

the river, so as to have a complete circle in the event of a breakdown. Thus we shall be able to supply Fremantle or the city from either side of the river and meet any emergency.

Mr. Davy: Can you see a sufficient supply if we get half a million of people in the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The engineers have prepared an interesting chart. They anticipate that within 40 years we shall have to tap every one of the little streams between Perth and the Murray River at Pinjarra, and build reservoirs right along the hills, in order to provide an adequate supply for the city.

Hon. G. Taylor: I shall be pleased to see that work completed.

The Minister for Lands: That will be an opportunity for some of the young ones.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When the new hills supply was turned on I told the public that the Engineer-in-Chief was investigating the possibility of training some of the water that now overflows Mundaring weir back into the Canning or Wongong catchments. Surveyors are or shortly will be in the field to investigate that scheme. The Engineer-in-Chief is satisfied that that end of the hills is rather over-reservoired for the quantity of water supplied while the Mundaring end is rather under-reservoired. If the water that now overflows the weir could be trained back the other way the Canning and Wongong catchments would hold it, and thus we could impound a great quantity that now overflows the weir and runs to waste.

Mr. Thomson: Have you a report from the Engineer-in-Chief as to raising the height of Mundaring weir?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No engineer in the department will stand that scheme.

Mr. Thomson: Not even the new Engineer-in-Chief?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know whether Mr. Stileman has examined it, but not one of the other engineers approves of it. We could get more water from Mundaring weir if we had a bigger pipe, but I think it would be wise to look for fresh sources of supply and leave the Mundaring supply for the agricultural districts. We do not want to see so much water running over the weir to waste, and if effect

can be given to Mr. Stileman's scheme, a lot of the overflow will be saved.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.52 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 11th November, 1926.

	PAGE
Bills: Metropolitan Market, personal explanation, 2s	2109
Road Districts Act Amendment, 2s. ...	2114
Special Lease (Esperance Pine Plantation), 2s. ...	2118
Reserves (No. 2), Com. Report ...	2120
Adjournment ...	2120

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

BILL—METROPOLITAN MARKET.

Personal Explanation.

HON. H. J. YELLAND (East) [4.35]: Under Standing Order 383 I wish to make a personal explanation concerning my remarks on the Bill. I had referred to the fact that the Producers' Markets had raised the charges from 5 per cent. to 7½ per cent. on the sale of products. I intended to convey the statement that the Producers' Markets had, in conjunction with other produce merchants, agreed to raise the cost from 5 per cent. to 7½ per cent. Because I did not make myself clear I feel I have in some way placed the Producers' Markets in a wrong light. My explanation makes it clear that the Producers' Markets were not responsible for the raising of the charges, but this had been done in conjunction with the other produce merchants, all of whom agreed to this with one exception.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 9th November.

HON. J. E. DODD (South) [4.36]: The Bill is long overdue. It will help to provide facilities for the people, and tend to bring the producers and consumers to-

gether. If it had been introduced before the Primary Products Bill last year, we should have been much further ahead. It is better to establish markets first, and afterwards consider what may be necessary. There is not about this Bill the same compulsion as there was about the Primary Products Bill, which contained provisions for the compulsory acquisition of produce and the compulsory prohibition of the use of the railways against some of the taxpayers. I stated then that the measure was on Soviet lines, and I have no reason for departing from that view. It was undoubtedly a Soviet measure. The Bill before us is quite different. The market is to be managed by a trust, some members of which will be nominated and some appointed. The trust will comprise five members. I should prefer to have three, one to represent the producers, one the consumers, and one the Government. That would be better than five members. I cannot understand the opposition to the consumers being given representation on the trust. Surely they are as much entitled to consideration as the producers. The producers send their goods in, and the consumers buy them. Their interests are such that both should have representation. If there are to be five members on the trust I should prefer to see two representing the producers, seeing that two others will be appointed by the Government. I prefer trust control to City Council control, although I have nothing to say against the City Council. The councillors are doing splendid work, for which they receive more kicks than halfpence. The trust is a State-wide affair. It will deal with produce from practically all over Western Australia. The market ought not to be in the hands of the City Council. I find it somewhat difficult to understand the attitude of many members towards the Bill. In the past I have drawn attention to the socialistic opinions of many members of this Chamber. For the life of me I cannot understand by what subtle use of language members can say that the State Insurance Bill is a State trading concern, and that this particular Bill is not. If members can enlighten me as to the difference between them, I shall be much obliged. Members are supporting this Bill whole-heartedly, and yet the vital principle in it is one that involves State trading.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Only some members are supporting it; not all.

Hon. J. E. DODD: Under Clause 11, a trust may establish and maintain a public market, which will be used for the sale and storage of fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, poultry, eggs, butter and other dairy produce, grain, hay, chaff, straw, etc. Surely nothing can be plainer than that this is State trading. The only difference will be that the market will be administered by a trust instead of the political head of the Government.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is the only difference.

Hon. J. E. DODD: To some extent the Bill establishes a monopoly, though it does not go the whole length in this direction. It provides that no trader can come into the markets, so that the trust will have a pretty fair run.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It is the function of the City Council to do all that.

Hon. J. E. DODD: I am often mystified concerning members' opinions upon these matters. I do not know by what stretch of imagination it can be argued that State insurance is State trading, and that this marketing business is something else. I am beginning to think that the functions of government are to clear the ring and see that justice is done to all. I have been inclined to look at things in that light all my life. It seems to me, however, this cannot always be done. There is an irresistible public opinion which sometimes forces Parliament into doing something that may not always be in the best interests of the people. Conservatives, as a rule, argue against State trading, on the ground that it sets up a form of State monopoly and comes in competition with other trade. The extreme socialist is opposed to State trading because he calls it State capitalism. The Bill is commended because it will bring the producer and the consumer more closely together. It will also eliminate some of the middlemen.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It will not eliminate any middlemen.

Hon. J. E. DODD: I think so, when it comes into operation. I shall support it at the second reading.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.45]: I am glad that the Bill has been introduced for it is long overdue. The present system is inconvenient and very extravagant. The provision of central markets will mean

tremendous saving, for the existing system means so much economic waste. For many years some people have been doing their utmost to secure the establishment of central markets. While the kerbstone markets were established and did something towards bringing the producers and consumers closer together, much more could have been done had central markets been provided. By the latter means the facilities so necessary for the control and distribution of produce, can be provided. I hope that the Bill will become law with perhaps a few slight amendments. I trust, too, that the ordinary practice regarding market buildings will be carried out. Should an hon. member visit markets in other cities, he will find that they are merely shells, and that is all that is necessary. If a large amount is spent upon the construction of elaborate buildings, the capital cost and the charges levied will be so heavy that they will militate against the effective working of the institution. Reference was made to the action of the Scaddan Government in purchasing a valuable block of land with a view to establishing markets. It has been said that that action resulted in holding up this matter for a long period. It may have had that effect some time back, but no such consideration has applied during recent years. Certainly that has not stood in the way. The kerbstone markets, so it has been asserted, have done much to assist the producers. That has been the result to a certain extent, for the markets started off very well. To-day, however, a large percentage of those who occupy stalls there are not producers at all, but are merely dealers. Gradually, but surely the producers are going out of it, and the dealers are slipping into their places and remaining there. The practice is followed of going to the other markets and purchasing all classes of produce, which are taken back to the kerbstone markets for sale, and the dealers are doing well out of the business. That is not to the benefit of the producers or the consumers as has been suggested. Mr. Cornell said that both the City Council and past Governments had been dilatory in the establishment of city markets. The Governments in office 10 or 15 years ago could have been accused of being dilatory, because they did not take the matter seriously. Governments in office during the past nine years, however, cannot be accused similarly, because they have done their best to secure the establishment of central markets. To-day there is an agitation for the control to be vested in the City Coun-

cil. At one time I felt that that was the proper course to pursue, but from the experience I have gained from the actions of the City Council over a number of years, I am not now at all sympathetic towards their desires. Had the City Council desired, and had they been sincere in their desire, the markets would have been established years ago.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: But the Bill was thrown out.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That was last year, but in years previously the City Council had every opportunity to establish the markets.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: It was essential that something should be done to back up the City Council and that backing was not forthcoming.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I like that! The City Council had their opportunity, with all the backing that was necessary.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: That is wrong.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Before I have finished I shall prove that my statement is not wrong. But before I deal with that phase, I would like to point out that central markets should not be confounded with facilities necessary for controlling exports. I hope no attempt will be made to work the two sections of the business together. The central markets will be established in the city, but facilities for export purposes should be established, together with cold storage provisions and so on, at the various convenient ports, wherever they may be. If we attempt to combine the two sections, it will result in a great deal of unnecessary expense and unnecessary trouble. Some reference has been made to the appointment of a select committee to consider the whole question. The Bill is an important one and it is now late in the session. I cannot see that any additional information could be obtained if a select committee were appointed. I have heard no valid reasons that would warrant the reference of the Bill to a select committee. Such a body would not have time to complete their inquiries before the close of the session and I cannot see that any good would come of such a course being adopted, nor can I see any new ground that a select committee could break. Mr. Macfarlane declared I was not correct in saying that the City Council had had opportunities long ago to establish central markets. For the benefit of hon. members I will deal at some length with the history of this proposition and will refer to indis-

putable facts. On the 5th March, 1917, the then Government agreed to the municipalisation of city markets. Nine years have elapsed since then.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: The war was in progress then.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: But at the latter period we were well out of the war.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: You are out of it by a long way.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The position was that the City Council were asked to submit proposals to the Government.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: We submitted them.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I was the Minister in charge of the Agricultural Department at the time, and I say that the City Council did not submit proposals.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: We were dealing with the Premier then, and not with the Minister.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Not during the whole of that period.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Yes, during the whole of that time. We were asking for a Bill.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No mention of a Bill was made during the five years I was in the position of Minister for Agriculture.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: I can quote the Premier's remarks.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Although the Government agreed to the municipalisation of the markets, and asked the City Council to formulate proposals, no such proposals were forthcoming. On the other hand, the City Council appointed a special committee to go into the question. Several requests were made to the City Council for information, but nothing satisfactory was forthcoming. At the beginning of 1918—the Government were eager to establish the markets and were anxious to get something definite—I, as Minister, instructed the Under Secretary for Agriculture to communicate with the City Council and ask for definite proposals. The usual type of reply came along, setting out that the council had appointed a committee and expected to be able to reply within a month or so. On the 18th March, another letter was sent and on the 23rd of that month the council replied, getting away from their usual stereotyped communication. The council informed us they had difficulty in getting information. That difficulty was

probably a financial one owing to the war, but at that time the Government would have assisted the council in that direction.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: The Government were more hard up than the council at that time!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: On the contrary the Government would have found the money to enable the City Council to establish markets. That aspect had not been lost sight of, and the Government were prepared to assist the council because they realised that public bodies had difficulty in raising funds at that time.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: The council did not want money then; they wanted an Act of Parliament.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Why did they not ask for it?

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: They did.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Not during the three-year period I have referred to.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: I will produce the correspondence to show that they did.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: In July, 1918, a large deputation waited upon the Minister and a reply was furnished that the markets were badly needed, that for years past the City Council had been considering the position, but did not appear to be any further ahead with the proposition than during the preceding years. The reply of the Minister showed that the Government were feeling piqued, because nothing definite had been done. In July, 1919, a rather warmly worded letter was sent to the council and read as follows:—

I am directed to point out that an extremely long period has been taken up by the council in considering the matter and the Government have no information as to the stage that has been reached, except that obtained from a newspaper report of a discussion which took place. A perusal of that discussion does not indicate that the matter has reached a stage in any way approaching finality. The Minister desires to point out that the establishment of suitable and up-to-date markets is now a very urgent necessity for the community.

That letter was sent because of the discussion that had been reported in the Press, copies of which can be obtained by hon. members. Again, on the 15th September, a letter was sent to the council regarding the position. That will indicate to hon. members that the department were constantly communicating with the City Council and asking for information. The reply obtained was that the matter was still under consideration. On

the 20th October a further letter was sent to the council and on that occasion we asked when definite information might be expected. The council replied on the 24th October and indicated that they hoped that a report from the special committee would be submitted within a month or so. Does that show that the council had taken up the matter seriously? Hon. members will agree that it does not. On the 4th November, 1919, the council discussed the question and Councillor Mills moved—

That the establishment of produce markets under municipal control is an imperative necessity, and that the Markets Committee be instructed to give effect to this resolution.

That bears out what I have stated. One of the councillors himself realised how dilatory the council had been, and he moved a straightforward motion that was to the point, and urged the council to take action to establish markets. The motion, however, was regarded as a slight upon the special committee that had been labouring for two years without result. One would have thought that the council would either have supported Councillor Mills or taken some action. On the other hand the motion was defeated. The reason was that it was considered to amount to a vote of no-confidence in the special committee. The council had got nothing from the select committee for two years and yet they could regard such a motion as a vote of no-confidence! Time for action was long overdue and the council should have taken the matter out of the hands of the committee and acted themselves, or else appointed a new committee to give effect to the desire of councillors.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: What about the Government who appointed representatives to confer with delegates from the council?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That happened later on. At that time the matter was brought under the notice of the department and the Minister responsible forwarded the following communication:—

I quite agree with Councillor Mills that the council have been very slow in their efforts. That body would be among the first to condemn any Government under similar circumstances, but I know of no matter of urgency that has been delayed by Government departments as long as this matter by the council.

I shall supplement that by saying that had the Government had this matter in hand, the City Council would have been the first to use the whip because of the delays, and the council would have been justified.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The council asked for a Bill from the Crown Law Department.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That was long after this stage. Over 2½ years had passed and it was apparent that there was no hope of anything being done. Following upon that, a further communication was sent in December, 1919, and on the 12th December a reply was received from the council saying that they were not yet in a position to advise the Government as to what action would be taken. The answer that came read to this effect, "Not yet in a position to reply." Two and a half months passed and still there was nothing done. On the 16th February, 1920, another letter was sent and again there was the same reply. It looked as if the reply had been stereotyped. Still again, on the 31st May, the City Council were communicated with and once again came the reply couched in exactly similar terms. Our patience was exhausted. As a matter of fact I wrote a minute which appears on the file and which reads, "These replies have exhausted my patience." Was it any wonder? And they had declared that they were the right people to control markets! For a long period of years I hoped against hope regarding the establishment of central markets. Numerous efforts were made to induce the City Council to move in the matter. They were given every chance, but all they did was to back and fill the whole of the time. It was the most disappointing thing I ever had anything to do with during the whole of my period in office, extending over three years.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: What were the years?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: From 1917 on.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: I will get some information for you.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The opinions I have expressed are from the records. I carefully kept a copy of them.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: You were not working in harmony with your Premier at the time.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: This matter was entirely in my hands. Sir Henry Lefroy was Premier and I was working in complete harmony with him.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: I was referring to Sir James Mitchell, not to Sir Henry Lefroy.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: This matter was dealt with by me for a considerable time before Sir James Mitchell took over. Had

the City Council taken advantage of the position as it stood when the National Ministry was in office under Sir Henry Lefroy, central markets would have been established. The City Council, however, preferred to fool about with the matter and they made no serious attempt to bring it to finality. I was at that time very sympathetic towards the establishment of markets under municipal control, but as time has gone on, and with the experience I have gained, I have changed my views and I feel now that the City Council, in control of such an institution, would be acting as representatives of the city of Perth only. This is a matter that concerns not only the consumers, but the producers and all the taxpayers of the State. My opinion now is that markets should be controlled by a trust appointed by the Government. The scales will be held equally by a trust and no favour will be shown to any body. Regarding the interests of those outside the metropolitan area, I have been inundated with letters and telegrams asking that I should not support municipal control. I have a big pile of communications and only one out of the total number favours control by the City Council. That one letter came from the Housewives' Association.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It shows how all your letters were inspired.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: The Housewives' Association are pretty good judges.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I suppose so, from their own standpoint. They reside within the city limits.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The less you say about those letters, the better.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Not one producer is in favour of control by the municipality; all have asked me to do my utmost, firstly, to endeavour to have the Bill passed, and secondly, to on no account assist to give control to the City Council. The contention is that the Government of the day should have control. I intend to do all in my power to have that control vested in a trust appointed by the Government. Regarding the Bill itself, there are one or two alterations that I would like to see made, in order to secure a little more representation for the producers. I will do my utmost to bring that about. I hope the Bill will become law and that no time will be lost in the establishment of markets, which mean so much for the community.

HON. SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [5.7]: After listening to the various speeches made on the second reading of the Bill, I feel I cannot do otherwise than sympathise with the views of the various speakers. With the conflicting statements that have been made, it is exceedingly difficult for me to arrive at a conclusion. I am one of those who hold the opinion that a municipality should have control of all such concerns within the municipal surroundings. The members of a municipality are elected by the people.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Elected by some of the people.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Yes, but the best people. Therefore, those who are elected should represent the opinions of the ratepayers and should be given control over the various utilities in the municipality. I am of the opinion that a municipal body should control not only an institution such as markets, but also trams. The members of the municipal council are elected by the people and if they are not fit to conduct public institutions such as markets and trams, it is better that the municipalities should be wiped out of existence, and control handed over to a trust. But whilst we have a municipality we should at least entrust to the councillors the destinies of the municipal surroundings. Municipal councillors are elected annually, and if they do not perform their work satisfactorily the ratepayers can remove them. It should be possible to elect a good and representative body, almost as good, it might be said, as we have in the Legislative Council, because they are elected in the same way by the people.

Hon. E. H. Gray: No, there is plural voting in connection with the municipality.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: As I did not quite catch the uncalled for interjection, the hon. member can spare himself the trouble of interjecting. The councillors are elected for a period and there should be no difficulty about securing a class of man capable of discharging the duties of the municipality in a satisfactory manner. If a municipal council fails in this respect, the best thing to do is to wipe it out of existence. We come to the alternative proposal in the Bill, and that is the appointment of a trust. A trust, if properly constituted, is an excellent body, but we have to compare the trust with a municipal council. One is

nominated and the other is elected. Whenever the Government are running a concern, no matter what the nature of it may be, they experience great difficulty in controlling those who are employed in it. I can quote a case in point. A man had been doing unsatisfactory work and he was dismissed. To use the language of the person who dismissed him, there was the very devil to pay; there was no end of trouble. The unions asked that the man should be reinstated. Representatives of other bodies also urged the dismissed man's reinstatement and generally there was such a fuss made that eventually the man was reinstated. When the officer in charge did reinstate the individual he said to him, "You may have your wages every week but don't go near the work; there will be less trouble and I do not want to have any more bother." That is how a Government concern is carried on. Under the existing regime I do not think anyone dare dismiss or suspend an individual. With regard to the proposed trust I should like to know how it is to be constituted. The Government would not be loyal to their people unless they nominated some of their own supporters; they certainly would not be regarded as loyal if they did not adopt that course. However good or well-intentioned the nominees might be, there would be trouble similar to that I have just mentioned. They dare not suspend or dismiss any man connected with Labour. In the circumstances I fear that the trust would prove almost as troublesome as if it were a Government. Whilst my inclinations are to vote for the municipality having control of the markets, I am confronted with the fact that I have had no end of letters from all parts of the country stating that the writers do not wish to have anything to do with the City Council. I know nothing about marketing arrangements, and therefore have to be guided by the advice I receive from other people. I feel I cannot disregard those letters. In the circumstances, what am I to do? A select committee has been suggested, and I believe that would be the better way to settle the question. I listened to what Mr. Dodd said this afternoon about the markets being a State trading concern, but I am afraid that his arguments to-day are not as convincing as usual. I utterly failed to see the analogy. Mr. Baxter put up so many arguments on the other side as to lead me

to the belief that there is only one way of settling the question, namely by a select committee.

Hon. E. H. Gray: A select committee would settle it all right.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: That interjection relieves me of any hesitation in voting for a select committee. The question is important in many ways. I believe it affects cold storage and various other descriptions of business. Therefore a decision should not be arrived at too hastily; the matter should be carefully considered. With these remarks I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill, and I shall support the reference of the measure to a select committee if that course is suggested.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [5.19]: I hope that the second reading of the Bill will be carried and that the measure will be amended in Committee. I favour the control of the markets by a trust, but I do not favour such a trust as proposed by Clause 3. I hope that in Committee members will agree to two producers being on the trust, those producers to be nominated by the organisation. Provision should also be made that upon the death or retirement of either of those members the organisation should have the right to nominate his successor. I care not what Government may be in power, the same argument applies: Government supporters are appointed to those positions. We had an illustration of that in connection with the Fremantle Harbour Trust, on which the producers had a representative in the person of the late Mr. Basil Murray. When that gentleman passed away, the position should have been filled by another representative of the primary producers. Instead of that being done, I understand a person having no interest in primary production was appointed to the vacancy.

Hon. E. H. Gray: He is an excellent representative.

Hon. G. W. MILES: He may be, but the interests supposed to be represented on such a trust should be represented there at all times. Country members have stated that they have received letters from various organisations urging them to obtain two representatives of primary production on the trust, but, failing that, to accept the Bill as it is. Certainly the Honorary Minister is

in a happier position on this Bill than the Chief Secretary was with regard to the State Insurance Bill, Mr. Drew being compelled to ask for "the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill." Representatives of the Country Party have not handled the present Bill well in the interests of primary production. On top of this we have the manager of the Westralian Farmers' Ltd. writing to the Press in the same strain. I never heard of such methods before. People not interested in primary production have agreed that the organisations of the primary producers should be represented on the markets trust, and yet we have Country Party members reading out letters to the effect that if they cannot get what they want, they should take the Bill as it stands. I support the second reading, but I shall do my best to see that the representatives of organisations are nominated by those organisations.

On motion by Hon. E. Rose, debate adjourned.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 9th November.

HON. SIR WILLIAM LATHLAIN (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.23]: I do not intend to speak at great length on this Bill, because I feel that my attitude on it is explained by the amendments of which I have given notice. I do trust, however, that members will give the measure their most serious consideration. It involves some vital principles, and indirectly may exercise an important influence on the future of the State. If the Bill is passed as printed, it will mean a complete alteration in the franchise for both road districts and municipalities. As regards Clause 4, I intend to move the inclusion of the lessee or tenant of endowment lands, the definition not being as clear as it might be. In the vicinity of Perth there are various endowment lands, and whilst the lessees perhaps may be exempt, it is the desire of those in whose districts the endowment lands are situated that the tenants, at all events, should be rated. When one realises the enormous amount of property exempt from rating in the City itself, and also in the various municipalities, one does not wonder that the rating is fre-

quently so high. Take, for instance, a place like Claremont, where a considerable proportion of the lands are exempt from rating because the district contains so many educational and other public establishments. Clause 9 deals with an important phase of the existing system relating to road boards. I approve of the chairman of a road board being termed its president, and of the board itself being termed a district council, because we should give these positions all the dignity possible in order to induce men of a higher calibre to take up the honorary work involved. Everyone realises the splendid work which has been done by the local governing bodies. Speaking in another connection, I gave instances bearing on that aspect. Clause 9 contains a drastic proposal that the whole of the councillors shall retire upon one fixed date. This, in my opinion, would not be in the best interests of local self-government. Certainly, such a proposal would not be regarded as in the best interests of a private business, and why it should be brought forward at this particular juncture in connection with municipal government I am at a loss to know. The work of a road board is on exactly the same lines as the running of a business, and what would be the result if in a large business—my own or any other—the whole of the employees were discharged upon one day? In the case of a municipality or road board the only person remaining would be the salaried officer, either the town clerk or the secretary. At the election quite possibly not one member of the previous council might be re-elected. Some political cry might be raised, with the result that all the old members would disappear. I have here a letter from the chairman of the Claremont Road Board giving emphatic reasons for the rejection of Subclauses 1, 2 and 3 of Clause 9. The letter reads:—

In furtherance of the interview with you regarding the Road Districts Act Amendment Bill, I would like to emphasise the need for the deletion of Subclauses (1), (2) and (3) of Clause 9, dealing with duration of councils. If this system is introduced, whereby all the members of a district council go out of office at the same time, it will lead to chaos, and the effect of no continuity of policy would be disastrous to the work of any board or council, as it is absolutely impossible for local governing bodies to satisfactorily finalise their work by a fixed date to suit an election. In support of this I would like to give an instance from my own experience which will prove the need for the retention of some of the members from year to year, as under the present system. For

some time previous to March last my board had been busy arranging schedules and advertising its intention to raise certain loans, and by the time the annual elections came round I was well advanced in negotiations for the required amount, which eventually I obtained on terms of advantage to my board, and of course to the ratepayers concerned. Had we been working under the proposed new system, and the general clear-out and election, on the one-man-one-vote principle, had taken place just then, the whole of the work in connection with these loans would have had to be done over again, and—to say nothing of all the extra work for the staff—I venture to say such favourable terms could not have been obtained. If, as proposed under the power sought, a new board or council is elected every third year it will mean an enormous amount of extra work for the secretary and his staff, and, judging by those of my own board, they are already overworked. I think I am safe in saying that almost without exception the present system has worked wonderfully well, and I can see no sane reason for the change to something that has no sound argument to back it up; without, of course, it is intended by triennial elections on the one-man-one-vote principle to get party politics controlling local government bodies; and if that is the move behind the change, I feel sure that almost every road board in the State will support the Metropolitan Local Government Association in the request that the Legislative Council will delete those portions of the amending Bill whereby such power is sought.

I urge members to take a serious view of the Bill because, if it be passed in its present form, it will eventually be made to embrace the whole of the municipalities. Like certain other members of the House, I claim to have given very long service to municipalities, and I say the Bill as it stands will be disastrous to the general working of a municipality, and to the carrying out of any schemes by the local authority. After all, the general success of a local authority is largely due to its continuity of policy. Only at the end of his first three years of service is a member of a road board or municipal council beginning to learn the A B C of the work.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Then he has no trouble in getting back again.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: That may be so, but I should not like to take the risk of discharging the whole of my employees on one day and chance getting them back again. That is what is proposed in the Bill. A man has to keep his seat on a local authority for some considerable time before he can be of very much use. One important fact has to be remembered, namely, that a local authority cannot carry out the things it would like to do, but only those things it is permitted by the Act to do. There is a

very great difference there. Clause 37, and others, apply to the franchise. This is one more attempt to reduce the franchise, and if successful it will eventually become operative within the municipalities and the city areas. I believe in every man having fair representation, and I say that men and women in Western Australia get as fair representation both on road boards and on municipal councils, as is afforded in other parts of Australia. Some will say the franchise is on a lower basis in some of the other States. I say the tone of the representation also in those other States, more particularly in Queensland and New South Wales, is on a very much lower plane than it is in Western Australia.

Hon. E. H. Gray: What about the Old Country?

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I have not been there, so I cannot say. In Western Australia we have had clean municipal life, which is something to be proud of. The Bill will reduce it to the level of some of the Eastern States. For the past 10 or 15 years there has scarcely been a period in the municipal life of New South Wales without disturbance, without some charge of bribery or corruption.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The charges have never been proved.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: No, they have been on such a gigantic scale as to be difficult to prove. Municipal life in Western Australia has always been clean, and I hope it will ever remain so. The existing franchise has given general satisfaction to those who are thrifty and have established homes here, and also to those who have to pay large amounts in rates and taxes. I hope the House will seriously consider the position, for I regard the Bill as the forerunner of others that will eventually include municipalities and bring us down to the lower level of municipalities existing in some of the other States. I have here a request from the Metropolitan Local Government Association, which comprises the whole of the local authorities within the metropolitan area. However, let me say I care not from whom such requests may come, I will put forward only such amendments as I myself approve. I am not here to be dictated to by any organisation whatever, and I will endeavour to have carried out only what I believe to be in the best interests of the State and of the local authorities. The provision in the Bill giving greater

powers to local authorities is one I heartily approve of. In a number of road board districts there is a desire to amalgamate the several sporting bodies in one common playing enclosure. Such a combination, I think, will give greater satisfaction at a lesser cost to the people of the district. At Narrogin, I understand, splendid work has been done in this respect. If a municipality or a road board is prepared to afford assistance in this direction, it should have the power to do so. Other schemes are contemplated, some of which I cannot approve. We have the Workers' Homes Board, and if we are to give local authorities power to erect homes for their own employees, we must also empower them to erect homes for the whole of the people in their districts. Why should the employees of any local authority be given greater consideration than is given to the people who pay the taxes? In some of the clauses the Minister takes to himself considerable powers. In Clause 57, for instance, if the Minister makes a valuation that does not exceed the valuation made by the Commissioner of Taxation, the Minister's valuation cannot be overridden by a local court. Clearly, the Minister desires power to override the local court. However, this and other provisions can be dealt with in Committee. In the meantime I will support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

BILL—SPECIAL LEASE (ESPERANCE PINE PLANTATION)

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th November.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [5.43]: I will support the second reading. It must be gratifying to the Government and to the House that this company should be about to start operations. The public are becoming seized of the possibilities of pine plantations, and a large amount of money has gone out of the State to be invested in schemes of this nature in New Zealand. Huge areas of land in Western Australia, notably in the Great Southern district, are eminently suited to this purpose. However, I rose to suggest—if I may do so—that this is an opportune time to use prisoners for afforestation. If I am in order in doing so, I seriously suggest that it

is one of the activities upon which prison labour might well be employed. A large number of people in the Labour movement have an instinctive objection to the employment of prison labour. This has grown up in the course of years owing to prisoners in the olden days, kept under bad and even cruel conditions and subjected to severe discipline, having been allowed to compete with workers in various industries. We in this State have adopted fairly advanced prison legislation. Since I have been a member of a visiting committee, I have been brought into close touch with the prisons, and I say emphatically that although we have up-to-date legislation, it is of no avail. Members and the public pride themselves upon the humane treatment meted out to prisoners, but I maintain that the present system is absolutely dangerous, especially to young men who have the misfortune to get into gaol.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. member must connect his remarks with the Bill, which merely provides for granting a conditional purchase lease for a pine plantation.

HON. E. H. GRAY: I was trying to connect my remarks with the Bill by suggesting that the Government could extend their activities in the same direction by utilising prison labour. I was not sure whether I should be in order in referring to that matter.

THE PRESIDENT: I am afraid the hon. member is going beyond the scope of the Bill.

HON. E. H. GRAY: The trouble is that only during the debates on the Address-in-reply and on the Appropriation Bill have we an opportunity to discuss such a question.

HON. E. H. HARRIS: Why not introduce a motion to that effect?

HON. E. H. GRAY: It is an interesting question, and if I am not in order on this occasion, I shall take another opportunity to speak on it.

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot allow the hon. member to initiate on this Bill a debate on the general question of the employment of prison labour for afforestation work.

HON. E. H. GRAY: I support the second reading and will introduce the question on another occasion.

HON. J. E. DODD (South) [5.47]: I support the Bill: it is one that can be supported by every member. The measure provides means to cope with the lack of

softwoods, a problem that is at present engaging attention in all parts of the world. In to-day's paper I read an account of two addresses delivered by Mr. Owen Jones of New Zealand on the subject of planting pine plantations, and the figures he quoted were astounding. Anyone who has read of the probable shortage of softwoods must realise how necessary it is to take advantage of all means to encourage the growth of timber. At Gravesend the "Daily Mail" Publishing Company have something like 18 miles of factories engaged in converting timber into paper pulp. When we think of the large number of similar works in other parts of the world where softwood is being converted into paper pulp, we can realise the possibility of our softwoods supply being cut out. The Bill provides for the granting of a special lease upon which softwoods may be planted. Fourteen or fifteen years ago I spent three months in Rotorua, New Zealand. I was too ill to make many inquiries, but I was struck with the efforts made to establish softwood plantations. All the waste land round about Rotorua was being dealt with, and the growth of timber was phenomenal on account of the volcanic nature of the soil. I am not sure what varieties were being grown, but I believe one was hickory and another was larch. The Australian eucalypt was also being planted, particularly in the vicinity of the Rotorua townsite. In furtherance of Mr. Gray's remarks I may mention that prisoners were being employed upon that work. The New Zealand authorities had a splendid system under which good conduct prisoners were employed in the plantations. This Bill refers to a particular lease, but I hope that later on something will be done in the direction indicated by Mr. Gray. I hope a company may be formed as suggested and that it will prove successful. It will have an opportunity to establish plantations on some of our light land and provide timber that must prove most valuable.

HON. J. M. MACFARLANE (Metropolitan) [5.52]: I support the Bill and hope that the attempt to be made to establish a pine forest in the Esperance area will succeed. At the same time I have grave doubts whether pine growing in this State will prove a commercial success. Other attempts have been made to grow pines in this State—at Drakesbrook and at Ludlow.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Was not the wrong kind of pine planted there?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Yes; the wrong kind was planted at Drakesbrook and then the mistake was repeated in the second experiment at Ludlow. The climate of this State is not at all like that of New Zealand, and I doubt whether it will prove suitable for pine growing. The work of afforestation should be actively pursued in this State. There is plenty of vacant land along the seaboard which, I have been advised, could be used to grow timber that would be of great value to the State. As the money for the Esperance venture is being found by a company who are satisfied that they can make a success of it, we should do all that we can to encourage them.

Hon. J. Ewing: You have been throwing cold water on the proposal.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I have merely pointed out that experiments made in this State have not been successful. I would rather see the money invested in pine plantations in Western Australia than sent outside the Commonwealth.

HON. H. A. STEPHENSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.54]: I have pleasure in supporting the Bill and hope the syndicate will be successful in their undertaking. There are hundreds of thousands of acres of land suitable for growing softwoods and, if the right varieties are selected, I have no doubt that the venture will prove successful and profitable. Throughout the world the supplies of softwood are diminishing rapidly. Australia's requirements are increasing daily and in Western Australia I think the demand will grow more rapidly than anywhere else, because we have primary industries such as fruit growing and butter making in their early stages and much softwood will be required to provide export cases for them.

HON. A. J. H. SAW (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.55]: I am not sure whether the doubt expressed by Mr. Macfarlane was based on the question of soil or climate.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: I think the climate of Western Australia is hardly favourable, but I hope the experiment will prove a success.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: A couple of years ago the University entered into an arrangement with the Forests Department whereby they became joint partners in creating a

pine forest on University endowment lands south of Applecross. The Conservator of Forests, Mr. Kessell, is very enthusiastic about the project and has expressed the opinion that it will undoubtedly be successful. He, from his special training, should be better able than a layman to judge of the prospects. One point I raised with Mr. Kessell when he was advocating the joint project with the University was the danger from forest fires. Although it was a private conversation, I do not think Mr. Kessell would object to my repeating the opinion he expressed on that occasion that there was not much danger from forest fires. Recently, however, I was reading something about the forests in Canada, and I noticed that most elaborate precautions are adopted there to guard against forest fires. The forest areas are patrolled by aeroplanes and fire organisations are continually on the alert. I trust that Mr. Kessell was correct and that there will be no danger from forest fires, which undoubtedly are feared in other parts of the world. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. J. Ewing, debate adjourned.

BILL—RESERVES (No. 2).

In Committee.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [6.3]: Before moving that the House do now adjourn, I wish to state that I do not feel justified in asking members to come back after dinner. On the Notice Paper appear the Albany Harbour Board Bill and the Roads Closure Bill, in both of which Mr. Burvill as well as other members are interested. In any case I had intended postponing consideration of these measures until the next sitting of the House. I had also intended to make only a brief speech in reply on the Shearers' Accommodation Act Amendment Bill, after which the House would have gone into Committee. That can well be done next week. The other measures that remain to be dealt with we are not yet prepared to submit to the House. If

we had sat after tea it would have been only for a brief while, consequently I have decided to adjourn. I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.5 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 11th November, 1926.

	PAGE
Bills: Adoption of Children Act Amendment, 1a ...	2120
Annual Estimates: Metropolitan Water Supply ...	2120
Other Hydraulic Undertakings	2181
Railways	2187

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

BILL—ADOPTION OF CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Mr. Sleeman, and read a first time.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1926-27.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Lutey in the Chair.

Vote—Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Department, £141,481 (partly considered):

MR. RICHARDSON (Subiaco) [4.37]: There are a few matters I desire to bring under the Minister's notice. It is pleasing, I am sure, to the residents of the metropolitan area to know that there is likely to be a sufficient supply of water during the forthcoming summer. We have been told that in previous years, but the expectation has not been realised. Still, with the advancement made in regard to reservoirs it is more