps to dissolve the board.

Hon. G. Taylor: You are inclined to be harsh.

Mr. SAMPSON: The board's behaviour was not in the public interest. Under the existing law any local authority can close a road if they consider it dangerous to traffic, and there is no appeal. The Belmont Road Board, without giving any opportunity for protest, since the Act does not require that opportunity to be given, closed the road in question. As the law stands, it is competent

for any other road board to close any other road or street on exactly the same basis.

Mr. Clydesdale: That particular road is positively dangerous, and you know it.

Mr. SAMPSON: I would remind the hon. member that the Belmont Road Board have carted material over the road within the past few weeks.

Mr. Clydesdale: Very little.

Mr. SAMPSON: That fact absolutely rebuts the suggestion that the road is dangerous to traffic.

Mr. Latham: I have been over it and know it to be safe.

Mr. SAMPSON: Many people have been over it. The whole business is a miserable piece of hypocrisy on the part of the Belmont Road Board. If I were gifted with the cloquence of the Premier, I would describe the board's action in fitting terms. I am only sorry that the Minister for Works has been so considerate to the Board in this matter. The proposed amendment will bring to an end a disgraceful state of affairs in connection with that road. The present position is that settlers who have provided some of the funds for the road find themselves, as the result of the action of the board, deprived of the legal use of the road.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What has happened to the road?

Hon. G. Taylor: It is closed.

Mr. SAMPSON: One matter in which the local authorities look to the Legislature for assistance is the limiting of loads which may be carried over various roads. Like the Minister, I realise the great difficulty which his department have to face in this connection. It is easy to say that a road vehicle is licensed to carry a certain tonnage, but it is another thing to prove that the tonnage actually carried exceeds that for which the vehicle is licensed. In most cases it would be impossible to secure evidence showing that a load reasonably estimated to weigh four tons was more than two tons, as, in the majority of districts there is no weighbridge. I daresay the Minister has given consideration to this aspect, as many people have done: and I trust that as time goes on means will be discovered for limiting the tonnage carried by vehicles to that for which they are licensed. The Bill also refers to insurance covering passenger traffic. The principle involved might be debated at great length. It opens up the question whether all road-users should not be required to take out third-party risk policies. It is quite conceivable that the

driver of a sulky or other horse-drawn vehicle might be a danger to other road-users. Danger is inherent in every walk of life. The point we have to consider is whether we can properly insist upon insurance of those vehicles. I know it is customary for the privately owned and driven motor vehicle to be insured, and that is a wise precaution. In point of fact, all road-users, including pedestrians face danger when they go upon the King's highway.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [7.30] : One realises that an efficient Act is essential. Generally speaking, the Bill is a good one, but I propose to deal with some of the clauses and I trust the Minister will consider sympathetically amendments we will suggest during the Committee stage. The advent of motor transport has revolutionised road problems and road traffic, while it has also increased the cost of road construction. In reply to the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George), the Minister said that fines collected had amounted to £6,230 and costs to £1,947, while licenses totalled £90,817, and drivers' licenses accounted for £9,447, or a total of £108,442. That was the amount collected in the metropolitan area alone. It is quite safe to assume that in the country districts the license fees paid to the police and the motor fees paid to the local authorities will amount to considerably more, so that approximately £250,000 is paid each year to the State and local authorities. It is necessary that control shall be vested in some authority, more especially respecting those who are plying for hire. It is essential both for the safety of the pedestrian and for the passenger using the vehicles. Not only should safe conditions be provided but a proper type of vehicle should be insisted upon. Some vehicles plying for hire to-day will, should the Bill become law, require to be overhauled at considerable expense or be driven off the roads. I favour the provision regarding insurance.

The Minister for Works: Do you think the amount suggested is sufficient?

MR. THOMSON: It is very modest and, as the Minister indicated, it affords those plying for hire considerate treatment. I favour the suggestion of the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) that a comprehensive or third-party policy should be provided. I

do not know if that would overload the burden for those engaged in the business, but such a provision would not only protect the passengers, but also the interests of the owners of the vehicles plying for hire. I would not dream of taking out a policy other than a comprehensive or third-party policy.

MR. SAMPSON: It should be required for every vehicle on the road.

MR. THOMSON: But this will be a step forward. There are one or two clauses to which I desire to draw special attention. One is that which provides that the Commissioner of Police in consultation with the Commissioner of Railways may decide whether or not a bus service may run to a particular district. That is rather drastic. If the powers contained in that clause were carried out with due consideration for the interests of various districts, no hardship would result. On the other hand it is quite possible that the power would be used to absolutely prohibit motor buses from going into various districts. I recognise the difficulty confronting the Minister and those charged with the administration of the Act, but we are entitled, when discussing the Bill, to see that the interests of the public and particularly of those who may desire a motor service in their district, are properly safeguarded. I trust that the Minister will be able to tell us what the intention of the department is on that point. I do not like the wording of Clause 12 which provides that the Commissioner of Police shall be the sole licensing authority throughout the State. I object to the police taking over the whole of the control and collection of licensing fees. Is that not the position?

The Minister for Works: No

MR. THOMSON: That is how I read it. It is proposed to delete the section of the principal Act that provides for traffic inspectors appointed by the local authorities. Section 20 includes the following:—

In each district there shall be a traffic inspector or two or more traffic inspectors appointed by the local authority. Each such inspector may grant any license which the local authority has power to issue under this Act.

As I read it, that portion is to be deleted. If I am wrong I shall be pleased to accept the Minister's assurance.

The Minister for Works: I do not propose to alter the existing position at all. You are referring to inspectors.

MR. THOMSON: If the Minister assures me it is not the intention to place with the

police the responsibility of issuing the whole of the licenses for motor vehicles—

The Minister for Works: As a matter of fact the police refused to do the work.

Mr. THOMSON: I accept the Minister's assurance. The Bill proposes to fix the age which a person must have attained before he can secure a driver's license, at 19 years. I do not agree with that and I hope the Minister will not insist upon it. There is an additional proviso that applicants must submit themselves to a test, including a medical examination. I do not agree with the contention of the member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown), and I hope the fears of that hon. member will prove groundless. I hope the fact that a person is blind in one eye or deaf in one ear, will not preclude him from receiving a license.

Mr. Marshall: You must admit that deafness is a big handicap when driving vehicles in congested portions of the city.

Mr. THOMSON: Some men who are deaf in one ear hear quite as well as any person not so affected. The Bill provides for dealing with persons possessing these physical defects, and before a license can be granted to such persons they must pass a test. I know boys and girls of from 14 to 16 years of age in whose care I would trust my life when they were driving a motor car sooner than I would to much older people. Under the Bill, before one can drive a motor vehicle he must have reached the age of 19 years. To-day country children aged seven and eight have to drive miles to school every day. Of course, I do not suggest that they should be allowed to drive a motor car. In any event, no parent would be foolish enough to entrust to the care of a very young boy or girl a car that cost hundreds of pounds, to say nothing of the risk to those boys and girls. Still, it is very much easier to stop a motor car than to stop a bolting horse. If boys of 14 or 16 years of age are permitted to drive a team of horses to the siding with a wagon-load of wheat, I see no reason why we should increase the minimum age of motor drivers from 18 years to 19 years. As motor drivers, boys or girls of 18 years are just as competent as they would be at 19 years. Plenty of boys and girls of 16 years of age are quite competent to drive motor cars. My own boys were driving at 14 years of age although, of course, not alone; I was always with them, and I had absolute confidence in them. I hope the Minister will give favourable consideration

to the amendment placed on the Notice Paper by the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay). The figures quoted by the member for Beverley (Mr. C. P. Wansbrough) were sent to us by a farmer, who pointed out that the license fees he had to pay for his motor vehicles were equivalent to 1½d. per bushel of his wheat. A man who is using his wagon only when taking his crop to the railway station or to the mill, and for carting back super. or stores is allowed a reduction of three-quarters of the ordinary fee. Of course, if a farmer is using his motor vehicle for driving about the country, he ought to pay the full fee.

The Minister for Works: How would you check that?

Mr. THOMSON: The local authorities will know whether the farmer is using his wagon continuously on the roads, and they will not agree to lose three-fourths of his license fee.

The Minister for Works: The farmer himself might be a member of the board.

Mr. THOMSON: If so, his neighbours will see to it that he is not improperly allowed a reduction in the fees he ought to pay. If it be right to exempt a wagon carting wool in a remote district, the same principle ought to apply to a farmer's motor wagon used only for carting in produce to the siding and carting out super. and stores to the farm. A man ought not to be charged full license fees for a wagon used only for those purposes.

Mr. Withers: The principle would be open to abuse.

Mr. THOMSON: All principles are open to abuse. But for one man who would abuse it there are scores of men who would abide by it. Why penalise the whole of the farming community for one who might abuse the privilege?

Mr. Clydesdale: How many farmers would buy a motor wagon simply to cart their wheat and their stores? Any who did would deserve a have to pay the full licensing fee.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Well, of course.

Mr. THOMSON: Before the Federal Arbitration Court just now, one of the arguments in favour of the 44-hour week is the necessity for efficiency. For the farmer to be efficient, he must have up to date machinery. According to my friends here, the farmer should not have harvesters or reapers and binders, but should go back to the old sickles. Actually the man who pur-

chases a motor wagon in order that he may shift three or four loads a day, against one with a horse-drawn vehicle, is striving for efficiency. He realises that his time is of value, and that it pays him to cart in his crop quickly and cart out his super. and other requirements with equal despatch. I am surprised at the interjection from the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson), who is himself a farmer.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: He knows something about it; apparently you do not.

Mr. THOMSON: When the building of the Yarramony railway was under discussion the hon. member said he was doubtful whether it ought to be built because, with the increasing motor transport, there was a possibility of the line being unnecessary. Yet because a man endeavours to be up to date with his methods, the hon. member would penalise him. The farmer that has a motor wagon for carting his produce to the railway station cannot possibly keep that wagon going the whole year round. Contrast the position of a carrier running a motor truck on the roads every day in the year with that of a farmer doing only his own carting. Yet the member for Guildford argues that the farmer who uses the roads during only portion of the year should pay at the same rate as does the carrier who uses the roads throughout the year. It is not just and I hope sufficient support will be forthcoming to carry the amendment of which I have given notice.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You are concerned more about the agents than about the farmers.

Mr. THOMSON: Throughout my remarks I have not mentioned agents, and I am not concerned about them.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Yes, you are.

Mr. THOMSON: I regret that the hon. member should interject in that strain. There is another matter that I hope the Minister will consider. One of the clauses provides that a minister of religion may have his vehicle licensed free of charge when it is used for religious or for his own purposes. I hope the Minister will accept a proviso to the clause in order to give similar exemption to the farmer, railway ganger, or any other man who has to keep a vehicle exclusively to convey his children to school. The children who live in the metropolitan area or in country towns experience no difficulty in getting to school, but parents who live at a considerable distance from a school have to provide and maintain a vehicle for their

children's transport. Members know that a horse and vehicle cannot be maintained for less than £30 a year.

Mr. Marshall: Surely a farmer would be able to keep a horse for less than that!

Mr. THOMSON: Allowing for the feeding and shoeing of the horse, and the wear and tear on the vehicle, there would be little left out of £30 a year. Many people in the country districts have to keep a horse and vehicle exclusively to convey their children to school.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Would not such a man get a driving allowance to cover that?

Mr. THOMSON: I will deal with that point in a moment. I have no desire that the rights or privileges enjoyed by ministers of religion should be curtailed. They are called upon to travel long distances in order to conduct religious services in remote districts.

Mr. Marshall: For all the good they do, I think we should impose the tax upon them.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not agree with the hon. member. The ministers of religion are doing good work, but if it is fair to exempt their vehicles, it is only fair to exempt vehicles used for conveying children to school. The member for Albany asked whether the cost of maintaining a vehicle to convey children to school would not be covered by the driving allowance granted by the Education Department. Perhaps the hon. member does not know that the Education Department have taken to themselves the right to say to whom the driving allowance shall be paid. They base it upon a man's income. One man had a gross income of £400, and the department told him he was in a position to pay the cost of conveying his children to school. Yet after deducting the allowances permitted by the Taxation Department, that man had a taxable income of only £126, and therefore was not liable for the payment of income tax. Some members might argue that a charge of 15s. per wheel for licensing a vehicle to carry children to school is a very small matter, and that a parent should be thankful for being in a position to pay it. I hope the Minister will see the justice of waiving this charge. Another amendment is needed to obviate the present necessity to pay a double driver's license. I may own a Ford car for which I have to pay 5s. for a driver's license. If I buy a Ford truck I have to pay another 5s. for the privilege of driving the truck. That is not fair. If a man owns

a car and a truck, surely to goodness it should be sufficient for him to take out one driver's license.

Mr. Chesson: He would take out only one driver's license.

Mr. THOMSON: No fear. A man might own a motor cycle, for which he must take out a driver's license. If he is working for an employer and driving a motor truck, he must take out a driver's license for the truck. It is quite possible for one man to have to hold three driver's licenses, one for his motor car, one for his motor truck, and one for his motor cycle.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: But he could drive six cars if he had one car license.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes. The Minister should consider this matter; one driver's license should be sufficient. The Bill gives power to make regulations to prohibit or restrict the driving or hauling of agricultural machines, including tractors and ploughs, on roads. I hope the Minister will explain the reason for inserting that provision. No doubt the reply will be that it was a resolution of the road board conference, but with all due respect to that body, the provision is unnecessary because it is sufficiently covered in the principal Act. Section 41 of the Act gives power to regulate the use of roads with a view to preventing undue damage or obstruction, to define what is heavy traffic, to prohibit the passage of heavy or obstructive traffic, to prescribe the maximum weight that may be taken across any bridge or culvert, to prohibit or regulate the use on any road of any vehicle not having the nails in the wheels countersunk as may be specified, and to prohibit or regulate the drawing or trailing of any sledge, timber, or heavy material on any road. That power and the provision to recover the value of any damage done to a road should be sufficient. It is not right to prohibit or restrict the driving or hauling of agricultural machines on roads. At any rate, the Minister should tell us why such a clause is considered necessary.

The Minister for Lands: Are not a lot of the road board members farmers?

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, and doubtless there have been instances of roads having been damaged, but the boards already have sufficient power to deal with such contingencies.

The Minister for Lands: One thing you have forgotten is that the traffic fees are applied to maintain the roads.

Mr. THOMSON: I am pleased that the traffic fees collected outside the metropolitan area are retained by the local authorities.

The Minister for Lands: And yet you ask for more exemptions.

Mr. THOMSON: I think the Minister for Lands will agree that a vehicle used entirely for conveying children to school should be licensed free of charge.

The Minister for Lands: And one big hole in the road might cost the parent more in the way of medical expenses than he would pay by way of license fees in a life time.

Mr. THOMSON: I cannot follow that reasoning. The total proceeds of the fees derived from vehicles used to convey children to school would not be spent upon one road. To exempt such vehicles from the payment of license fees is only just.

The Minister for Lands: It might mean that you will have to strike higher rates.

Mr. THOMSON: The figures supplied by the department to the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) show that £108,442 was paid in motor fees, drivers' licenses, fines, etc., and it is safe to assume that considerably more is paid in the outside districts. Those figures applied to petrol-propelled vehicles only.

The Minister for Works: It is about fifty-fifty.

Mr. THOMSON: We have the cart and carriage licenses, and all wagons and lorries upon which the license fee is levied. Out of the fees that are being collected, quite one quarter of a million pounds is being paid to the local authorities, and in the metropolitan area to the traffic branch.

The Minister for Lands: If the money were not paid by means of fees it would be paid by means of rates. It would make no difference.

Mr. THOMSON: If it is logical to exempt certain people from taxation, it should also be logical to grant exemptions under the traffic laws. I have referred to one exemption. All I ask is that the same principle should be applied to the motor wagon as is applied to ordinary lorries and wagons, and that there shall also be exemption in the case of school children. That is a reasonable and fair request. I hope the Minister will give these requests every consideration. I will support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [8.17]: I support the Bill in general. Possibly in Committee we can assist the Minister to frame something that will be suitable to the present traffic conditions. I appreciate the difficulties confronting him, and also those with which he will be faced if he raises the age limit from 18 to 19, as affecting people who may get licenses. I should prefer to see the age reduced. Boys of 17 and 18 have a far greater knowledge of machinery, and are more capable of driving motor vehicles, than many older men and women who are driving in the towns to-day. Farmers' sons and other boys make good drivers at an age younger than 18. I fail to see why the limit should be increased.

Hon. G. Taylor: It might be limited to the cities.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not see why the city boys should be penalised. We are here to do the best we can for the country districts. The Minister told the House about the problems of heavy traffic. They are questions that require the attention of all members. In my district, where the rainfall is very heavy in the winter, the Minister by regulation debarred people from using the roads for certain months. He is thus penalising an industry which is the life-blood of the South-West. I refer to the timber industry, which represents so great an asset to the country. It is a great problem to know how to keep vehicles on the roads in winter. It might be possible to do so by limiting the weight that may be carried on any vehicle. If a contractor, whose vehicle can carry two or three tons, is limited to one ton or 1½ tons, according to the power, instead of travelling slowly, he will speed up, and thus will do more damage to the road than if he carried a heavier load at a slower rate. The Minister said that roads on which many thousands of pounds had been spent had been ruined, and that it would take more to reconstruct them than it had taken to build them in the first place. The only way to overcome that difficulty is to build substantial roads. The more gravel that is put on a road, the worse it becomes. Once a vehicle breaks through the crust during the heavy winter rains the roads become boggy. The roads have never been in such a deplorable state as they are in to-day.

The Minister for Lands: That appertains right through the country.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I put that all down to motor traffic.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is an abnormal set of conditions.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No. It is said that motor vehicles do less harm to a road than horse-drawn vehicles, but I think they do more harm. Prior to the advent of motor traffic one could travel over the roads in comparative comfort; but now, that motor traffic has increased to such an extent it is impossible to travel over any road in the South-West in comfort.

Mr. Marshall: Is that not due to the prosperity and growth of the districts concerned?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No. In years gone by the timber industry was more active than it is to-day.

Mr. Marshall: But there are other industries there now.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Not so many more, but possibly there is more vehicular traffic. A timber carter in the South-West has to pay a license fee. First of all the local authority, under the Minister, charges a fee for heavy traffic. The fee is paid to enable the carter to carry materials or products over the road. The local authority then says to the man, "Our roads will not carry you; therefore we have to get the Minister's consent to close them for four months." The regulations governing this are now lying on the Table of the House. Roads in my district have been closed from June until the end of September.

Mr. Marshall: Have you moved to disallow those regulations?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No. I have received protests. The local authorities must do something to maintain the roads so that the public may travel over them. This is one of our problems. I do not know if it can be overcome by fixing the weight that may be carried by any vehicle. I am glad the Minister has promised to pay a visit to the district, when the case will be put before him. One carter came along with a truck carrying six or seven tons, and used the road only for three weeks. It is estimated that in that period he did damage to the roads to the extent of £400. The local authority sent him an account for that sum. I said to them, "You have licensed the vehicle, he has paid the fee; what chance have you of collecting the money?" Something must be done in a case of that sort.

Mr. Marshall: God speed the advent of aviation.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not know how sleepers could be carried through the air.

The member for York could see no reason why the Causeway should not be made a national work. I am opposed to the nationalisation of that structure. Perth should be able to pay for the upkeep of its own roads, just as the country districts do.

Mr. Thomson: It is the only artery leading in and out of the city.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is a gateway as between towns, in the same way that the bridge over the Blackwood River is the gateway between towns.

Mr. Thomson: I would not support that principle too much if I were you.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: This should not be made a national work, any more than the bridge over the Blackwood River. I hope in Committee the Minister will permit certain necessary amendments to be made. Every member desires to have the Traffic Act, the regulations, and the fees altered to suit all the conditions in the State, and not those existing in any particular part of it.

The Minister for Lands: If you reduce the fees too much your roads will remain as they are.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not suggest that the fees should be reduced.

The Minister for Lands: I know how bad your roads are.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Those who use the roads should pay for them. The member for Katanning referred to the school children. We would like to see all these privileges given free. The sulky or vehicle that is used for the carrying of the children to school may also be used to take the father and mother to some special function.

Mr. Withers: Surely not!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is not used for the one purpose only. It may be used to take the parents to church or to a picnic.

The Minister for Lands: We were not previously aware that the farming community was so wealthy that it could afford a vehicle at all.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Parents will make great sacrifices in order to give their children an education. In my district children drive six or eight miles to school. A horse-driven vehicle is much harder to control than a power vehicle. I have seen boys of 15 driving a team of horses.

Mr. Marshall: In most cases the horses are selected for that job.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I have seen boys of 15 breaking in horses, and driving and rid-

ing them. The horses are not by any means selected.

The Minister for Lands: Most of the children who go to school in your district go on horseback.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes, but many of them drive to school.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret [8.30]: I have no desire to discuss the Bill on the second reading, as it is purely a Committee measure. We already have our statute-book laws for the control of motor roads. After six years' experience of the present Act the Minister controlling that measure has decided that it is necessary to bring down an amending Bill for the purpose of tightening up that Act and giving to the Minister, the police, and the local governing bodies the necessary power to make traffic safe. Accordingly there is no occasion for long speeches on the second reading. In Committee we shall have ample opportunity to thrash out points of disagreement. I rose merely to ask the Minister whether it would be possible to include in this Bill some power to make it easier and more effective to deal with persons who have so little respect for human life as to let police records disclose. Drivers of motor cars in this State, as in other parts of the world, have shown a supreme contempt for human life and suffering. That remark, of course, applies to but a very few drivers. Those few, however, should be subject to special penalty, and the mode of procedure in such cases should be laid down in the Bill. If a driver collides with a human being, a vehicle and proceeds on his way ignoring the accident, he should be subject to special punishment, having regard to the humanity of which, *prima facie*, he is guilty. A driver who consciously meets with an accident has a plain duty to see what assistance he can render to the injured. That is the humane and proper course. In Committee we shall endeavour to secure the insertion of a new clause providing special punishment for the type of driver who knocks down a person and then continues on his journey.

Mr. Marshall: There is one in this class and I would like to know who he is.

HON. G. TAYLOR: I too would like to know, and therefore I shall not be too severe in my remarks. The suggestion has been made that it would be proper to charge such persons with manslaughter. Still, I do not wish to go so far. But if I were starting by when a man in a motor car wilfully

knocked down a human being and simply proceeded on his way, then, if I had a gun with me, I believe I would drop him on the track because of his inhumanity. I hope that in Committee hon. members will try to reach such persons, though fortunately there are not many of them. Men who have no sympathy for others should be compelled by legislation to keep somewhere within bounds.

MR. MANN (Perth) [8.5] : Previous speakers have addressed themselves to matters affecting the electors they represent, and it is my duty to put before the House the position as it affects the Perth City Council. Under this Bill the Minister for Works proposes to divide the tax in a manner which apparently will leave little money for distribution. Hitherto the preservation and repair of the Perth-Fremantle road has been met out of the tax prior to distribution. Now, however, the Minister proposes to take a great deal more of the tax. I wish to bring under his notice the circumstance that the cost of the preservation of the Perth-Fremantle road from the city boundary to the Fremantle bridge is to be taken out of the fund before distribution. However, there is that long stretch of road leading from Barrack-street to the city boundary, with the river on one side and King's Park on the other, in respect of which no rates are or can be collected. Nevertheless, the City Council have to meet the full cost of maintaining that road. The whole of the heavy traffic coming from and going to Fremantle passes over that stretch of road.

The Minister for Lands: That is not so. There are two roads.

Mr. MANN: Of course there are two roads, but this is the road over which the heavy traffic passes, and the Minister knows that.

The Minister for Lands: I do not know it.

Mr. MANN: Then I inform the Minister that it is so. If it is thought necessary to take from the tax the money needed to maintain the Perth-Fremantle road, then that long stretch of road to which I have referred should be included in the distribution, seeing that from it the City Council receive no rates whatever, though it serves the same purpose as the Perth-Fremantle road.

The Minister for Lands: For a start, do not all the charabancs use the Karrakatta road?

Mr. MANN: I do not think they do.

Mr. Panton: Yes, they do.

Mr. MANN: Suppose they do, it is only a very small portion of the traffic.

The Minister for Lands: Oh, is it?

Mr. MANN: If the fact were otherwise, that would not make the Government's argument sound. If, as the Minister apparently thinks, it is necessary to keep that other part of the road in order, why should not the part within the City boundary be kept in order? The Minister provides in the Bill for the upkeep of the Karrakatta-road. I suggest he should also include in the Bill the long stretch of road within the City boundary.

The Minister for Lands: The other road, after it leaves Karrakatta, is maintained by the tramways.

Mr. MANN: The tramline is right off that road.

The Minister for Lands: When the trams come into Perth, they go by Hay-street.

Mr. MANN: I am speaking of the route along Mount's Bay-road by the river. If the matter had been prominently brought to the Minister's attention previously, he would probably have included that part of the road in this Bill. The Minister will recognise that the City Council receive no revenue from property along that part of the road having the river on one side and King's Park and Mt. Eliza on the other. Moreover, that is an expensive piece of road to maintain, and the City Council find it a heavy drain on their revenue. I hope that in Committee the Minister will accept an amendment in that direction.

The Minister for Lands: The heavy vehicles you speak of are owned by people who live in the City.

Mr. MANN: That is not so.

The Minister for Lands: It is so.

Mr. MANN: If it were so, then that circumstance would not make the position any better for the City Council, who do not receive the fees from the vehicles. If they did receive those fees, there might be something in the Minister's interjection.

The Minister for Lands: The Perth City Council got all the benefit for many years.

Mr. MANN: But the fees go into a pool. If the City Council were getting all the fees to-day, they would be much better off.

The Minister for Lands: I know they would.

Mr. MANN: In the year prior to the operation of the existing Traffic Act the City Council received £4,733 in traffic fees, whereas in 1921 they received only £2,729.

The Minister for Works: I suppose the City Council will admit that they have received a lot more since I have been in office than they received previously.

Mr. MANN: They do admit that, but with the increase in traffic fees of late years they would now be receiving at the rate of £7,000 or £8,000 a year.

The Minister for Works: There would be a revolution outside the City boundaries if that state of affairs existed.

Mr. MANN: I am not suggesting that that state of affairs should exist. I do urge, however, that the Minister in making his distribution should act equitably towards the City Council.

The Minister for Works: They have told me they are getting a better deal from me than they ever had previously.

Mr. MANN: They admit that the Minister has been fair and reasonable. I suggest that he should not oppose my amendment. Another matter I wish to mention at this stage is the amendment proposing to insert the words "the Commissioner of Police" in Section 2. Does the Minister intend that the Commissioner of Police shall distribute the tax?

The Minister for Works: No.

Mr. MANN: He is merely to have control?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Mr. MANN: The Minister will still distribute the tax?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Mr. MANN: There should be some scale or basis of distribution.

The Minister for Works: There is.

Mr. MANN: Is it in this Bill?

The Minister for Works: No.

The Minister for Lands: The scale was arranged at a conference of all the local authorities with the previous Minister for Works.

Mr. MANN: The Perth City Council wish to know upon what scale the distribution will take place?

The Minister for Works: The City Council and every other local authority have been definitely advised by me as to that. They said they could not get the information from the previous Minister, but they certainly have had it from me. I will tell the House about it presently.

Mr. MANN: I would advise the Minister to put the scale into the Bill, so that it will be there for all time instead of merely existing at the whim of Ministers who come and go.

The Minister for Works: I have altered it since I have been in office.

Mr. MANN: The City Council admit that the Minister has been reasonable and even generous, but another Minister may come along and view the matter in a different light.

The Minister for Works: Then the best thing you can do is to see that I am kept in office.

Mr. MANN: That is another story.

The Premier: Your objection will not arise for the next ten years.

Mr. MANN: I suggest to the Minister that he include in the Bill provisions setting out the manner in which, and the scale upon which, the fees shall be distributed. When framing their estimates for works to be put in hand, the City Council would like to know what revenue to expect. Under the existing system they have not that opportunity.

The Minister for Works: There is no possible way of telling them that.

Mr. MANN: But there would be if the Minister fixed the scale in the Bill.

The Minister for Works: They have had the scale from me.

Mr. MANN: But as it is now, the scale can be changed from time to time.

The Minister for Works: It cannot be changed during a year.

Mr. Thomson: The revenue may increase.

The Minister for Works: There has been a phenomenal increase this year.

Mr. MANN: While the amount of revenue may increase, the scale does not increase, and we ask the Minister to include the scale in the Bill. Then local authorities will know what they may expect to receive.

The Minister for Lands: You could not possibly know that.

Mr. MANN: But the local authorities would have a better idea if that were done.

The Minister for Lands: They know what they received last year, and they can estimate on that basis.

Mr. MANN: They may anticipate that the Minister will distribute the funds on the same scale as last year but, on the other hand, he may not do so. The requests I have made are reasonable, and I trust the Minister will accept amendments to the Bill along those lines. They will not affect the distribution or the administration, but will be of benefit to local authorities, particularly the City Council.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [8.47]: Undoubtedly some of the provisions of the Bill are necessary if for no other purpose than to legalise the illegal regulations under which motor buses have been operating hitherto. Motor buses have been regulated and their licenses endorsed quite outside any law in existence up to the present. The Minister will admit that fact. Officials have admitted it, and the remarkable thing is that nobody has challenged it so far. It is remarkable on the face of it, but not so remarkable when we realise that since the motor bus industry sprang into existence, it has become more or less a monopoly. People with a monopoly are just as anxious to keep it as other people may be to destroy it. No attempt has been made to test the undoubtedly illegal acts of the Administration in endeavouring to restrict the movements of buses to particular routes.

The Minister for Works: We have power to do that.

MR. DAVY: The Minister has power to prescribe routes that must be followed by motor buses, but what the law does not provide is power for the Minister to say that a particular motor bus can run only between two particular points. The Bill that the Minister has introduced is, in effect, an admission that in the past no power existed to authorise what has been done.

The Minister for Works: Everyone knows it is necessary.

MR. DAVY: Perhaps so. There was really no one to challenge what was being done, because it could only be tested by somebody charged with contravening the regulations. As those enjoying the monopoly were not anxious to have the business thrown open for everyone to rush into, one can understand the position. A certain amount of regulation is required, but I am not prepared to go nearly as far as the Minister asks Parliament to go. One feature of the Bill that has been argued to some extent to-night is that in which the Minister suggests that the age of a person who may be licensed to drive a motor car shall be fixed at 19 years. The Minister suggested the danger of granting a license to a youth of 18, as opposed to granting a license to one of 19 years of age. I realise that the latter is an arbitrary age. The Minister argued that in case of emergency youth was less likely to rise to the occasion than would be an older man. The Minister was rather unhappy in his

selection because, if there is one class of crisis that is best met by youth, it is, I suggest, an emergency. Judgment is not what is required in such circumstances. The circumstances have to be met so speedily that judgment has no time to operate.

The Minister for Works: Judgment is what is required in such circumstances.

MR. DAVY: No, speed of action.

The Minister for Works: A good judge of pace is what is wanted.

MR. DAVY: Good judgment of pace does not enter into a case of emergency. When an emergency arises, what is required is the youth's speed of action between eye, hand and foot. If I were faced with an emergency, I would prefer a youth of 18 to be in charge of the car rather than a man of 58 years. I admit that there is a tendency on the part of youths to drive too fast, although plenty of older men can be found who are inclined to do the same thing. It seems quite beside the question, and I cannot see that it will serve any good purpose, to raise the age from 18 to 19 years. The Minister said he would like to raise the age to 21 years, but why does he stop there? There is no moment in the life of a human being when, with a quick change, he ceases to be a youth and becomes a man of judgment. It is a gradual process and, for the purpose of driving motor cars, a human being 18 years of age is probably as competent as he ever will be, and much more so than he will become in old age. One clause of the Bill causes me a certain amount of amusement. It is a trap set for us by the Minister into which we are asked to walk, and if we do so, we will certainly deserve to be considered very simple.

MR. MARSHALL: It is a sort of "come into my parlour."

MR. DAVY: Yes. We have walked into the trap once. The Minister and the Premier have been perfectly candid, and told us exactly what this trap means, in what direction it leads, and therefore I hope hon. members will pause before accepting the proposal. The Minister has included an innocent-looking new clause providing for compulsory insurance by owners of motor vehicles used for conveying passengers. He provides that the insurance shall be done with an office doing business within the State and approved of by the Minister. We had a similar instance in the Workers' Compensation Act, and we agreed to it because,

in our innocence, we thought the provision was included in order to protect the claimant in an application for workers' compensation against an employer not able to pay, and also to protect a poor employer against the disaster that might befall him when required to meet a claim for £750 on account of the death of a person employed by him. We thought the insertion of the words "approved by the Minister" would merely enable the Minister to satisfy himself that the company, with whom the employer was insured, was a genuine company, not a humbug company with no capital and no more stability than the person taking out the policy.

Mr. Richardson: It was regarded as a guarantee of good faith.

Mr. DAVY: We have been disillusioned. The Minister has claimed since that the provision gave him the right—although we did not appreciate the fact at the time—to fix premiums to be paid to the company to be approved by him.

The Minister for Works: Parliament would have been wrong had it not given me that power.

Mr. DAVY: Whatever I may think of the capacity and honesty of purpose of the Minister, I do not think he is sufficiently the master of everything, that he has sufficient time, or that his capacity is sufficiently above that of the average human being to enable him, in the midst of his multitudinous duties, to constitute himself a premium-fixing commission. Attempts have been made in the past to fix the prices of the necessities of life, both in this and other States, and it has been recognised generally that that task required the efforts of an independent body of three or four highly skilled persons.

The Minister for Lands: Are not highly skilled persons also required in this instance?

Mr. DAVY: Whatever the capacity of the Minister for Works may be, I do not think he can be regarded as a highly skilled person to determine the question of insurance premiums.

The Minister for Lands: Ministers have technical advisers.

Mr. DAVY: Of course, selected by themselves! If it is right that the premiums should be fixed by law, then it should be done by a commission appointed by the House. It should not be left to the haphazard way experienced on the last occasion under which the Minister selected those per-

sons he thought fit to do the work. If we are to have the premiums chargeable by insurance companies fixed—it is immaterial to the agreement whether that is good or bad—let us say honestly that we intend it to be done, and let Parliament appoint a number of skilled persons to undertake the duty.

The Minister for Lands: Do you think we would agree? I might think one man more skilled than you were prepared to admit.

Mr. DAVY: I would be perfectly satisfied if a commission were appointed by the Government for the purpose, in pursuance of statutory power, of fixing the premiums in connection with the insurance companies.

The Minister for Works: That is what happened.

Mr. DAVY: If the Minister candidly asked us to create a new statutory body for the purpose of fixing the premiums of insurance companies, and specified that one should be a qualified actuary, another a nominee of the insurance companies, and the third a nominee of the Government, we would have a reasonable prospect that what they fixed would be a fair and proper thing. But the Minister by implication is asking us to give him alone, not the Government, the right, in his own way, either with the help of his own genius or with the assistance of any persons he chooses to nominate, the enormous power of fixing the premium.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: And so putting some of the companies out of action.

Mr. DAVY: That is the first bright idea that can be seen behind this innocent little thing. I remind members that when we incautiously passed a similar provision in the Workers' Compensation Act the phrase was "an incorporated insurance company doing business in the State." That little word "incorporated" has been missed this time.

The Premier: Since you have shaken off your early innocence you are becoming suspicious.

Mr. DAVY: Perhaps I was too innocent when I came here, but I cannot help noticing that that word "incorporated" has been dropped out since the Workers' Compensation Act was passed. Another point: the Premier has assured us that the natural corollary—how I do hate that term! We are suffering from natural corollaryitis in this community. We are led on from one thing to another, because always are we told that the next thing is the natural corollary

of the last. Let me repeat, the Premier has told us that the natural corollary of compulsory insurance is State insurance. So in this innocent, little proposed new section of the Traffic Act we have a new State insurance department. It cannot be avoided. Taking the statement of the Minister for Works and the Premier's statement, this inevitably commits us, if we pass it, to a new State insurance department.

The Minister for Works: I never said anything about a new State insurance department.

Mr. DAVY: No, I am saying it.

The Minister for Works: But you said, according to the Premier and to me.

Mr. DAVY: I said the inevitable inference, according to the statements of the Minister for Works and of the Premier, from an even more innocent provision than this is that it means a new State insurance department.

The Premier: Be careful in drawing your inferences.

Mr. DAVY: I defy any one to disagree with the inference I am drawing. The Minister for Works says he is to be able to fix the premiums to be charged by any insurance company. The Premier says the natural corollary of compulsory insurance is a State insurance department. What is more certain than that the Minister will refuse to approve of the company? Because here is a brand new kind of insurance that they will be called upon to hand out.

The Minister for Works: Oh no.

Mr. DAVY: It is quite different from anything we have had.

The Minister for Works: Scores of such policies are in operation to-day.

Mr. DAVY: Of course. I have one myself. But it is not the same. There is not one like this in Western Australia.

The Minister for Works: Nonsense! Any number of men with cars take out that insurance now.

Mr. DAVY: Not this insurance. It is quite different. The insurance that the Minister—I think I have seen him driving a car—and I take out is an insurance covering accidents to the car and third party risk to the extent of £2,000. Here it is proposed that each owner of a vehicle shall take out cover in respect of £100 for each passenger the vehicle is licensed to carry. Admittedly it is on the same principle; but it will require working out on a new set of figures. And the Minister will be in a position to say, "I do not like your figures, and I will not

approve of them." Then the Premier will come along and say, "The natural corollary of this is a State insurance department." So, they play into each other's hands. I will give the Minister for Works credit for having been extremely clever about it. He has created exactly the same position here as he did with the Workers' Compensation Act. If we pass the section it is unavoidable; but, by heavens! if we do pass it we will do it with our eyes open this time.

The Premier: We do not want to be forced under this Act to do something that we do not want to do—as we had to do before.

Mr. DAVY: There could be no spectacle more pleasing to me than to see the present Government forced to do something that they do not want to do; when everybody knows that they were determined to do it before they got into office, that the doing of it was a plank of their own fighting platform. It must have been delightful to be able to work up a situation that enabled the Government to do what they wanted while pretending that they were being forced to do it.

The Minister for Lands: No pretending; it is a fact.

Mr. Sampson: It was doing good by stealth.

Mr. DAVY: However, I do not wish to say anything more about this clause. Had we not had the experience we have had in respect of compulsory insurance under the Workers' Compensation Act, we might easily have been induced to think that this was a quite innocent, and perhaps even meritorious, measure.

The Minister for Works: I may still convince you that it is.

Mr. DAVY: I do not think so. Had we not had the experience we have had, we might possibly have accepted it; but we have learnt our lesson, and I do not think we shall be caught again.

The Minister for Works: I know the lesson you ought to have learned, but you have not.

Mr. DAVY: Perhaps so. I do not know whether to call the Minister reactionary, or unduly progressive, or quite how to describe him. I had formed the opinion that almost universally it was held to-day by all shades of political opinion that what we were suffering from in Western Australia, indeed throughout Australia, was too much centralisation; that what we needed was to let the people manage their own local affairs, so

far as it could be conveniently done. I thought we had worked out a fair system of local government which, although having many defects, and being capable of considerable improvement, nevertheless carried on the local affairs of the country with moderate skill. Admittedly, one might point in many directions to faults owing to the system. For instance, one found that roads used by masses of traffic flowing between two great points were expected to be maintained by local authorities having but a small revenue. Some form of Main Roads Bill was necessary to deal with that situation. Whether our own local Act and the recent legislation passed by the Federal Parliament will do that, remains to be seen. But the Minister apparently thinks the Government are not only the best judges of what is good for the State, but the best judges also of what is good for every local authority in Western Australia. And, not content with collecting all the traffic fees in the metropolitan area, and then saying first of all that certain portions of the fund should be spent on certain statutory specified roads, they go further and declare that even when a given local authority gets its share of that fund the Government shall still have the right to say upon what roads that share shall be spent.

The Minister for Lands: That has been the system ever since the traffic fees were pooled.

Mr. DAVY: By what authority? This is the first time I have seen or heard of any statutory authority for such a proposition.

The Minister for Lands: There may not be any statutory authority, but the Government in power when first the traffic fees were pooled decided upon that system for the maintenance of main roads.

Mr. DAVY: There is nothing about main roads in the clause I am talking about.

The Minister for Works: But fees are collected for the roads, and are expected to be spent on the roads. The distribution is based on the claims of certain main roads. That has been the basis ever since the traffic fees were pooled.

Mr. DAVY: Even so, it would appear to me quite clear that if one authority is to collect the whole of the traffic fees in the metropolis, they certainly should not be held by the authority that collects them. They should be distributed on some basis between the various local authorities within the area. But surely, once it is decided in what pro-

portion the sum shall be divided, that should be the end of Government interference with the thing.

The Minister for Works: No fear! No Government have admitted that.

Mr. DAVY: I shall be interested to hear why not.

The Minister for Works: You had better ask your colleagues over there. They would never admit it.

Mr. DAVY: That will not prevent me from criticising it. The fund having been created, obviously it has to be distributed amongst the various local authorities responsible for the upkeep of the roads. Some basis, one would think, could be arrived at that would be fair to each of the local authorities. But it is now proposed that the Government should still further be able to say "Your amount is so-and-so, and you have to spend it on such-and-such roads" It seems quite clear that this is a very definite move towards centralised control by the Government instead of control by the local authorities and I believe it to be bad. Whether it occurred before I came into the House or not, I do not know. Obviously the Bill must be carried through its second reading.

The Premier: There is no obvious reason why it should go through the second reading.

Mr. DAVY: It contains quite a number of necessary provisions, but I hope the Minister will not hurry the Bill through the Committee stage. I hope we shall be given a fair opportunity to inform ourselves of what is right and proper and to improve the Bill in any way in which it may be improved.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle—in reply) [9.16]: The Bill has been received very favourably by most members, but there are one or two phases of the discussion to which I should like to refer. The first is the statement made by the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) that the City Council do not know the basis on which the traffic fees are distributed from the pool. That complaint was made to me when I first took office; I was told that none of the local authorities knew the basis of distribution. Whatever may have been the reason for keeping the local authorities in the dark prior to that, there has been no reason since and they have all been advised of it on more than one occasion.

Mr. Mann: We want it put in the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The City Council have made that statement in a typewritten document that the member for Perth followed very closely during his speech. The method of distributing the fees is that certain roads are declared to be main roads, and they are classed under two headings—first-class and second-class. There was also a third class, but I abolished that and adopted first-class and second-class according to the density of the traffic that the roads carried. The fees are distributed on the chainage of road within the boundary of each local authority. The police retain the cost of collecting the fees, after which the first charge on the fund is the upkeep of the Perth-Fremantle road. When that amount has been deducted the balance of the money is distributed on a chainage basis. All the local authorities know that perfectly well. Why the City Council have made the statement contained in the circular I do not know. There may have been reasons for it prior to my taking office, but there has been no reason for it since.

Mr. Davy: What do you mean by a chainage basis?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Take the Perth-Fremantle road, according to the chainage in the Claremont Council, Cottesloe Road Board, Cottesloe Council, and North Fremantle Road Board, each of those local authorities is paid from the pool.

Mr. Davy: The whole fund is divided up according to the length of road in each district.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, according to the chainage of first-class and second-class roads and the chainage in the district. I do not hold that the present system of distribution is perfect, and I have asked the local authorities to suggest a better system. The only proposal I have received so far has been from the town clerk of Subiaco, who suggests that the traffic be classified. He holds that it is possible to classify the traffic, that there is very heavy traffic in some districts that does not go right through the metropolitan area, and that the districts carrying it should collect at a higher rate. I have inquired from the officers controlling traffic as to the feasibility of the suggestion and they tell me it is impossible to classify the traffic going through the different districts.

Mr. Mann: What objection have you to stating the basis in the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A number of different roads have been brought in since I have been in office. I have brought in the Armadale-road, which was not included when I took over; neither was the road that runs to the foot of the hills near Greenmount.

The Minister for Lands: You will want to bear that in mind when discussing the redistribution of seats.

The Premier: If it were put in the Bill we would have to bring down an amendment whenever an alteration was made.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As traffic develops and new arteries assume importance, so they can be brought under the scheme, but if it were put in the Bill we would have to be continually altering the statute. Everyone knows perfectly well what the basis of distribution is. The money belongs to the local authorities, and the Minister has no right to keep secret the basis of distribution.

Mr. Davy: Would Armadale contribute to the fund?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; all the traffic fees from that area are pooled. Anyone in Armadale owning a motor car is licensed by the police and the money goes into the pool.

Mr. Davy: Before they were brought into the pool where would such a car have been licensed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: With the Armadale Board. At that time the money was retained by the board and the Armadale people had to look after their own roads. I am asking that the Armadale-road be brought under the scheme. We have spent a lot of money on it. The work is not finished yet as we intend to give it a bitumen dressing. We do not want it to get into the bad state that it was in before.

Mr. Sampson: The Armadale section is in a very fair state.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But the road on the other side of Armadale is in a shocking state. The member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) has not given any thought to the collection or distribution of the fees or he would not have argued as he has done. The whole reason for pooling was this: previously owners licensed their vehicles in the districts in which they lived. All the big warehouses in the City licensed their cars, lorries, and vans with the City Council and then used their vehicles to cart goods from

the wharves to their warehouses. Their vehicles were used very little within the boundaries of the City Council who collected the money, and practically all the wear fell upon the roads of local authorities who received no portion of the fees. That was considered to be quite unfair.

Hon. G. Taylor: Were there any complaints from the City Council at that time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not then. That principle is kept in mind in distributing the funds. Although those vehicles are owned in the city, they are used on the roads belonging to the various local authorities between Perth and Fremantle, and those local authorities now collect their proportion of the fees.

Mr. Davy: That is quite obvious.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Then if they collect their fees according to the chainage of road, is it not obvious that the money should be spent on such roads? Why should Cottesloe, Claremont, and North Fremantle claim a proportion of the fees paid by a car, wagon or bus owned in Fremantle or Perth on the ground that their roads are used, and then neglect to maintain those roads and spend the money on some other road? Is it not reasonable that when they collect money from the pool in respect of a particular road, it should be spent to keep that road in order?

Mr. Davy: The Bill specifically says the money must be spent to keep the road in order.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: And the hon. member complained of that.

Mr. Davy: No, I did not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The whole case submitted by the hon. member was that it was centralisation; we were going to tell the local authorities they had to spend the money on certain roads.

Mr. Davy: I did not complain of the mention of roads in the measure, but of the reference to expenditure on other specified roads.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That applies to any surplus. Take the local authorities between Perth and Fremantle. The Government constructed the Perth-Fremantle-road and it is maintained out of the pool, but the local authorities collect their proportion on the chainage passing through their respective districts. The local authorities are constantly asking me to declare other roads in their districts to be main roads under the pool so that they

may collect on a chainage basis for those roads out of the pool. Every Sunday and on hot nights there is considerable traffic from Perth to Cottesloe. The traffic turns off the Fremantle-road and goes to the beach via Eric-street, which road is being cut up. The local authorities receive nothing out of the pool in respect to Eric-street, and I have been asked to bring Eric-street under the scheme. There are scores of similar instances. While we keep the Fremantle-road in order, all the funds the local authorities are now getting out of the pool are free from any charge for the upkeep of the Fremantle-road. We say to the local authorities, "There is a surplus in the fund and the money should be spent on this or that subsidiary main road." No doubt some of the local authorities have been inclined to neglect that class of road and to spend the proceeds of the traffic fee on their own little sub-ways. If they are allowed to neglect this class of road, they will probably be approaching the Government to keep it in order.

Mr. Davy: If you order them to spend money on Eric-street, will they have that included in their chainage?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope the Cottesloe Council will not think that I have specially selected them: I am using this merely as an illustration. The chainage on which they are paid is that of the Fremantle-road running through their district, but they do nothing to that road. They do not spend a penny upon it. They are paid from the pool money which has been paid in fees by people outside their own district. As people outside their area are paying into a fund because of the traffic they create on a particular road, the money should be spent on that road. That is the idea underlying the present system and it is only fair and reasonable. I wish this Bill to be treated as a non-party measure. Members on this side of the House are free to criticise it or to vote against it as are members opposite. We want to get the best Bill possible. We will not ask members on this side of the House to be tied to any idea that is contained in it. Members will be free to vote against it as they like. I made a similar statement last session. I hope that although I may oppose any suggested alteration, and may think that the various clauses in the Bill should stand, it will not be argued that this has been treated as a party measure, or that

members on this side of the House are expected to vote with the Government.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Boys of 18 will be all right now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not say they will. I think 19 is too young. I have a son much younger than 19, who can drive a motor car, but I never allow him to drive unless I am sitting alongside him. He is well balanced and is considerably experienced for a boy of his age, but there is no fear of his being allowed to drive alone. It is not a question of quickness of action, but of judgment. The member for West Perth argues that judgment does not enter into it, that it is a question of quickness of movement.

Mr. Davy: In an emergency.

Mr. Mann: Temperament would have a good deal to do with it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot understand from what authority the member for West Perth draws his conclusions. In a case of emergency, such as the stopping or twisting of a car, when quickness of action is required, what is it that prompts a person to do the right thing at the right moment? His brain acts first, and then his foot or his hand will act as is dictated by his brain. It all arises from the driver's judgment. If it did not come from that source, the hand or foot would not work as it should do. The whole thing emanates from the brain.

Mr. Thomson: Automatically a person becomes part of the machine.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is the brain that prompts the man and gives him judgment. Judgment is the whole thing that directs his action.

Mr. Davy: It is not the judgment acquired by age or experience; it is born judgment.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member says judgment does not enter into it. If it does not enter into it a man cannot move either his hand or his foot.

Mr. Mann: Temperament plays a big part.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The main thing is to be a good judge of pace, as to whether a man gets into or out of an accident. He has to judge the other fellow's pace as well as his own.

Mr. Sampson: You cannot beat a lad for a thing like that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Members cannot tell me that a boy of 18 has the

same judgment as a man has. He does not possess the cool head or judgment of a man.

Mr. Mann: You will admit that some people should never be allowed to drive?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. One member argued that it was always in the hands of the authorities not to grant a license. They have to grant a license if a person can show himself to be an efficient driver. They cannot refuse it on the ground that he is temperamentally unfit. They have not dared to do so if he is physically unfit. Take the case of the accident at the Burswood crossing when the charabanc ran into a train. It was found afterwards that the driver was blind in one eye and could hardly see out of the other.

Hon. G. Taylor: Like some politicians.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was stated that the driver always required a passenger with him to direct him and prompt him. The authorities have no power to refuse a license in a case of that sort.

Mr. Thomson: You have provided for that here.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am glad the House realises that something has to be done. When I was in Sydney I learned that the driver of a big charabanc fell dead from heart failure while at the wheel. Fortunately the bus was travelling slowly, and turned into a wall and stopped.

Mr. Sampson: I suppose he was an old man.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He was under 30.

Mr. Thomson: He is more likely to suffer from heart disease than is a boy of 18.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is no power in the Act to prevent the police from giving a license to known bad characters. We are asking for that power in this Bill.

Mr. Davy: Is a known bad character a fit and proper person to be licensed?

The Premier: We know that a girl got into an accident a few months ago.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We frequently see motor cyclists tearing along the road to the seaside at the rate of 50 miles an hour. I do not travel very slowly myself, but when I see these fellows pass me I feel that I am standing still.

The Premier: And they have a wild madness in their eyes.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If it was a question only of considering them I should be prepared to leave them to their

own devices, but we have to consider every-one else on the road.

The Premier: We might compromise with members with regard to boys of 18 years of age if they will limit the age of motor cyclists to 30 or 50.

Mr. Sampson: What about the new roads?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: New roads are being brought into the scheme. We do not want to repeat the experience we had of the Perth-Fremantle road. On three different occasions the Government had to borrow money to reconstruct it. The road was then handed over to the local authorities, who allowed it to be ruined.

Mr. Mann: I do not see any penalty provided in the case of persons who claim to be of the right age, but who have not yet reached it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is already provided, as the hon. member can see by the case that appeared in this evening's paper. The idea of including new roads is that it is essential they should be brought up to date, widened and strengthened. Once they are put into good condition they must be maintained in decent repair. The Main Roads Board is better equipped to look after through roads than the local authorities would be.

Mr. Sampson: Will the amount payable be affected?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The upkeep of the roads will be a first charge on the pool. The only road I am doubtful about is that on the south side of the river. It will have to be reconstructed, because it is in a bad way. It is proposed that if the State raises the money the local authorities can only be charged with half the cost, in the same way as is done in the case of country roads under the Federal scheme.

Mr. Sampson: They would still receive their quota?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The upkeep of the road will be a charge upon the pool before there is any distribution. The distribution will then be made on the chainage basis.

Hon. G. Taylor: What about my suggestion?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As I explained when moving the second reading of the Bill, I discussed the question of penalties very carefully with the Crown Law authorities. The point raised by the hon. member is dealt with in the Act. Power is

asked for in this Bill because there is insufficient power contained in the Act. I asked the Crown Law Department whether it would be possible to provide, instead of fines in the case of persons who knocked others down and left them lying in the road, or who speeded at an excessive rate, or committed other offences, that they should have their licenses cancelled for the time being, or whether we could direct the Bench to suspend the licenses.

Hon. G. Taylor: That would be wise.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Crown Law authorities pointed out that the existing law gives a power as wide as could be given to any bench.

The Premier: You do not get wise benches exercising these wise powers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. If the Bench had power to suspend a license for a month or two, in place of inflicting a fine that is easily paid, it would teach these persons to be more careful in future.

Hon. G. Taylor: My desire was to make this quite clear in the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am in sympathy with the idea of tightening up the law in this respect. If the Bill does not go far enough I shall be pleased to make it stronger, if the hon. member will point out how this can be done. I am pleased with the reception accorded to the Bill. There is plenty of room for difference of opinion. It is an intricate measure, but I feel that the public realise the necessity for tightening up the existing Act and widening the powers already given. I do not propose that the Commissioner of Police shall have authority to distribute the traffic fees, but that he shall have power to control the traffic. This power is vested in the Minister, but Ministers have usually delegated their authority to the Commissioner. In this Bill the Commissioner will be named as the authority to deal with the traffic, not as the authority for distributing the fees.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 4:

Mr. THOMSON: It is provided here that the Commissioner of Police is to be the licensing authority only in the metropolitan

area. In the interpretation it seems to be clear that the local authority is the municipality or the road board, and that the Commissioner of Police is the authority in any outlying land. What is the interpretation of "outlying land"? Is there any land of that description?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Various portions of the State are not included in either a municipality or a road board, though it is true they do not contain many inhabitants. Such portions are called outlying places. Some are situated near Albany and the south coast, some lie towards the South Australian border, and others are to be found in the North-West.

Mr. DAVY: The words "and as the licensing authority therein," referring to the Commissioner of Police, do not at the moment convey anything to my mind.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Wherever the words "local authority" appear, the Commissioner of Police will be the local authority for the metropolitan area; and he will also be the licensing authority for the metropolitan area.

Mr. Davy: Perhaps the word "as" should be "is."

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think the words are all right. The Commissioner of Police will act as both local authority and licensing authority.

Mr. Davy: The words convey nothing to me.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 6:

Mr. THOMSON: Why are the words "or reward" included in the definition of a passenger vehicle? The owners of motor trucks used for the cartage of wheat or firewood may take passengers, not strictly for hire, but in return for the cost of benzine. Would they have to be licensed under this clause?

Mr. SAMPSON: I move an amendment—

That after "reward," line 7, there be inserted "unless special permission in writing is obtained from the Commissioner for some particular occasion."

It may happen that the owner of a motor vehicle usually engaged in carrying goods arranges an odd occasion for the conveyance of a party. In such a case it would be drastic to insist on the payment of the full license fee for a passenger vehicle. My amendment represents a great convenience in sparsely populated districts for the transport of, say, football teams.

Mr. BROWN: I support the amendment. In many small towns motor trucks which during the week are used for commercial purposes are hired for a small fee on Saturday or Sunday to carry footballers or cricketers or the members of a Sunday school picnic. In such cases special permission should be granted on payment of a nominal fee. The drivers are careful, and I have never known of a mishap.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is not necessary to go into the country to see motor lorries used for trips on Sundays. Along Oxford-street on Saturday afternoon and Sunday motor lorries go out to the North Beach with loads of young people. Those lorries belong to firms who permit the use of them for outings.

Mr. Marshall: The driver might be a licensed passenger driver.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: That is not likely to be the case often, because the trucks are used for commercial purposes during the week.

The Premier: We do not want to leave the door too wide open, though.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I agree, but some concession might well be granted.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: In my district farmers and carriers use their motor lorries to take football and cricket teams about for a small fee. They will be debarred from so doing unless the clause is altered. Can the Minister see some way out of the difficulty?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: We stipulate for the authority because serious accidents have been narrowly averted on many occasions. Everyone will remember the accident on Kalamunda Hill.

Mr. Sampson: That was long before there was any legislation on the subject.

The Premier: But the circumstances were similar.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, and that is why we need this legislation. I have seen motor lorries on which the seating accommodation consisted of school forms fastened with a rusty nail or bolt through wood that was absolutely rotten. There was no security for the children; the least jolt might have caused a form to fall off, and on a sharp turn or twist the children were extremely liable to be thrown off. There must be some regulation of this traffic. However, I will give the matter consideration. The object of the measure is to protect life and limb, though we all like to see people get out into the country on holidays.

Mr. TEESDALE: The clause will seriously inconvenience northern towns, where there is but little opportunity for sport. Lately it has been arranged to use motor trucks for the conveyance of cricket and football teams from one town to another. No charge is made beyond the cost of the petrol. As a rule the motor truck proprietors take these trips in turns. Journeys are made from Broome to Derby, and from Port Hedland to Roebourne and Whim Creek, to play matches. The clause, if passed unaltered, would put an end to visits which help to maintain good relations between the towns.

Progress reported.

BILL—INSPECTION OF SCAFFOLDING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [10.2] in moving the second reading said: The Bill seeks to amend the Inspection of Scaffolding Act passed in 1924. That Act was not in operation for long before we found several defects. For instance, hon. members will recollect that when the Act was introduced, it provided that all scaffoldings should come within the scope of the legislation irrespective of height. An amendment was inserted by the Legislative Council limiting scaffolds to those over 8ft. from the horizontal base. That is where the first trouble crept in. The argument was as to what was the horizontal base? The question was debated at length when the measure was before us but the Legislative Council insisted upon the inclusion of their provision. No one thought for a moment that under that provision there could be erected three-storey buildings, without having scaffolds 8ft. from the horizontal base. Yet that has been done. It has been accomplished by erecting the wall over-hand until the workmen get up a bit, and then small scaffolds are placed on the joists of the floor and the building is constructed from the inside. By this means contractors have been able to construct three-storey buildings without having scaffolds 8ft. from the horizontal base. In such instances, the horizontal base is taken from the joists, and not from the ground.

Hon. G. Taylor: The intention was that the height should be from the ground.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so. Not only is this unfair to the workmen,

but also to the employer who desires to give protection and safety to his men. By resorting to these tactics, such contractors save inspection fees at the expense of their men who have to run considerable risks. It has been ascertained by inspectors that some very defective floor joists have been used upon which the scaffolds have been erected. In one instance there was a deflection of 1 inches, owing to the presence of gum vein in the timber, when the weight of the men was put on it. The inspector had no power to interfere and no alteration could be effected. The Bill provides a definition of "horizontal base" in order to overcome this difficulty and thus prevent joists from being taken as the base. The existing Act provides that outside the metropolitan area it is limited to buildings of over one storey in height. No doubt Parliament intended to exclude ordinary cottages and one-storey buildings. Now we find, however, that one-storey buildings reach considerable heights. There are picture theatres, churches, wheel bins, and many other buildings in the country districts, running up to scores of feet. Yet they are one-storey erections only. Church spires are built to a height of any thing from 40 to 60 feet.

Mr. Sampson: Then there are motor garages, too.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, all kinds of buildings that run up to a great height. To give hon. members a definite instance, I would draw attention to a wheel bin that has been erected at Northam. It is a one-storey erection only. When the scaffolding inspector was at Northam, he looked at the scaffold and declared it to be absolutely dangerous. He had no power to interfere. Had one of the workmen fallen he would have been hurled from a height of 30 feet. The inspector approached the contractor and at his suggestion the contractor agreed to strengthen the scaffold. The fact remains that the inspector had no power to order him to do it. Everyone will admit that in these days some one-storey buildings may reach a greater height than buildings of two or three storeys.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: We thought the provision would refer to buildings of from 1 to 12 feet in height.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Bill provides for anything over 15 feet, and think that is reasonable.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: So do I.

Mr. Davy: Which clause deals with that point?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Clause 2. The definition of "horizontal base" is the same as that included in the New South Wales Act. South Australia has abolished any reference to height at all. I could not hold out hope of getting any such provision through Parliament, and the proposal set out in the Bill, it cannot be denied, is a reasonable proposition. The height is to be taken from the ground level. A case was brought under my notice to-day in which a man in my own electorate was working on the second floor of an hotel building. They were using the joists as the horizontal base and as the scaffold did not come within the provisions of the Act the scaffolding inspector could not interfere. The man fell through the rafters but saved himself by means of his arms. That man is in the hospital still. In view of these instances, the proposal embodied in the Bill must be regarded as a reasonable one. We have discovered another system that has been adopted. In order to get over the requirements of the Act that an application must be made for an inspection of scaffolding that comes within the scope of the Act, some contractors are endeavouring to have work carried out without any scaffolding at all. In such circumstances the workmen are compelled to run more risks than if scaffolds were used. We have had brought to our notice the fact that painters working on a four-storey building have had to walk along a ledge not more than five inches wide and hang on with one hand while painting with the other. The least slip, and death awaited them. However, there was no power to interfere, because there was no scaffolding at all. We ask that when the inspector sees men working under such dangerous conditions he shall be empowered to order that scaffolding be erected and that the work cease until the conditions are made safe. In another instance—I am ashamed to admit it occurred on a Government building—a plumber was sent to repair the guttering on a four-storey building. No scaffolding was provided, and he had to climb over the roof, slide down a very steep place and hang on to the guttering while he repaired it, without any provision whatever being made for his safety. Again we had no right to interfere. Those methods are merely adopted with a view to getting round the Act. Then there was another

case. In Hay-street four men were called upon to work from the roof of a verandah, the verandah acting as scaffolding. The verandah collapsed, with the result that one man fractured his skull and died.

Mr. Mann: Was there not a case at one of the racecourses?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, I have that in mind.

Hon. G. Taylor: Did that verandah accident happen since the Act was passed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. One of the men died as the result of that collapse. It is because of these things that we require power for the inspector to order the erection of scaffolding.

Mr. Mann: In that accident at the racecourse, I understood the inspector saw the scaffolding and passed it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is not so. However, I had better not discuss that accident, since it is still under consideration with a view to legal action being taken.

Mr. Davy: Is it made clear that the inspector can order safety measures to be taken other than the erection of scaffolding?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Well if it is not scaffolding, it comes under the heading of "gear."

Mr. Davy: You quoted the example of the plumber on the roof. In such an instance it might be absurd to have to erect scaffolding.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, it would not be a case for scaffolding; they would fix up gear, such as a bosun's chair. Also we are asking permission to apply the Act to excavations for building purposes. In Subiaco a big basement was being taken out for a two-storey building. The scaffolding erected for the men to work on was built of pickets from a fence; old, rotten jarrah, all cracked and split from the nail holes. The thing collapsed, fortunately when the men were not there. At present there is no power to compel the erection of scaffolding in these excavations, and so we are asking for that power in the Bill. I am bringing the Bill forward simply because these matters are urgent. All that the Bill does is to rectify defects we have discovered, the rectification of which I believe to be in accordance with the ideas of members when they passed the Act. I am not asking for a number of things I had in the original Bill, things that failed to get through Par-

liament. Each of the things I am asking for, I really think was intended by members when the original Bill was passed. One other provision, making for the smooth working of the Act, we are asking for. It is that when local authorities grant building permits, they shall send along notice to the chief inspector, so that he may be aware of the proposed buildings. A lot of the local authorities are doing that now, but we want to make it compulsory. It will save having inspectors running around looking for buildings, for they will know exactly where the buildings are going on.

Mr. Thomson: In the country, I understand, the architects' division attends to this inspection.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, when the original Bill was introduced, a promise was made to the House that it would not involve a new department. In accordance with that, the architects' division are doing a great deal of the work; and only two inspectors have been appointed for the whole State. Expenses have been kept down to the minimum. I think the provisions of the Bill will commend themselves to the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. G. Taylor, debate adjourned.

BILL—TRUST FUNDS INVESTMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Shipping Ordinance Amendment.

2, Legitimation Act Amendment.

Received from the Council.

House adjourned at 10.18 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 14th September, 1926.

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

QUESTION—MINERS' PHTHISIS, COMPENSATION.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS asked the Chief Secretary: 1, How many men are precluded for tubercular reasons from further mining work under the Miners' Phthisis Act? 2, How many are receiving compensation from the State in the following categories—(a) Half wages through being single; (b) half wages through being widowers; (c) Half wages and other remuneration for dependants? 3, Is it a fact that some excluded men in receipt of State compensation, are also receiving the Commonwealth old age pension, and as a result are subject to an equivalent reduction from State compensation? 4, If so, how many? 5, Are those in receipt of old age pensions subject to restrictions as to the amount of property they may own, and moneys they may earn? If so, will the Government rectify this, and pay afflicted men full State compensation thus enabling them to cease drawing Commonwealth pensions without suffering financial loss? 6, What is the total amount of compensation paid by the State to exclude T.B. miners to—(a) 30th June, 1926; (b) 31st August, 1926? 7, What liability to the 31st August, 1926, has the State escaped by deducting the amount of Federal pension from compensation promised to afflicted men?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, 119. 2, (a) 20, (b) 2, (c) 38. 3, Yes, but