

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 4th December, 1940.

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

QUESTION—BUNBURY LOCAL COURT.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Justice: 1, Is it a fact that the Local Court work previously attended to by the Magistrate stationed at Bunbury is now being dealt with partly by the Magistrate from Albany and partly by a metropolitan magistrate? 2, If so, is it a fact that there is no qualified person available (other than a legal practitioner) for appointment as Magistrate at Bunbury? 3, If so, is it considered reasonable that portion of the Bunbury magistrate's district should be supplied from Albany, when the latter already had to serve Ravenshorpe, Katanning, Wagin and other centres? 4, Would it not have been better to retain the services of the Acting Magistrate (recently acting at Bunbury) for a further period, and why were his services not further made use of?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. 3, Yes, in the special circumstances. 4, No, because of an adjustment of magisterial positions which is to take effect immediately.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS.

Concession Fares for War Service Personnel.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that leave to visit their homes at Christmas is to be given to A.I.F. personnel

at present undergoing training in Victoria, and that those proceeding to their homes in South Australia will be called upon to pay railway fare amounting to 5s. each; those who have to travel to New South Wales 9s. each, but Western Australians will have to pay full railway fare amounting to approximately £12 each? 2, Will he ascertain why Western Australians are so heavily penalised? 3, If the cheaper rates to be charged to South Australians and New South Welshmen are the result of action taken by the State Governments concerned, will the Western Australian State Government take immediate action to ensure personnel from this State receiving similar fare concessions? 4, If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied: 1, I am not aware that the position is as stated, but inquiries are being made from the Eastern States in regard thereto. 2, 3, 4, Answered by No. 1.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Financial Emergency Act Amendment.
- 2, Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance.
- 3, Industries Assistance Act Continuance.
- 4, Tramways Purchase Act Amendment.
- 5, Lotteries (Control) Act Amendment.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

Clause 2—Delete the words "the Commonwealth of Australia" in lines 17 and 18 and substitute the words "His Majesty."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The amendment, if agreed to, will alter paragraph (ai) so as to make it read, "During the continuance of any war in which His Majesty is engaged." Without further comment, I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

MOTION—SUPERPHOSPHATE, MANUFACTURE AND SALE.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

Debate resumed from the 23rd October on the following motion by Mr. Boyle (Avon):—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon all matters relative to the manufacture and sale of superphosphate in Western Australia.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [4.36]: This motion has been moved because of the doubt existing in the hon. member's mind about the fairness of the price charged for superphosphate now and before the war period. Members will recall that in July last, when the price of superphosphate was increased and this State made a violent protest to the Federal authorities, considerable dissatisfaction was expressed in all the States—but particularly in Western Australia—because of the added impost upon the primary producers. Superphosphate has changed the outlook for Australian primary industries and it is therefore of the utmost importance to the people of Australia that the price charged for it should be a fair one. Upon carefully reading the mover's speech, it seems to me that he is enthusiastically behind our Premier in the protest which he made to the Commonwealth authorities, and also in the protests made at various gatherings by this State's representatives against the increase in price. I have received from the Commonwealth authorities what they consider to be a complete explanation of the increase in price since war was declared; but although their explanation may be complete and the reasons given for the prices alteration were approved by Professor Copland, there is still some room for doubt as to whether the inclusion of the pre-war basis, plus increased cost caused by the war, is wholly valid. In July last, immediately following the announcement of the increase in price, our Premier wrote to the Prime

Minister and in the course of his letter he said—

I desire to urge that the Commonwealth Government, which has already recognised the necessity for providing assistance to farmers in their time of trouble and to various forms of primary industries, particularly the wheat industry by means of the flour tax, should extend very favourable consideration to this matter. I sincerely trust that you will find it possible to take action to counteract to some extent the serious effect upon these industries of this heavy increase in the cost of production.

The Prime Minister in reply promised an early review and stated he desired to assure the Premier that before permitting an increase in price, the Commonwealth Price Fixing Commissioner made a searching investigation into factors affecting costs. The Prime Minister subsequently publicly reviewed his statement which appeared in the "West Australian" of the 20th August last. He made some comments and said he was prepared to investigate the matter thoroughly on the lines requested by the Premier of this State. Following our more recent protests, the Department of Commerce supplied us with the whole basis of calculations that permitted the present price to be charged. I have that document, and at a later stage I intend to lay it on the Table of the House, because it is the Commonwealth's explanation of the reason that permitted its Price Fixing Commissioner to agree to the price now being charged.

There is a little variation in the figures submitted by the member for Avon in moving the motion. He appeared to be under the impression that the price charged in Western Australia was higher than the price being charged in all Australia. That is not quite so. Variations in other States occur in accordance with their freight circumstances, and the absence in at least one State of superphosphate works. Generally speaking, the price is subject to many and varying conditions. At a meeting of Ministers for Agriculture a motion was moved by the representative of South Australia to this effect—

That the Commonwealth Government make every endeavour to reduce the cost of superphosphate to pre-war levels and if these efforts prove inadequate, that the price be pegged at the figure existing on the 31st December, 1939, as is the case in New Zealand.

That point was amplified by the Minister for Agriculture of South Australia. Western

Australia's representative, in seconding the motion, said—

I have no doubt that the Commonwealth Government, through its officers, has already made some investigation of the position. Substantial reductions will have to be effected, however, if primary production is to continue as it should do in these days. If, as was stated a while ago when we were dealing with wine, the Commonwealth Government cannot, under existing machinery, instruct the Commonwealth Prices Commissioner to investigate prices ruling prior to the 31st August, 1939, it should make provision to do so. I am anxious to ascertain whether the ruling prices of superphosphate at the 31st August were fair or unfair. It may be that profiteering was going on then. If that is so, it would be illogical and unjust to fall heavily on the war-time profiteer but to allow the peace-time profiteer to continue his profiteering in war-time. Under the Western Australian legislation the State Prices Commissioner may investigate whether prices were fair or unfair prior to the 31st August . . .

It may be that substitutes may be found for some of the high priced imported ingredients of superphosphates. I hope that we shall be able to produce, in Western Australia, some of the ingredients that are now being imported at a high price and in the near future may become still more expensive. Surely the Commonwealth and State Governments, acting both separately and conjointly, can do something to meet this situation. It will be foolish for us to sit back and accept these increases of prices as inevitable.

That was Western Australia's attitude at a meeting of the Agricultural Council regarding the price charged since the war and the price charged prior to the war. The member for Avon, in his motion, said that 13s. a ton was the cost of the primary commodity at its island source. While that is so, it does not convey the whole story. He endeavoured to show that, although the initial cost was 13s. at the island, the producers in Western Australia were compelled to pay a figure approaching £5 for the finished article. The fact is that the cost of phosphatic rock is about 13s., but the c.i.f. price has been for many years about £2 5s. per ton. That price has been established over a very long period, and before we can get a clear picture of the price of superphosphate, we must examine the factors controlling the cost.

The most authoritative report procurable in Australia on the subject of superphosphate is the report made by Mr. Gunn in 1932. Before that—I believe in 1929—the Tariff Board made an exhaustive report. It sat for six months inquiring into all the circumstances attending the price of superphos-

phate and the supplies and availability of phosphatic rock throughout the world. Both of those inquiries were instituted by the Commonwealth Government, and the conclusions may be found in the records in the bound volumes in this State. The findings of the Tariff Board in 1929 were—

Prices charged not fair and reasonable.

Responsibility for this resting on both manufacturers and consumers.

Excess profits not being made by companies, but considered that—

- (a) New bags could be partly replaced by secondhand bags.
- (b) Agency charges too high.
- (c) Possibility of decreasing price more likely with increased output.

In the report prepared by Mr. Gunn in 1932, it was shown that the price between 1913-14 and 1932 had decreased by 14.7 per cent., and means by which the price to the consumer could be reduced included bulk buying.

Means by which price to the consumer must be reduced—

- (1) Bulk buying—
 - (a) Quality rates.
 - (b) Cash discount.
 - (c) Elimination of agent's commission.
- (2) Removal of duty on pyrites.
- (3) Greater use of secondhand bags.
- (4) Wharfage charges.
- (5) Reduction in rail freights.
- (6) Increase in output.

In all the reports submitted to the Commonwealth on the subject, comments have been made about the differential rail freights charged in the various States. To-day I obtained the figures ruling in the various States. At a recent conference the Premier, in making some comment on the State's contribution to primary industries, instanced what Western Australia was foregoing in the shape of freight reductions. If I remember clearly, the Premier of South Australia objected to the statement that Western Australia was charging lower freights on wheat and superphosphate than was any other State. These figures are based on a distance of 150 miles and are the actual freight costs to the farmers. They are not the actual freight in each State, because in at least one State there is a recoup by the State Treasury to the Railway Department of an additional concession. The figures are—

Western Australia	..	5s. 2d.
South Australia	..	11s. 2d.
Victoria	..	7s. 0d.
New South Wales	..	8s. 4d.
Queensland	..	8s. 6d.

Those are figures submitted to me by the Commissioner of Railways to-day. They are up to date, and represent all-in concessions given to farmers, whether on a freight basis or on a special rate. I mentioned that it would be well for us to see what was involved in an inquiry as suggested by the mover; and undoubtedly we could not get very far if an inquiry were made on the lines suggested by him. We could inquire into what happens in this State; but if we consider for a moment the method of control of phosphatic rock throughout the world, and particularly the sources of our supply, it becomes obvious that we cannot get very far with the select committee the member for Avon suggests. The whole control affecting the rights, titles, and interests of the Pacific Phosphate Company, which controlled the output of Nauru and Ocean Island, was taken over by what is known as the British Phosphate Commission. That commission was instituted in 1919, and took over all rights from the other company, the cost being approximately £3,500,000, and the terms of its payment and the duration of period 50 years. This commission was arranged on a sort of tripartite basis between the British Government, the New Zealand Government, and the Commonwealth Government; and as time has gone on and commissioners have been replaced, it now is ostensibly under all-Australian control and direction, because, as I know the member for Avon is aware, the nominees following the displacement of the old commissioners have come from Australia, and the control in reality is under the Commonwealth Government.

The agreement which was entered into on the basis of £3,500,000 arranged that the commissioners should pay 6 per cent. to the three Government representatives, plus a sinking fund contribution. They had to repay the principal in 50 years, the annual payment being about a quarter of a million. They are obliged to supply to the three commissioners concerned superphosphate in varying proportions. Perhaps Australia's proportion at the time was 43 per cent. of the total; that of the United Kingdom 42 per cent.; and New Zealand had a much smaller quantity. But since before 1928 the United Kingdom cost of freight charges has prevented any supply of phosphate rock from those islands, and the whole output has been sent to Australia and New Zea-

land. Within the terms of that contract, one which was at first expected to affect the price of superphosphate in Australia, was a provision that any quantity above Australian and New Zealand requirements would be sold in the open markets of the world at the best price the commissioners could obtain. But that has not been an influence on our prices, because in competition with other countries in which phosphates are available it has not been possible to ease Australia's price by sales elsewhere. World shipments in the handling of phosphate rock during recent years have averaged about 10,000,000 tons. In the two islands from which Australia mainly gets its supplies, about eight years ago there were in sight about 104,000,000 tons. So that it is quite possible that even if we allow the percentage of rock, I think it is 57 per cent. of phosphate rock, which is in a ton of superphosphate, the balance being sulphuric acid and other additions, the life of those two islands in phosphatic rock for Australia will be at least 40 or 50 years. Now, the c.i.f. price has not varied very much. The only variation in that price is in the factor of freight. Freights have varied from time to time; and according to the freight variation, so has the price at Sydney or at other Australian ports varied. The variation of the price of rock itself, as far as I can ascertain, has not been more than 1s. per ton over a large number of years. A variation of 1s. per ton in the basic rock amounts to only about 7d. per ton in the finished article of superphosphate.

I have mentioned that rail freights in Australia vary considerably. In the manufacturing charges, in which I think the member for Avon can see some room for improvement, there is a very wide variation in an interstate sense; and although some of the companies operating have manufacturing in the different States, their costs and their prices vary considerably. In Western Australia's costs the whole thing is bound up in manufacturing charges, rail freights, or even the initial cost of the commodity at Nauru Island and Ocean Island. Therefore, since the State has very little say in what the price will be to the manufacturers, it is primarily a matter for Commonwealth investigation. We cannot get very far; and I think that since we cannot get very far, we can run round in circles in Western Aus-

tralia making an investigation which will lead us nowhere in regard to alteration of price. But if this were applied to a Commonwealth sphere, and either the Tariff Board report of 1929 or the report made by Mr. Gunn in 1932 were brought up to date in the light of all costs obtaining to-day, we would very quickly, in a Commonwealth sphere, get all the information necessary to determine whether the prices being charged are just or unjust. And because that is my belief I intend to move an amendment to the motion. I intend to move that after the word "That" in the first line of the motion the words "a select committee be appointed" should be deleted and the following words inserted in lieu, "a request be made to Western Australia's representatives in the Commonwealth Parliament to move for a select committee." With the deletion of the word "Western" in the subsequent part of the motion, it would read, "That a request be made to Western Australia's representatives in the Commonwealth Parliament to move for a select committee to inquire into and report upon all matters relative to the manufacture and sale of superphosphate in Australia." Then we shall not be confining the inquiry to be made; and I believe that through our members in the Senate and the House of Representatives we can obtain for all Australia, for the farmers in all the States, some satisfaction as to whether the prices being charged now are extortionate or are fair. I move an amendment—

That after the word "That" in the first line of the motion the words "a select committee be appointed" be struck out, and the following words be inserted in lieu:—"A request be made to Western Australia's representatives in the Commonwealth Parliament to move for a select committee."

MR. BOYLE (Avon—on amendment) [4.59]: The Minister for Lands has been courteous enough to acquaint me of his intention to move this amendment to the motion proposed by me, and I see no reason for refusing to accept it. Speaking now to the amendment, I agree that a State inquiry would be of a circumscribed nature. Firms operating in Western Australia, without exception, have their headquarters in the Eastern States—I believe, two in Victoria and one in South Australia. That being so, a certain element of difficulty would be associated with the work of a select commit-

tee of this House. In moving the motion, I had considered the possibilities. I realised that method represented our only means of drawing attention to the existing state of affairs. By his amendment, the Minister has made the position more clear, and I take it that if the House agrees to the amendment, the Minister will be prepared to see that the matter is taken to the proper quarters. In other words, I think he has associated the Government with the project. The Minister also mentioned that the Premier personally, and the Government generally, had entered protests against the increased price of superphosphate and I assume his reference to my enthusiastic support of the Premier's action represented one of those little flights of oratory that the Minister is entitled to indulge in.

The Minister for Lands: But you did appreciate it!

MR. BOYLE: I am very pleased indeed that we are at one on this matter, and that both sides of the House are in agreement in the proposal to endeavour to minimise a blow of such a description at the interests of our producers. An inquiry by a select committee of the Federal Parliament would possibly allow the farmers of the Commonwealth to know why they are required to pay an increased superphosphate bill, representing between £5,000,000 and £6,000,000 extra annually. Such an inquiry may serve to reassure the farmers of Western Australia, whose increased super bill represents between £350,000 and £400,000 each year. They may be reassured that there is a particular reason for the increased charges. When we appreciate the argument regarding increased shipping freights from Nauru and realise that one ton of phosphatic rock can be converted into 1¾ tons of super, we must also realise that any select committee appointed to investigate this problem will have ample scope for inquiry. The Government is as much interested in this matter as any member sitting on the Opposition side of the House, because of the detrimental effect upon the agricultural industry of the State. We have been told already that in many instances there is a possibility of 30 per cent. less superphosphate being used this year for top-dressing purposes. In Western Australia the farmers depend upon top-dressing for an increase in their flocks and so forth. In the circumstances, I support the amendment and I suppose the Government will undertake the responsibility of

communicating with the Federal Parliament on this matter. I am sure that every member on the Opposition side of the House will support the proposal so that the farmers in Australia may have an opportunity to ascertain—to date they have not been given any information on that point—the reasons for the tremendous increase in super prices. In Western Australia we are more dependent upon super than are the farmers of any other State, and we use more proportionately. The only difficulty I foresee was mentioned by the Minister himself and that is that the Commonwealth Government is virtually in control of the superphosphate industry inasmuch as it is the main factor in the matter of supplies from Nauru Island. The appeal will be merely one from Caesar to Caesar unless a select committee of the Federal Parliament is appointed to investigate the position.

MR. WATTS (Katanning—on amendment) [5.5]: When the Minister has succeeded with his amendment, as I hope he will, the motion will still refer to matters relative to the manufacture and sale of superphosphate in Western Australia.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister has already indicated his intention to move a further amendment to strike out "Western" so that the inquiry will relate to the position in Australia and not in Western Australia alone.

Amendment put and passed.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS:** I move an amendment—

That in the last line of the motion the word "Western" be struck out. ●

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

RESOLUTION—RURAL RELIEF.

To Inquire by Joint Committee.

Debate resumed from the 20th November on the motion of Mr. Watts (Katanning) to concur in the following resolution transmitted from the Council—

That a joint Committee consisting of three members of each House be appointed to inquire into and report upon such measures which may be necessary and/or desirable to relieve those engaged in the rural industry from their present financial handicaps and problems.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [5.7]: According to the resolution of the Legislative Council three members from each Chamber of this Parliament are to be appointed as a joint committee to inquire into and report on the financial and other problems of the farmers in an endeavour to meet the existing difficulties. We all know that farmers' problems and handicaps are due to a very wide range of causative factors. They are not due to one particular aspect of their activities, but to very many circumstances, not excluding the war. Their problems are so diverse that I am sure a committee of the type proposed would find itself interestedly engaged for many months. The members of that body would find the subject matter of the inquiry of absorbing interest. They would, no doubt, add tremendously to their personal knowledge and quite possibly would be able to make use of that knowledge to the very great advantage of the State. During the course of the inquiry, what would they ascertain that is not now already known, properly tabulated, or is not being completely examined and in connection with which effect is not being given to any possible solution? We would provide a very interesting occupation for many months for such a committee in the variety and diversity of the interests the committee would have to examine, and in that task it would have to extend its activities far beyond the borders of the State. The committee would have to go very far indeed in investigating what would be the results and effects of any recommendations it might make. The problems of the primary producers are not confined to Western Australia. The difficulties associated with the farmers are not only financial, but are concerned with marketing problems, which are of equal moment and are not confined to Western Australia, nor yet to the Commonwealth of Australia alone.

As they did in the pre-war period, so in post-war years will international considerations play a very big part. One of the greatest difficulties in connection with the commodities of farmers at any time is that associated with markets, and the difficulty of obtaining them in countries that can make use of our commodities and pay prices that are remunerative to us. That constitutes one of the major difficulties in connection with primary production in Aus-

tralia. The matter is not confined to the activities and possibilities of wheatgrowers but extends to all engaged in rural industry. Included in that category the difficulties apply very materially to the wool-grower, the wheatgrower, the lamb raiser, the fruitgrower and all those engaged in other avenues of rural industries and their many minor branches. Other adverse factors include the producers' present financial indebtedness due to past circumstances—the depression, the drought and low prices—and on top of that we have the present state of affairs, as, for instance, in the fruitgrowing industry in connection with which the markets have almost entirely disappeared and several millions of cases of fresh fruit are without any market at all. I mention those phases in order to show that, no matter from what angle the proposed inquiry is approached, there are so many factors affecting the financial standing of the farmer and his prospects for future markets, that we must go very far afield if we are properly to examine the situation and submit practical proposals to ease their burdens.

There is a department in the Federal sphere which in past years has undertaken a complete examination of farmers' difficulties, available markets, international agreements, shipping and all manner of subjects allied with the task of placing our surplus products in overseas markets. I refer to the Department of Commerce, which has the advantage of a very complete report on the world position affecting every rural commodity produced in Australia. That department is not only aware of the availability of markets within Australia but overseas so far as can be gauged under existing conditions. The concluding references in the motion to the financial difficulties and problems, I take it, indicate that the inquiry will cover all those problems, which affect farmers directly or otherwise. Some of the ablest men in the Public Service of Australia are associated with the Department of Commerce. We may take as examples such men as Mr. Murphy, the Secretary of the Department, or Mr. McCarthy, who is stationed in Sydney and deals with all Australian shipping, who are the embodiment of thoroughness, efficiency, and up-to-dateness, having a complete knowledge of rural development within Australia.

Inspired by those men, the Department of Commerce has submitted continuously to

the Agricultural Council, and thereby to all the States, an accumulation of evidence that could not be obtained in any separate State by any inquiry such as is proposed. Such an inquiry could deal with certain aspects of farmers' difficulties and debts and with the attitude of the banks towards certain individuals, whose cases could be examined. Basically, however, it would not lead us very far towards a solution of the financial and other difficulties of the farmers. The last few words of the resolution to which I refer are—

To inquire into and report upon such measures which may be necessary and/or desirable to relieve those engaged in the rural industry from their present financial handicaps and problems.

The future of the farmer is largely wrapped up in his prospective markets. If one thing more than another has in recent times given some hope to the wheat grower, it is the prospect of stability in his industry. If for the time being the fruit grower has any occasion for hope, it lies in the prospect he has of a stabilised price for his products. The wool grower is in a different category. The meat producer is to be governed during the war period by Imperial contracts that have been entered into. The poultry farmer and the egg producer are assured of reasonable prospects while there is a change of shipping being made available. The shipping position is affecting Australian rural industry to-day more than ever before. Those who have been advised of the ultimate destination of cargoes in recent months view with very grave concern—almost alarm—the difficulty of landing cargoes in England from Australian ports. We read in the Press of the tonnages that are being destroyed daily and we are aware of the difficulties that must be confronting the British Ministry of Food on account of the congestion obtaining in the western ports of England and the almost total closure of the major eastern ports. The feeding of the Empire in these trying days is a distinct problem to all concerned. The problem becomes daily more alarming to those in Australia relying on export trade for their well-being.

So much of the interests of the farmers of this country is bound up with the successful export of their products, and that

phase would have to be examined by any select committee appointed. It would have to inquire from those who have the information at hand just what is the complicated international position and what are the prospects in regard to this or that rural industry, and how such industries can be financed to a greater degree than has been possible in the past. Unless a select committee made such inquiries, it would merely spend an interesting time gathering information that has already been collected. These problems and their solution are not confined to any one State. No answer could be obtained within Western Australia to any one part of the problem, even to that aspect about which members opposite always express so much concern, namely, that of the farmers' debts. How far could we, by such an inquiry, make a substantial contribution to the easement of farmers' debts; how would such an inquiry help us to make any greater endeavour in that direction? Until there is a change in the war situation that will improve the marketing position, and until there is some basis upon which to build, it is better for us to leave to the Commonwealth authority, which has accepted the responsibility of investigating the position of the rural industries, the fullest possible scope and refrain from conducting any pin-pricking inquiries.

I think it is well known that the Commonwealth Department of Commerce has asked all the States to make a survey of past and possible future rural activities within the State boundaries. In every State the Minister for Agriculture has prepared a picture of future rural development. Those surveys are being daily reviewed and amended in the light of altered circumstances. All States have been in active co-operation with the Department of Commerce in its inquiry into the possibility of finding markets, the prospects of international agreements, and the basic financial difficulties of farmers. The recent decisions regarding the wheat industry were arrived at not merely with a view to securing for the farmer a better price for his product, but to help him in his somewhat hopeless financial outlook. That is the fundamental reason why all agricultural inquiries have been made, namely, to better the farmer's lot, to give him some prospect

for the future and as far as is humanly possible to see that he obtains a payable price for his commodities in this country.

I have no doubt the object of the resolution carried in another place was a very desirable one, but it will be achieved with more beneficial effects to the whole of Australia by leaving the matter to the Commonwealth authorities, who are receiving the fullest co-operation of all the States whose departments have a picture of the possibilities of rural industry and thus have an opportunity to decide what recommendations ought to be made to form a foundation for the building up of Australian agriculture. What is sought by the resolution is being done in the wider sphere. I would like to have sufficient leisure to give a close examination to the many aspects and avenues that could be explored by the proposed committee, but I can assure the House that it is not possible for us as members of Parliament to obtain in a reasonable time within our State borders any information that has not already been collected.

I realised from reading the speeches made by the mover of the motion, both in this House and in another place, and by those supporting it that their desire is to ease the financial burdens of the farmers. But all the factors I have mentioned contribute to the farmers' financial plight. One circumstance is inseparable from another. It is no use examining their financial position unless we also examine all the causative factors and seek a solution along those lines. I do not think a select committee from this Parliament could, within a reasonable time, secure any more information than has already been tabulated and is available from other sources. The idea is excellent; the objective is good, but it is not our task to appoint a select committee to inquire into a matter concerning which we already have full and complete information. I oppose the motion.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [5.25]: I have seldom heard the Minister make such an extraordinary speech as he has made on this subject. He gave his imagination full play and ranged all over the world in an endeavour to provide reasons for the defeat of the motion. I am perfectly sure—and I think I can speak with a certain amount of authority—that the mover of the motion in another place never intended that the in-

quiry should embrace such a wide field as that suggested by the Minister. As has been repeatedly pointed out by members of the Country Party in this House, the time has long since passed when farmers could successfully carry on their operations at the prices that have recently been ruling for their products. The Minister said that a certain degree of stability had been assured the wheatgrowers. We all fondly hope that is so, but even if the degree of stability forecast by the Federal Minister for Commerce is realised the wheatgrower will still be unable to carry on at a profit because 3s. 10d. f.o.b. is not a payable price for wheat, as was pointed out years ago by the Royal Commission which so exhaustively examined the question. Speaking from memory I think the cost of production in Western Australia was set down in those days at £1.10.0 and the Commissioners pointed out that the data was not sufficient to enable them to arrive at a more accurate figure. The figure mentioned by the Commonwealth Minister is 3s. 10d. f.o.b. ports for bagged wheat—for bulk wheat it would be less—and the net return to the farmer, based on that figure would be only 2s. 10d. Consequently he is producing at a loss.

Within the last few days we have been discussing a Bill designed to provide relief for drought-stricken farmers and I think £300 was stated to be the maximum amount a farmer would be likely to receive under that measure. If a man needs more than that amount to enable him to carry on his farming operations his plight must be desperate indeed. The fact that a special grant had to be obtained from the Commonwealth and that the relief to be granted is limited to £300 for each individual farmer, is an indication of the desperate plight of these men. The serious position in which the farmers find themselves was the reason for the introduction of the motion in another place. Hon. members will recall the several attempts that have been made in recent years to introduce legislation designed to amend the Rural Relief Act with a view to bringing secured creditors under the provisions of that measure, thus affording relief to farmers, and particularly wheatgrowers. Those attempts proving unsuccessful; no amendment has been made to the Act. Our only course of action, as an alternative, is to endeavour to convince members who opposed the

amendments to the Act that we have some justification for bringing down this rural relief measure. The only way to establish that is for us to ask for an independent inquiry into the financial troubles of the wheat-grower. I am not bound by the wording of the resolution. If it is possible to carry it in an abridged form, I am sure members on this side would be only too ready to agree to some restriction of its terms. As representatives of primary producers we want an investigation into the immediate financial difficulties of the farmers, to learn particularly whether we are asking for a fair thing. Requesting that secured creditors shall be brought under the operations of the rural relief legislation.

The inquiry need not extend beyond the confines of the City of Perth, and need not last for more than approximately a month. Most of the people who would be called to give evidence are already in the city. The farmers' representatives are here, and, if a few witnesses are required from outside, they could be brought to Perth. The inquiry need not extend over a long period. We have ample authority for asking for such an investigation. Let me take members back to a few years ago when the predecessor to the present Minister for Lands was in office. I think the occasion had to do with an amendment of the Rural Relief Act. It was suggested that wheat, wool and lambs were to be valued, during the course of the revaluation of properties, at a figure set down by the Commonwealth Royal Commission. Members may recall the ridicule that was poured upon the suggestion by the then Minister for Lands. The figure put down for lambs was 10s., wool was rated at 6d. per pound, and wheat at 3s. a bushel. The Minister of that day said, "What ridiculous prices. We would not dream of accepting them." Time has proved the wisdom of the Royal Commission's recommendation. I do not blame the Rural Relief Trustees for not accepting those prices, but I have no hesitation in saying that if the prices had been accepted there would have been fewer second applications by farmers for relief under the Rural Relief Act.

When the Act was passed, many farmers applied for relief and obtained a reduction of their debts. I remind members that many farmers have had to go back for a second

instalment of that relief, because in valuing the properties the trustees placed an unduly high value on the products. That was not realised until later. Had the values we suggested on that occasion, and the Royal Commission suggested, been adopted, the farmers' affairs would have been settled on a much better basis. But the recommendations were not adopted. As pointed out on many occasions by members on this side of the House, farmers to-day are leaving their properties. I am not talking in the past tense. They have left their farms and are leaving them to-day. They have taken this step because their debts are such that they cannot carry on operations. That being so, it is the bounden duty of the House to inquire into the reason for this state of affairs, and to adopt any remedy possible to alter the position. The Minister made an amazing declaration, one that seems to have become a mania with some people. He said, "Leave it to the Commonwealth; it is a Commonwealth matter." It is no more a Commonwealth matter, that which concerns the wheat growers, than it would be if the matter concerned wharf labourers or those engaged in the goldmining industry, or in any other industrial section of the community. The well-being of the man on the land is just as great a responsibility of the State Government as it is of the Commonwealth Government. In fact, I will say the greater responsibility lies with the State Government.

The other night the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) pointed out that the welfare of the citizens of the State should be the first consideration of the State Government. When people cannot carry on their avocations, it is the bounden duty of the Government to support any proposal for an inquiry within reason into the circumstances of those people. I do not want a protracted inquiry, one extending over many months, nor a costly inquiry. I do not want the inquirers to travel all over the world on this question, nor is such a thing contemplated. An inquiry is, however, necessary and should be held. Such an inquiry was visualised by the Royal Commission to which I have just referred. It stipulated a period of seven years during which its recommendations would have effect, and visualised that at the end of that period some further investigation would be necessary if the position had not then been rectified. I have further proof

of that in the report of the Royal Commission in Queensland which recently carried out an inquiry into the wool industry. That Royal Commission explicitly stated that if the Commonwealth Government did not declare a moratorium to cover woolgrowers and primary producers of Queensland from the declaration of war, certain additional recommendations that were made should have effect. That shows that the parlous condition of the primary producers was so clearly visualised by the authorities that they contemplated the taking of action of that description. We have endeavoured to amend the Rural Relief Act, and to have relief given through an amendment to the Agricultural Bank Act. Those attempts have not been successful. So that an opportunity might be provided to prove that our request was well grounded, this motion for an inquiry has been brought forward. I hope the House will pass it, seeing that it has already passed through another place. The passing of the resolution in this House will enable some authoritative declaration to be made as to what steps are necessary to place the farming industry in a payable position. No doubt the market position and the effects of the war have some bearing on the subject, but affecting the position are other factors which are just as vital, and which just as intimately affect the successful carrying on of these particular avocations. Let the House amend the resolution if necessary. No one wants money to be wasted in these times, and we are not asking that there should be any expenditure. Let the time over which the inquiry is held be restricted, and let other restrictions that are deemed to be necessary be imposed. The appointment of a Royal Commission has not been asked for but merely that an inquiry should be held by a select committee. That can be done at a minimum of cost. I appeal to members to realise the position of the industry, and to vote for the resolution so that a thorough and impartial investigation may be made.

MR. BERRY (Irwin-Moore) [5.37]: I share the amazement of the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) at the remarks of the Minister. It seems to me that every time we attempt to bring forward any movement to lighten the load on the primary producing industry, the economic sea is fished for as many red herrings as it is possible for the

economic fishermen to catch and draw across the path. The main object of another place in passing the motion now before the House was to attack the position of the secured creditor. Some years ago we dealt with the unsecured creditor, and slaughtered him. It seems that we did everything in our power to make the country storekeeper, and the merchant, cut their debts so that the assets of the secured creditor might thereby be made stronger than they were before the unsecured debts were handled. I understand this is a motion for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the possibility of bringing the secured creditor into line with the unsecured creditor. It would be a very proper thing to appoint such a committee. I hope it will bring forward a recommendation that will make it possible for us to do what should have been done years ago, namely, bring the secured creditor into line with the unsecured creditor under the Rural Relief Act. Amongst the many red herrings drawn across the trail by the Minister, he referred to the export markets, the difficulties of shipping, and suchlike disabilities. I suggest that the very existence of those difficulties makes it the more imperative for us to tackle the secured debts associated with the farming industry, which is going to be asked not only to carry the disabilities due to the war but to carry also the secured debts and pay interest on them despite the export restrictions that have been imposed. I have never heard a speech more in favour of the motion than that which was made by the Minister in opposing it. He said that the stability that was offered by the Federal plan was such as to make the position of the farmer so much more secure. That may or may not be so. Wheat is to be paid for at 3s. 10d. f.o.b. port, but when the Minister said that, he omitted to state that the 3s. 10d. will be paid on a restricted crop. That is the important point. The Federal scheme provides for the payment of 3s. 10d. f.o.b. for only a proportion of our crop. It behoves us to see that if our output is restricted, the secured creditor shall be equally restricted in his interest bill and his embarrassing mortgage. Another point raised by the Minister was that the particular matter into which the committee was to inquire should be left with the Commonwealth Government. Frankly, I was more than astonished at his remarks. I would be ashamed to say such a thing myself. Every time we have trouble in this

State we say we can do nothing, but must depend upon the Commonwealth.

Mr. Seward: Only for a particular section.

Mr. BERRY: That may be so, but it is the position on this question. Whatever we bring forward must go to the Commonwealth Government. No wonder people say it is time we closed up this place. We are getting that on every hand. We are allowing what little authority we still possess to go deeper into the drain, to fall more fully into the hands of the Federal Government. If we are going to leave everything to the Federal Government, why do we spend until 1.30 a.m. on debates in this Chamber which do not matter because the Federal Government has the last say. There is no point in it. There is no greater need in connection with any industry in the world for the tackling of secured debts than there is in connection with our own rural industry. What has the Commonwealth Government done? What little it may have done, the point is that we should do something for ourselves. Let us tell the Commonwealth Government to do some of the things we want it to do. It is not for it to tell us what we have to do all the time. We are saying, "Let us hand everything over to the Commonwealth Government so that it may tell us what to do." That is the attitude of the Minister.

The Minister for Lands: Nothing of the sort; you ought to wake up.

Mr. BERRY: If members on the Ministerial bench are as awake as are members on this side, I shall be satisfied. I object to the proposal that everything we do or attempt to do for the rural industries must go to the Federal Government and be talked over for months. We are asking members of this House to help us to arrive at a figure that will enable us to pay our debts and be honourable. We are always saying that we should do this and we should do that, but we never seem to get any further. We ask members to support us in our endeavour to arrive at a basis whereby we can make a definite recommendation for the reduction of the secured creditor in Western Australia. What has been done or what is being done outside Western Australia does not concern us. Finally I should like to add that one of the troubles of the farming industry of Western Australia, and probably Australia, is the fact that the farmers will not come

forward and say what they want and what they intend to have. It has been interesting to read recently in a farmers' newspaper that the people in the home country, in spite of the war, are demanding that they shall get as fair a crack of the whip as any other section that is contributing to the war. We are asking the same. We are asking that the secured creditor shall be reduced in such a manner that we may become ordinary citizens of Western Australia and not bankers' minions, and on that plea I ask the House, through you, Mr. Speaker, to support the motion to give us this committee so that the vital problem may be dealt with in a manner equitable to every one, the banks, the farmers and the people of Australia alike.

MR. BOYLE (Avon) [5.48]: I listened with real regret to the remarks of the Minister for Lands and to his decision not to support the motion for the appointment of a joint committee. I could understand the Minister taking up that attitude in respect of a select committee of this House, because it is only a year or so ago that we had a select committee of that type. But the virtue of the motion we are discussing is the fact that it requests the appointment of a joint select committee or a joint committee of both Houses. If such a committee were appointed we would endeavour to carry light into darkness; we would make an effort to produce facts and figures and evidence that would perhaps convert some people to a realisation of the position. The Minister, by his refusal to accept the motion, is playing into the hands of certain, shall I say, reactionaries in another place. There are reactionary elements in another place, if I may say so without reflecting on that branch of the Legislature. Of course it all depends upon the meaning of the term reactionary. I take it they are living in a period of, say 100 or 150 years ago, and that therefore they are not up to date.

The Minister for Lands: They are not all like that.

MR. BOYLE: I am speaking about their mental condition.

MR. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not reflect on members of another place.

MR. BOYLE: I had no intention of doing so. The Minister has mentioned the passing of this matter to the Federal notice or, to put it more plainly, he conveyed the information to us that Federal officials had been charged with the duty of preparing evidence in regard to the debt position of the farmers in Australia. Whether the Federal Government can take action is a doubtful point. The point was thrashed out when the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Bill was before the House of Representatives and it was ruled there by the Speaker that the Commonwealth had no power under the Constitution to legislate in respect of the debt position of the farmers in the various States. That is borne out by Section 51 of the Federal Constitution which states—

The Parliament shall, subject to this constitution, have power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to . . . banking, other than State banking; also State banking extending beyond the limits of the State concerned, the incorporation of banks, and the issue of paper money.

Beyond that it has no power to legislate. The Federal legislation provided for a certain amount of money to be given to the States, and the States were asked to introduce enabling legislation for the distribution of that money. If the Minister suggests as the member for Irwin-Moore remarked—and that hon. member took the Minister to task for making the suggestion—that it is his intention to pass this over to the Federal Government—

The Minister for Lands: I said nothing of the sort.

MR. BOYLE: I am glad to hear that, because that will prevent any further criticism of the Minister. For my part, at any rate, I would not criticise the Minister for what he did not say. We must stand up to our obligations. The Dickson Royal Commission which sat in 1931 showed that of the £31,000,000 owing by the farmers secured debts totalled £25,000,000 divided between the Agricultural Bank and the Associated Banks and private mortgagees. There has been an attempt to give relief to the farmers under Section 65 of the Agricultural Bank Act. The Associated Banks, however, have always thwarted any attempt to interfere with what they are pleased to call contractual obligations. We have always held that a contract entered into in the 20's and since proved burdensome, is a

contract that is due for revision. We have pointed out repeatedly that commodity prices and the value of the assets are in a ratio of about five to three, and the resolution sent to us by another place is badly worded in so far as it makes the scope of the suggested inquiry too wide. The resolution passed by another place reads—

... to inquire into and report upon such measures which may be necessary and/or desirable to relieve those engaged in the rural industry from their present financial handicaps and problems.

The financial handicaps and problems of the farmers to-day would provide subject-matter for consideration by many Royal Commissions, and it never was intended, at any rate by members on this side of the House, that the inquiry should have such a wide scope. Therefore I contend that the setting up of a joint committee of members of both Houses, a proposal that has already been agreed to by another place, would have a good effect inasmuch as it would give members of another place with members of this House the opportunity to call and examine witnesses. I intend, however, to move an amendment—

That in line 7 of the resolution passed by the Legislative Council the words "financial handicaps and problems" be struck out and the words "excess debts" inserted in lieu.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot accept the amendment because all that is before the House at the present time is the motion "That this House agrees to the request of the Legislative Council, as contained in Message No. 23."

Hon. C. G. LATHAM (York) [5.56]: For quite a number of years members on this side of the House have attempted to get certain legislation through for the purpose of giving still further relief to those engaged in primary industries. We have been unsuccessful because, I think, members opposite, while not being desirous of ruining that industry have been, so to speak, so far removed from it, and have been wrapped up to such an extent in their own industrial problems that they have failed to realise exactly the position of the farmer. And so it is for the purpose of investigating the position, and if possible relieving those engaged in rural industry, that another place has asked us to join it in conducting an investigation, feeling convinced that it will be possible to secure sufficient evidence to

induce our friends opposite to alter their views. I have no desire that a lot of money should be spent on conducting the investigations; I want it done cheaply. Moreover, I do not see why the inquiry should cost very much. May I point out what the position is to-day and what has led up to it? Some years ago an inquiry was held and certain recommendations were made. There was to be a fixed price for wheat and at the same time an adjustment of the debt structure of the farmer. The Commonwealth provided £12,000,000 by way of loan, and up to date about £9,000,000 has been granted to the States. There still remains about £3,000,000, but unfortunately Western Australia will not have much of that money to draw because it has drawn nearly the whole of its share.

When Australia found itself in extreme difficulties in 1930, legislation was introduced setting aside contractual obligations. The bondholders were first appealed to—the persons who had lent money to Australia—to agree to a reduction of interest. A few did not and so legislation was brought down to compel them to accept a lower rate. Therefore, we already have a precedent for what members on this side of the House are asking. Legislation that has been framed and introduced by members of this side of the House to deal with these matters has not met with the approval of the House. We believe that is because members opposite fail to understand exactly what the position is. This proposed inquiry will serve two purposes. It will enlighten members as to the position of the farming industry in the same way as I hope the report of the Royal Commissioner on the pastoral industry will enlighten them during the recess. That is a very valuable document, but it tells a doleful story. It speaks of what one might term the bankruptcy of a most important industry. If the House agrees to this inquiry, then I believe the report of the committee will tell the story of the bankruptcy of the farmers of the State and it may result in their being afforded some relief. The legislation introduced by members on this side of the House has not met with approval because it was probably not framed to the liking of all hon. members. Let both sides of the House get together and bring forward some legislation that will meet with the approval of Parliament. I do not know

of any more conciliatory way to deal with this proposal. To my surprise, another place has said, "We do not know sufficient to enable us to pass this legislation, but we are prepared to have an inquiry in order to ascertain whether there is justification for what has been brought forward. We are prepared to accept the recommendation of a committee, provided it is a committee of both Houses." The Minister for Lands is opposing the motion more on the ground of cost than on any other. I point out that members of this House are quite willing to devote their time during the recess to inquiring into the disabilities of the farmers. I ask members not to force the motion to a division, but to agree to it on the voices. Let us inform another place that we also are prepared to agree to an investigation with a view to the introduction of legislation to provide some relief to the farming industry. There is an opportunity now for farmers to rehabilitate themselves, because of accommodation provided by the Commonwealth and State Governments and because we have a fixed price for wheat. We are also receiving a reasonable price for wool. I believe that if we remove the financial load now carried by the farmer—which is far greater than he can carry—he will be able to meet arrears from current income. It would have the effect of placing the industry on a much better footing. Every member of this Chamber wants to feel that those engaged in our primary industries are able to meet their expenses. Of that I am sure. The Minister for Works will be paid for his water supplies; and the Minister for Lands will receive his rents.

The Minister for Works: What I suggest is that you start a reading class to study the previous reports.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We on this side of the House cannot compel members to agree to legislation providing for variation of a written contract and a writing-down of debts. A statement made by the Minister for Commerce in the Federal House recently is worth noting. He explained to the House the nature of the agreement entered into between the States and the Federal Government for fixing the price of wheat. He pointed out that there must still be some relief afforded. While the £3,000,000 will provide, he said, more relief than the

£9,000,000 already expended, still he thought the £3,000,000 was insufficient. As the Minister for Works said, it is no use our possessing knowledge if we do not apply it. It is on that account that we make this plea. Let us inquire whether we are justified in asking the secured creditors to make some sacrifice in the interests of the wheat industry and in the interests of the State, as well as of themselves. Half the value of a security given by a farmer is, after all, the personal equation. I again appeal to the Minister to let us hold this inquiry with a view to ascertaining whether we can frame a Bill to meet the position. Let us make a Christmas offering to the farmer—an offer of peace and goodwill. Probably it will prove to be the solution of his difficulties. It is hardly natural for me to do it, but I appeal to members on the other side of the House on this occasion to join with another place in an endeavour to secure legislation to help the farmers in their great difficulty. Their present excess of debt will bring them down, will bring us down and the city down. It will mean ruination to us all.

MR. WATTS (Katanning—in reply) [6.7]: Like my colleagues on these benches, I was most astonished to hear the Minister for Lands oppose this motion. I cannot for the life of me appreciate the point of view of the hon. gentleman when he alleges that it would be necessary to investigate world-wide marketing problems and all the other drag-net arguments that he chose to bring forward in order to substantiate some case for an opposition to this proposal. We on this side of the House, I suppose, have come nearer to the difficulties of the individual farmer than the Minister for Lands has had the opportunity to do. I admit, of course, that he has probably come nearer to the difficulties of the individual pastoralist than we have had the opportunity to do; and because he has come closer to the pastoralist, I have no doubt that was his reason for authorising the recent Royal Commission. So we on this side of the House, being nearer to the farmer, the wheat grower and the small wool grower, have just the same point of view with regard to those people as I give the Minister credit for having with regard to the pastoralists. He thought their difficulties were sufficient to

warrant an inquiry by a Royal Commission. We come to the House and ask for an inquiry by a joint committee into the affairs of the agricultural community.

Mr. Rodoreda: There has never previously been a Royal Commission appointed to investigate the pastoral industry.

Mr. WATTS: I am not suggesting that there has been. There has not been until recent years a real need for an inquiry into that industry. I was strongly in agreement with the Minister that the Royal Commission should be appointed; never by one word have I said anything to the contrary, nor do I intend to do so. But because I am of that opinion and because the Minister was of the same opinion, I am under a difficulty to understand his opposition to this motion. Does he suggest that there are people engaged in the agricultural industry who are not in definite financial difficulties for reasons, if not the same, at least somewhat similar to those engaged in the pastoral industry? I do not think for one moment that the Minister will deny there are such people. He will admit quite readily that there are many whose cases require the most sympathetic treatment. Their financial troubles—their excess burdens of debt, as the member for Avon put it—have not been occasioned by their own dilatoriness, but by matters almost completely outside their control. If we admit that, surely we admit there is a case for an inquiry, if we have at heart the interests of the State, the continued activity of the agricultural industry and the preservation of the morale of the people engaged therein.

Mr. Rodoreda: Do not you know what is wrong with the farming industry?

Mr. WATTS: We know perfectly well what is wrong with the farming industry.

Mr. Rodoreda: Then what have you to worry about?

Mr. WATTS: Because we have tried on no fewer than four occasions to make Parliament appreciate our point of view. First of all, the Legislative Assembly on two occasions objected to our point of view. On the third occasion, the Legislative Assembly—very late in the session and without much discussion—assented to our point of view, but the proposal, having been made late in the session, was dismissed by another place. This year similar proposals were introduced

in another place, but were rejected. The conclusion arrived at in that House was that it was a matter which it was necessary to discuss and to investigate. It is because another place came to that conclusion that I am now supporting this motion. The Legislative Council was responsible for the wording of the motion. I am in the unfortunate position that, although I would like to make the intention a little more plain, to define some restrictions in regard to it, I cannot do so. Members know that you, Mr. Speaker, have ruled that an amendment cannot be made to the motion and I am entirely in agreement with you that that is the correct ruling in the circumstances in which the motion was brought forward; but I think it is sufficiently clear to the House what another place intends we should inquire into. Speakers on this side of the House have made quite plain what is required, and a perusal of the debate in another place would put the matter beyond a shadow of doubt. What another place wants to inquire into is what can be done reasonably, equitably and decently to relieve those farmers who are carrying an excess burden of liability which they have been unable to pay in the past and which the future does not hold out a prospect of their being able to pay. How shall they be relieved of that trouble? I want this House to consider the motion on that basis. Do not let us go wandering all over the globe inquiring whether shipping is available to carry mutton to Europe, or whether the marketing problems of the Eastern States are greater or less than are those of Western Australia. I admit those discussions are undoubtedly in most capable hands. The gentlemen to whom the Minister has referred and who are in the Commerce Department at Canberra no doubt are perfectly capable for the time being, anyway, of dealing with those particular problems. But I want an inquiry to be made into the financial position of the farmers of Western Australia as a whole, not as individuals. There is any amount of information available at little expense from persons who have a substantial knowledge of both sides of this question, from the financial as well as the producing side. We can get these people to give evidence without any great expense; and we can get members of this House and of another place to study the problems and,

I believe, propound some remedy, in just the same way as the Surveyor General has propounded some reasonable remedies of problems of a similar kind in the pastoral industry.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. WATTS: There are one or two other matters to which I wish to refer. The first is the fact that in 1937, when one of the earlier Bills was brought down for discussion in this House, a motion for its reference to a select committee was moved by the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald). At that time, as will be ascertained from "Hansard," 1937, page 1698—

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member replying or introducing new matter?

Mr. WATTS: I am not introducing new matter; I am replying to the Minister's suggestion that inquiry by a joint committee is unnecessary. On the occasion referred to, the then Minister for Lands (Hon. M. F. Troy) agreed to the suggestion made by the member for West Perth for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the problem sought to be dealt with by that Bill, and I submit it is the same problem which we are now seeking to deal with under this motion. At the time I disagreed with the suggestion for the appointment of a select committee; I did not then consider that it was necessary to refer the Bill to a select committee, but the force of circumstances over the past three or four years, the fact that there is no one in authority who seems to appreciate to the fullest extent the difficulties that are complained of, and also the fact of the excellent service which I believe has been rendered to this State by the report of the Royal Commissioner on the pastoral industry, lead me to believe that in all probability inquiry by a joint committee of both Houses is very desirable. In all the circumstances, I have come to the conclusion that we can do nothing better at the moment than agree to the motion.

In conclusion, I should like to point out to members that day by day the position on many farms is rapidly becoming worse. We do not like to contemplate a position when there will be any more leaving of farming properties, but if one goes into the country districts, one cannot fail to see that there is

a strong inclination in that direction. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that if, following on the report of Mr. Fyfe, we can investigate the problem of the agricultural industries proper, we shall give some indication of our intention to the best of our ability to put up proposals which might, and I think will, to a large extent rectify the position of those engaged in the rural industries. I also say that I decline to accept the suggestion of the Minister for Lands that the Commonwealth Government—to whatever extent he suggested it—should have anything whatever to do with this matter, except perhaps after the inquiry has been made. Before we can even approach that financial overlord for any assistance in this direction, we must know what we want. We cannot know what we want unless we first make an inquiry and obtain some unanimity of opinion between both Houses of this Legislature which, up to the present time, we have not been able to do. The idea of proceeding by way of a joint committee is no new one. When the Minister for Lands was in some difficulty last year as to what should be done about the Government Domain site for public offices, he moved for the appointment of such a committee, and he knows what good results were achieved. I submit to this House that it is equally possible, at little expense, without going, as the member for Pingelly said, beyond the confines of the city of Perth, but simply by calling those who are financially interested in the problem and those who represent the farmers concerned, to make an effort to find a substantial remedy for the problem which faces those people, and which, if it is not solved, will become a very sore burden, not only to the farmers but also to the Government and people of Western Australia.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	14
Noes	19
Majority against .. .	5

AYES.

Mr. Berry	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hill	Mr. Seward
Mr. Latham	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Mann	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Warner
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Patrick	Mr. Doney

(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Needham
Mr. Cross	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Fox	Mr. Pantou
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Triat
Mr. Holman	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Wise
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Withers
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Millington	

(Teller.)

PAIRS.	
AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Collier
Mr. Watts	Mr. Hawke
Mr. Stubbs	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Thorn	Mr. Johnson
Mr. North	Mr. Styants
Mr. Boyle	Mr. Raphael

Question thus negatived.

BILL—SALE OF LAND (VENDORS' OBLIGATIONS).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th November.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [7.40]: The provisions of this Bill, one might almost say, set a precedent in Australia, but having regard to the principle involved, not only can I support it whole-heartedly but I feel it will meet with the approval of every member. It may be said that there is protection for those who purchase freehold property by virtue of what is known as a caveat registered at the Titles Office. As regards the people who deal in larger real estate, we would be safe in saying that their transactions are carried out either through reputable firms of estate agents or through legal practitioners. Thus there is little risk of their not ascertaining the condition of the title or the existence of any encumbrances, and therefore we can say that their interests are adequately protected. But we have to remember that this Bill seeks to deal particularly with a large section of the community—people who probably have only one land transaction in the whole of a lifetime. They might be purchasing an unimproved block of land or a home. In either event it is their first and only transaction, and the purchase money probably represents the whole of their savings. While I do not subscribe to the suggestion of the hon. member who introduced the Bill that dishonest practice is prevalent, I admit that in my own experience cases such as he indicated have occurred. Although legislation should not be passed to meet individual cases, this is an instance where the life's savings of people are involved and it is the duty of Parliament to protect them.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But this measure will not protect them.

Mr. SHEARN: I realise that, even if the measure is passed, it will not afford 100 per cent. of protection, but it will go a long way towards affording some protection that does not exist to-day for the class of people to whom I have referred. A considerable number of people in the community have no idea of the provisions of the Land Transfer Act. I have known people to ask in amazement what is meant by the lodging of a caveat. Though some people are satisfied to take a degree of risk, they are liable to find themselves in a difficult position. Not necessarily owing to any intentional dishonesty but through force of circumstances some encumbrance might overtake the property and place the purchaser in a most unfortunate position. The Criminal Code makes provision for dealing with any individual who, even in this way, might be guilty of an indictable offence. The hon. member's object is not so much to bring such an individual to justice as to ensure that the asset of the purchaser is adequately protected. Despite the provisions in the Criminal Code, even when a prosecution succeeds, it does not restore to the individual concerned the asset that should be his. And so I contend that the Bill, while not giving as much protection—as the Leader of the Opposition by interjection indicated—as many other Acts give, or no greater degree of protection, nevertheless goes a long way towards protecting purchasers against persons who may either deliberately or through force of circumstances place the purchaser in the position of losing either a portion or the whole of his savings. Therefore I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill, which I am sure will meet with the approval of members generally.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; **Mr. Fox** in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Notification of condition of title to be given:

Mr. McDONALD: The clause provides that every vendor of land sold by contract of sale shall give notice in writing to the

purchaser of any mortgage or encumbrance, lien or charge, on the land, of any writ of fieri facias or warrant of execution entered in the register book or registered against such land. If the vendor omits to give notice of any such encumbrances, mortgages, charges or writs, then he becomes, under this clause, liable to a fine of £100 or imprisonment for six months, or both fine and imprisonment. The penalty can be imposed merely because the vendor, perhaps quite unintentionally, omits or forgets about some charge or encumbrance or writ. In many cases contracts of sale are fixed up between the parties without either legal advice or the advice of an estate agent. The contract of sale is perfectly valid although it may be just in a few words on a sheet of notepaper. If a vendor with intention to deceive omitted any such encumbrance, then quite apart from this clause he would under the existing law become liable to be charged with an offence under the Criminal Code. So we do not need to worry about the offender who intentionally misleads the purchaser. However, the clause imposes the penalty even upon a vendor who unintentionally or through forgetfulness omits to give to the purchaser the full particulars required by the clause. Contracts of sale such as covered by the clause are not necessarily for large sums of money. They may be contracts for the sale of pieces of land for £5.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Or perhaps £500.

Mr. McDONALD: In either case, suppose some vendor through forgetfulness omits one of the particulars required to be given, the punishment is very heavy indeed.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But this is only the maximum. He might be fined 10s.

The Premier: No. The minimum fine would be not less than 10 per cent. of the maximum.

Mr. McDONALD: When the Legislature imposes a penalty, that is of course a guide to the Court in fixing the sentence. The minimum, as the Premier has said, is 10 per cent.; I had forgotten it myself. I move an amendment—

That in line 10 the words "one hundred" be struck out, and the word "fifty" inserted in lieu.

I propose later to move an amendment striking out the penalty of imprisonment. If we prescribe a maximum fine of £50 and the fine is not paid, then the offender is still liable to imprisonment automatically under

the terms of the Justices Act—so many days for each £1 of the fine. I should feel rather concerned if we left in the Bill so heavy a penalty for a more or less technical offence not associated with any intention to deceive.

Mr. FOX: I am quite prepared to accept this amendment, but shall oppose the further deletion which the member for West Perth has indicated. Other Acts, especially that dealing with offences in relation to gold, impose fines and also terms of imprisonment. The offence here in view is one of the most despicable if committed deliberately.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The member for South Fremantle is under a misconception. If it is done deliberately, it is a criminal offence. This Bill brings within the class of offences what is at present not an offence if not done deliberately. If done deliberately, it carries a penalty of as much as three years. That makes all the difference. I support the member for West Perth.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. McDONALD: I move an amendment—

That in lines 12 and 13 the words "or to imprisonment for six months or to both such fine and such imprisonment" be struck out.

I view the clause with considerable misgiving, because it creates a penalty for an entirely innocent, honest mistake, just as if a person was selling goods and by chance the goods were not up to quality although the vendor believed them to be so. It is as though the vendor of such goods were made liable to a criminal charge.

Mr. FOX: I still think those words should remain, because fine and imprisonment would be at the discretion of the court. Unless the court held that the offence was bad, imprisonment would not be imposed in addition to a fine.

The PREMIER: I had hoped the member for South Fremantle would accept this amendment. The principle involved is quite new, and does represent a reform that is really necessary, inasmuch as there have been people who, sometimes deliberately, and many times inadvertently, have been made to pay some small undisclosed charge when purchasing land. In one case a man bought land on the 28th June, and because he was registered as the owner on the 30th June he had to pay land tax. The amount was only 7s. or 8s.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But the tax is paid in advance.

The PREMIER: This purchaser had to pay it in advance for the next year. Immediately after acquiring the property, he started to build on it; and because the building was started on the 30th June he had to pay double rates, though that made no difference to the offence. The principle of making purchasers aware of any encumbrance on land is new and is good, but the offence is not a strikingly criminal offence. In the majority of cases the amount involved is not great. Most people when making large transactions in land employ a solicitor or a reputable land agent. Two individuals do not negotiate the purchase and sale of property worth between £4,000 and £5,000 without securing legal assistance. In most instances the amount outstanding on land will not be much, and the property will be subject to a caveat or other form of registration at the Titles Office. To render an individual liable to imprisonment for six months for such a minor offence that might be quite unintentional, is altogether out of proportion. The member for South Fremantle would be well advised to agree to the amendment.

Mr. FOX: In ninety-nine out of a hundred cases such as the Premier refers to, there would not be any litigation at all and the matter would be settled amicably. Even if a prosecution followed, the penalty would be not more than 10s.

The Premier: No.

Mr. Watts: You are rather optimistic.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It would be £5.

Mr. FOX: The penalty would be 10 per cent., which is the maximum.

The Premier: No, the maximum would be £50.

Mr. FOX: Those mostly concerned will be poor people and the amount involved will be small. In such cases the issue would not be taken into court unless there was fraud in connection with the transaction. No harm will result in leaving the penalty to the discretion of the magistrate.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. McDONALD: I move an amendment—

That a new subclause, to stand as Subclause (2), be inserted as follows:—“(2) In this section the word ‘charge’ shall not include rates or taxes charged on the land.”

The amendment means that if a vendor inadvertently omits to state the amount of rates or taxes on the property, he will not be liable to a penalty. One of the reasons for the amendment was indicated by the Premier. The transaction may take place on the 1st November, on which date the new municipal year commences and rates automatically become due. In those circumstances, the vendor could easily inadvertently fail to make a correct statement as to the rates and taxes on the land. Furthermore, the amendment may save the vendor from a trap into which an unscrupulous purchaser might lead him.

Mr. FOX: I will accept the amendment although at the same time I think the vendor should not make the mistake referred to by the member for West Perth.

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

Clause 4—Except under certain conditions vendor not to encumber land after entering into contract of sale:

Mr. McDONALD: I move an amendment—

That at the end of paragraph (a) the word “or” be struck out.

The object of the amendment is to correct a drafting error.

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

Clause 5—Where purchaser refuses to consent to mortgage vendor may appeal to the court:

Mr. McDONALD: I move an amendment—

That in line 7 of Subclause (1) after the word “vendor” where it first appears, the words “or where such consent has been given but by reason of some act or default of the purchaser the vendor is unable to mortgage or encumber such land or to register a mortgage or encumbrance thereon” be inserted.

Under the provisions of the Bill, after a contract of sale has been made, the vendor is not allowed to mortgage the land unless a caveat has been lodged against it at the Titles Office to protect the interests of the purchaser, or unless the purchaser consents to that course or the court, on a special application, allows the vendor to do so. The clause provides that where a

purchaser unreasonably refuses his consent, then the vendor may appeal to the judge for permission to mortgage the land.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Why should he get permission? The vendor is not the sole owner.

Mr. McDONALD: A house worth £800 may be sold for a deposit of £50, the balance being payable at the rate of 30s. a week.

Mr. Hughes: The vendor has sold the property, but has not been paid for it.

Mr. McDONALD: In that instance the purchaser's interest is £50, whereas the vendor's interest in the property is £750. The vendor may find himself in difficulties and desire to raise money to meet certain obligations. In the circumstances, it would be unfair for the purchaser to refuse to allow the vendor to raise the money on the property.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What protection will the purchaser have?

Mr. McDONALD: He may consent to the vendor taking that action and he will dictate the terms regarding the protection he requires, or he will be protected by a caveat and the person who will lend the money to the vendor under the second mortgage will know that the property is subject to the purchaser's rights. That is reasonable protection. My amendment will afford the purchaser additional protection and may prevent possible deadlocks.

Mr. FOX: The sponsor of the Bill in another place has informed me that he has had the amendment examined and is agreeable to it.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. McDONALD: I move an amendment—

That in line 9 of subclause (1) the word "appeal" be struck out and the word "apply" inserted in lieu.

This is a technical amendment. The term used in approaching a court is to "apply" not "appeal."

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

Clauses 6, 7, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Council with amendments.

BILL—BUILDERS REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of four amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; Mr. Needham in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 3—Delete all words after the word "corporate" in line 28, page 2, down to and including the word "registered" in line 31, and substitute the words "whose building work is managed and supervised by a person registered under this Act or exempted from the necessity of obtaining registration."

Mr. NEEDHAM: The Bill I introduced had for its main object provision for the registration of companies, which is essential because companies should be held responsible for all their building activities in the same way as an individual builder would be held responsible for the buildings erected by him. I contend that if companies are not registered it will mean they will be able to shelter behind their employees. There is nothing to prevent a company from carrying out unsatisfactory work and the only remedy then open to the board appointed under the Act would be the cancellation of the registration of an employee. The company could then appoint another employee whose registration in turn could be cancelled and that practice could continue indefinitely. As it left the Chamber, the Bill provided that before a company could register at least one of its directors should be a registered person. Although the fact was not specifically mentioned in the Bill it is obvious that a person exempted from the need to obtain registration would be equally acceptable in that capacity. In addition the measure provided that one other employee of the company should also be registered. That arrangement would not impose any

hardship on anyone and at the same time would ensure that practically at all times some qualified member of the company would be available to control its building activities. The measure provided that the registered director would have the necessary technical knowledge of the business of building enabling him properly to assist in the direction of the work. I find that a certain company sent to hon. members of another place a letter containing this paragraph—

Under the definition of "building" in the Act we would be debarred from carrying out such work. We would be pleased to arrange for your inspection of our premises and buildings so that you can see for yourself the class of building work carried out by this company.

There is no intention to debar that company from registration, nor is any reflection cast either on the company or the work it has been doing. The interpretation of the Bill contained in that paragraph is not correct. It struck me that the company was desirous that the law of this land should conform to its particular requirements rather than that its requirements should conform to the law. The Bill as amended by another place includes a clause for the registration of companies, but in view of the amendment of paragraph (d) of Subclause 2, it is obvious that no company would apply for registration but would merely employ a registered person and shelter behind his registration. My first intention was to ask the Committee to reject the amendments from another place, but as I am not desirous of the Bill being lost altogether, I propose to agree to them. I therefore move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 4—Insert after the word "registered" in line 32, page 3, the words "or exempt from registration."

No. 3. Clause 4—Delete all words after the word "corporate" in line 35, page 3, down to and including the word "registered" in line 38, and substitute the word "or."

No. 4. Clause 4—Delete all words after the word "corporate" in line 10, page 4, down to and including the word "registered" in line 12, and substitute the word "or."

On motions by Mr. Needham, the foregoing amendments were agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; Mr. Seward in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 11; Conditions of registration:

Mr. SEWARD: I move an amendment—

That in line 5 of the proposed new Subsection (2) the word "five" be struck out and the word "seven" inserted in lieu.

When I discussed this matter with the British Medical Association I was told that five years was not a sufficient period for the purpose of this subsection, in view of the fact that many of our doctors are away at the war and might be away long enough to discover that on their return their practices had been taken up by the refugee doctors. The amendment is moved in order to make the position doubly secure.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That in lines 6 and 7 of proposed new Subsection (2) the words "be registered as a medical practitioner under this Act" be struck out and the words "be registered as a medical practitioner under this Act if in the opinion of the Minister and at the absolute discretion of the Minister it is desirable in the interests of the general community of the State to grant such registration."

This is the clause that gives the right to a person who has been given a region to be registered as a medical practitioner and to practise in any part of the State he likes. That of course means that he will go to that part of the State where he can obtain the best practice with the highest remuneration. We must protect the practices of those of our doctors who leave Western Australia with the armed forces and particularly must we protect their interests in centres where the population is attractive from the medical point of view. If one of those refugee

doctors who is granted a region shows exceptional ability and, in the interests of the community, he should be kept here, he might be allowed a further term of registration. That question should, however, be within the control of the Minister. This amendment is moved in the interests of our own medical men who are patriotic enough to give up their practices and go to the war. In one case a doctor will receive only one-fifth of what his earnings were before he went away. Surely it is not proposed that on the return of our doctors they shall find their practices taken by some foreigner.

Mr. SEWARD: I have no objection to the amendment. Every care should be taken to ensure that the practices of our own medical men are ready for them to take up again on their return from the war.

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

Clause 3—New section:

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move an amendment—

That Subclause 1 of proposed new Section 11A be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—

(1) Where the Governor is satisfied that—

(a) the residents of any area are not adequately provided for in respect of medical or surgical services; or

(b) Any hospital within the meaning of the Hospitals Act, 1927, or the Lunacy Act, 1903-1920, or the Mental Treatment Act, 1927, requires for the proper administration thereof one or more resident medical officers to be employed or engaged on the staff of such hospital and a duly qualified medical practitioner or a sufficient number of such duly qualified medical practitioners is or are not available for such appointment or engagement—

he may by proclamation published in the "Gazette" declare such area, or hospital, as the case may be, to be a region within the meaning of this section, and may in like manner alter any area aforesaid or revoke such proclamation.

Some of our institutions are very short of doctors, and in the circumstances it is desirable that they should, when necessity arises, be declared regions. It appears that some of the refugee doctors are specialists, and they might be particularly useful in connection with our institutions.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I do not like either the clause or the amendment. The Minister in the course of his second reading speech quoted a letter from the British Medical Association, suggesting methods that might be adopted to meet the situation. I feel sure that doctors who return from the war will find their positions anything but happy at the outset. During the last war promises were made that the positions of men who went away would be retained for them, but on their return many of them had to seek employment anew. The same thing may occur in the case of our medical men who are engaged in this war. The views of the association are worthy of consideration. It suggests that the State Co-ordination Committee, which has fully investigated the matter, should draw up a report upon the medical requirements of country districts.

The Minister for Health: We do not want all that over again.

Mr. NEEDHAM: It suggested that an inquiry should be made concerning remedies for the present situation by means of increased transport facilities; that steps should be taken to safeguard the interests of doctors on active service; and that serious consideration should be given to the desirability of giving guarantees in the country districts concerned. The health of the community is our first consideration, but I am not satisfied that the Health Department has fully explored the present position. Upon their return from the war, our doctors may not be fully in touch with the most modern medical and surgical methods.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They will come into contact with the most modern practices imaginable.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The man who takes the vacancy may perhaps be somewhat difficult to replace.

The CHAIRMAN: We are dealing only with Subclause 1.

Mr. NEEDHAM: That is the subclause I am dealing with, Sir. Knowing that there is a danger not only to the medical profession but also to the health of the people, I oppose both the clause and the Minister's amendment. We have yet to learn whether these men from other countries are as well versed in medicine as they should be.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We have to face facts. It is not much use talking about having a survey of the medical needs of Western Australia. The department which I have the honour to represent knows all about that phase. There are at least 16 vacancies for doctors in country districts and in Government institutions. Another division will leave before Christmas, taking with it five or more Western Australian doctors. If many more divisions leave—and according to all indications that will be so—at least five doctors will accompany each of them. Where will the medical profession be in Western Australia so far as the public is concerned? Under this clause the man whom it is supposed to affect will not start for seven years. If he is chosen, he will practise for one year.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Is this man a qualified man now?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is a matter for the Medical Board, which controls the Medical Act and all registrations. If a man is suitable, he is appointed for one year. His term may be renewed from year to year, but only from year to year, until he has spent seven years in a particular region. He is not allowed to practise outside that region at all. To visualise any danger we have to assume that the war will last seven years, because if it finishes earlier and our doctors come back, any of these men can be sacked at the end of the year. If the war continues for more than seven years, at least some of these men will be eligible for registration. No one has more sympathy than I have with the B.M.A. However, we are short of medical men—about 21 in all. I am told there is likely to be a batch of 200 of these other men going up for examination before the end of the year.

Mr. Fox: How many of them are available in Western Australia?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There are two now available, and I had a letter recently from one in the Eastern States. Every member of the Medical Board is a member of the B.M.A., and the members of the board have to be satisfied that these men are suitable. There is a right of appeal to a judge of the Supreme Court, but that judge also has to be satisfied. I see no danger to the men going away, and am

optimistic enough to believe that we will beat both Germany and Italy within seven years.

Mr. RODOREDA: I agree with what the Minister has just stated. However, I do not like his contemplated amendment. I compliment the draftsman of the Bill on the number of safeguards it includes—more than I have ever before seen. What I fear is not that the floodgates will be opened and a stream of doctors admitted, but that we shall not get enough doctors. The Minister for Health now wants to grab all available doctors for city hospitals. I am concerned about the situation in country districts, especially in the North-West. To say that the present situation has been caused by the war is ridiculous. The war has merely intensified it. Difficulty has always been experienced in inducing medical men to go into the country. Some who go there do so because they cannot make a living in the city. To a doctor in the North-West a salary of £1,000 a year is paid. He receives that amount; there are no bad debts. We simply have been unable to secure doctors there, even prior to the war.

Mr. SEWARD: I accept the amendment of the Minister for Health. I realise the difficulty visualised by the member for Roebourne; but, as the Minister has pointed out, a man who is a specialist might be more valuable to the Perth Hospital or a mental hospital than practising in a country district. I assure the member for Perth that there are no grounds for the fears he has expressed. In the country districts the difficulty is to prevent the closing-down of hospitals on the ground that for months no doctors have been available for them. The shortage exists, and we must if possible secure doctors. We have had an opportunity to discuss the Bill with the B.M.A., but I was disappointed with members of that association.

The CHAIRMAN: We are dealing only with Subclause 1.

Mr. SEWARD: I ask the Committee to agree to the Minister's amendment.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I assure the Committee that one of the chief reasons for this amendment is that information, especially from New South Wales, which has a similar measure to this, is that there are some men available who are

purely specialists and would be of little value as general practitioners in the country. We could accept the services of such a man under this amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. CROSS: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of paragraph (a) of Subsection 2 of the proposed new Section 11a the words "or some other country" be struck out.

Mr. Watts: Why not move the Chairman out of the Chair?

Mr. CROSS: I will do nothing of the sort.

Mr. Watts: It would have the same result as the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. CROSS: If my amendment is not carried, the result will be that any person who has passed through a regular graded course of medical study for five years or more may practise in this State. I do not believe in opening the door to the whole world. We do not want men from Nazi Germany, China or Japan to come here and practise as doctors.

Mr. SEWARD: Needless to say, I ask the Committee not to agree to the amendment. If agreed to, the whole Bill might as well be scrapped. The object of the Bill is to make provision for the Medical Board to register a doctor who has obtained his degrees in a country outside the British Empire, with the exception of two countries, Italy and Japan. I would remind the member for Canning that Asiatics are not permitted to enter Australia.

Mr. Cross: A German Swede could come here.

Mr. SEWARD: Not unless he obtained a permit.

Mr. Cross: He can get a permit.

Mr. SEWARD: As the second reading has been passed, I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment.

Mr. MANN: I support the member for Pingelly. I cannot understand the member for Canning opposing the clause and submitting such an amendment.

Mr. Cross: You are too thick in the head.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Beverley will kindly resume his seat. The member for Canning will withdraw the

remark he has made. It is a distinct reflection on another member and cannot be tolerated.

Mr. Cross: I withdraw.

Mr. MANN: If the member for Canning were sincere, why did he not oppose the Bill on the second reading?

Mr. Cross: Why not specify the countries in the Act?

Mr. MANN: The member for Pingelly has already explained our immigration laws. Asiatics may not enter Australia. As there is a great scarcity of doctors in our country districts and in the North-West, I trust the amendment before the Committee will not be agreed to. The Minister for Health has also pointed to the necessity for doctors in mental institutions.

Mr. ABBOTT: I oppose the amendment. The object of the Bill is to obtain skilled men from whatever place they can be obtained. The Minister has pointed out that every precaution will be taken to ensure that the men are suitable; and it must be borne in mind that there is a crying need in our country districts for medical services. Surely, the member for Canning does not suggest that those services should be denied the country people?

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. SEWARD: Mr. Chairman, there are two amendments preceding my next amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee has given effect to its wishes in regard to the amendment moved by the member for Canning. I suggest that further amendments in that direction would be repugnant.

Mr. SEWARD: I move an amendment—

That the following paragraph, to stand as paragraph (c), be added to Subsection (2) of proposed new Section 11a:—

(c) has served as resident medical officer in a hospital approved by the Minister for a period of not less than three months and has been certified by the responsible medical officers of that hospital as competent in the carrying out of the duties assigned to him in such hospital.

It is my intention to move to strike out Subclause (3). When discussing the matter with the Medical Board, it was pointed out that there was no medical school in Western Australia and that consequently examiners could not be appointed. To overcome that difficulty, I am moving the amendment now

before the Committee. The responsible medical officers of a hospital will be able to try out a doctor serving in the hospital.

The Minister for Health: In other words, you propose to try the doctors out in the metropolitan area, not in the country?

Mr. SEWARD: Yes.

Mr. TRIAT: This is the particular provision that I said I desired to be inserted in the measure when I spoke on the second reading. In my opinion, the method proposed is the best that could be adopted to test a man's capabilities. People in the back country require doctors, and this is the best method to overcome the difficulty.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move an amendment on the amendment—

That in line 1 of proposed paragraph (c) before the word "resident" the word "junior" be inserted.

The Perth Hospital is conducted by a superintendent, 11 junior medical officers, and 63 honorary doctors. The Fremantle Hospital is conducted in the same way, although the number of medical officers is not so great. I presume that these immigrant doctors would enter the hospital on the same terms as junior doctors do, at £200 a year with board and lodging. That is my reason for the amendment.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I oppose the amendment. In my view, it would stultify the actions and decisions of the board provided for in the previous subclause. The doctor must comply with the requirements of that subclause. If those requirements are not sufficient I cannot see that the additional paragraph will help. We should not overload the requirements and I hope the amendment will be rejected.

Mr. SEWARD: I am not satisfied that sufficient precautions are provided and therefore I am pressing the amendment. There is nothing to show the standard in the country from which the doctor came as compared with our standard, and that is the most important matter of all. We must maintain the standard of our medical profession. The amendment is necessary in order that a doctor might give a practical demonstration of his work.

Mr. RODORED A: I oppose the amendment. The further we proceed with the

Bill, the worse we are making it from the point of view of country residents. Under the proposed new Subsection 3 the doctor will have to satisfy the board that he has had experience in the practice of medicine and surgery.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is getting away from the question which is the amendment on the amendment.

Amendment on amendment put and passed.

Mr. RODORED A: The need for doctors in country districts is urgent, and by the amendment we shall delay their practising by at least three months after the proclamation of the measure. If a doctor can satisfy the board as to the other requirements, this one is not necessary. The qualifications of such a doctor would compare favourably with those of many doctors in the country. In fact, it would be impossible for such a doctor to give worse service than some of our country doctors give. The Bill is loaded with safeguards to protect our own doctors.

Amendment, as amended, put and passed.

Mr. SEWARD: I move an amendment—

That the proposed new Subsection (3) be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That the following paragraphs be added to the proposed new Subsection (9):—

In cases where the board has decided that none of the applicants is suitable to be the holder of a certificate of regional registration in respect of a particular region, a local authority or the Minister may appeal in the prescribed manner to a Judge of the Supreme Court, sitting in chambers against the decision of the board within one month from the date of notification of such decision to the Minister, and thereupon the applications of all the applicants shall be dealt with by the judge by way of appeal from the decision of the board.

The judge may decide the appeal on the evidence before the board, or he may deal with the matter by way of rehearing, and for that purpose may summon and enforce the attendance of witnesses and take evidence on oath or affirmation in the same manner and to the same extent and shall have the same powers and authority as in the exercise of his ordinary jurisdiction. The local authority or the Minister, as the case may be, and the board and any applicant may be represented by counsel at the

hearing of the appeal, but no order for payment of costs shall be made by the judge.

The decision of the judge determining the appeal shall be final and conclusive, and notwithstanding anything contained in this Act the board shall give effect to such decision.

Rules of Court may be made for regulating the practice and procedure to be followed and observed in appeals under this subsection.

Any local authority appealing against a decision of the board is hereby authorised and empowered to defray the expense of such appeal out of its funds.

In this subsection "local authority" means any council of a municipality or any board of a road district having its administrative offices within the region in relation to which the applications for a certificate of regional registration have been refused by the board.

The intention is to provide the right of appeal in cases where the Medical Board has decided that no applicant is suitable. At first it appeared that the right of appeal might be given to one of the applicants, but the objection was raised—and I think it is tenable—that if there was a number of applicants and the board decided that none was suitable, the right of appeal should be vested in all of them. The position of the judge would be more difficult if he had to determine who amongst a number was the only suitable applicant. Then it became a question of deciding who should have the right of appeal so that the needs of the region, as well as the suitability of all the applicants, might be considered by a judge without too much difficulty. It is proposed that the local authority or the Minister shall have the right of appeal against the decision of the board refusing to appoint anyone to a region, and the appeal shall take place within a month.

The Minister for Health: To what local authority do you refer?

Mr. WATTS: The council of a municipality or the board of a road district having its administrative offices within the region. If the local authority did not appeal, the Minister could do so. The local authority would be authorised to defray the cost of the appeal out of its funds, which otherwise it could not do. The judge would be empowered to decide the appeal on the evidence before the board or deal with the matter by way of re-hearing. No order may be made for the payment of costs. There is a

feeling that the board might be unwilling to grant any certificate, no matter what the circumstances might be. The board might make its tests so stringent that it would be impossible for any applicant to gain admission, no matter how suitable he might be. It is unlikely that such appeals would be frequent. I ask for these provisions in order to exercise some gentle restraint on the board so that it will not be inclined to impose too stringent conditions upon applicants and thereby render the provisions of the measure entirely inoperative.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Do I understand that the applicant himself will have no right of appeal?

Mr. Watts: That is so.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I should have thought that one of the applicants should have the right of appeal.

Mr. Sampson: The local authority is more responsible.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: If three or four men applied and the board decided that none was suitable, the Minister might say that he was not interested. I think the appeal is a matter for the applicant.

Mr. WATTS: The Minister himself was responsible to some extent for my moving the amendment. A similar amendment on the notice paper was originally in my name, and the Minister showed me an opinion by the Solicitor General to the effect that if there were five or six applicants for a region and the board decided that none was suitable, it would not be reasonable for the judge to accept an appeal from one applicant only, because he might be the least suitable of the lot. The appeal would have to be from all the five or six applicants in order that the judge might have the whole question inquired into in his own way and, on the evidence before him, select the most suitable man. I agree with the point raised by the Solicitor General. I saw at once there was the difficulty he indicated. I sought for a means by which another method of appeal could be obtained that would overcome the objection, one that would bring before the judge the whole of the applications that had been before the Medical Board. It must be remembered that the right of appeal will not arise unless there is no accepted applicant for a region. When the Parliamentary Draftsman took over the

amendment for amendment, he noticed that the Minister had placed on the notice paper a provision regarding hospitals and mental treatment homes. The officer considered that the Medical Board might easily decline to make an order for a regional appointment to a hospital and possibly that is why the Minister was included in the right of appeal.

The Minister for Health: But the applicant is not provided with the right of appeal.

Mr. WATTS: That is so. If the appeal is given to one man, it will apply to the one all the time, and should three or four men have applied and been rejected, the one who appealed might be the least suitable.

Mr. ABBOTT: I oppose the amendment. If a number of applicants were rejected by the board, they should all have the right of appeal. I cannot see any objection to that. No doubt the judge would consider the merits of each applicant and possibly two or three might be selected. The Minister or the party to employ a medical man would then be in a position to reach a decision. If the amendment is rejected, will I have the opportunity to move an amendment standing in my name?

The Minister for Health: I do not think you will have that opportunity.

Mr. ABBOTT: What will be the position, Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN: I will give the hon. member the right to move his amendment, provided the amendment now before the Committee is defeated.

Mr. RODOREDA: I would like some further information from the member for Kaitiaki. In the event of the board deciding that an applicant was unsuitable for any one of the reasons previously mentioned, the applicant can apply to the judge on appeal and may be successful. The point arises as to whether the appeal could be lodged in respect of any one of the qualifications and the judge's decision would be final. Does it mean that the applicant, on succeeding with his appeal, could be prevented by the board from practising on some other ground or even be prevented from practising in a hospital for three months? I think the position regarding the appeal should be more definite.

Mr. WATTS: My amendment sets out that the decision of the judge shall be final and conclusive, and the Medical Board will

be required to give effect to the decision. There cannot be the right of appeal until the board has rejected the applicant. And that cannot be until the medical man has complied with all the conditions and has been for three months in a hospital.

Mr. RODOREDA: But the board may not allow the applicant to do three months in a hospital.

Mr. Watts: They cannot prevent that.

The Minister for Health: If the man has a diploma and has spent three months in hospital, then the board will have to arrive at a decision.

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

Clauses 4, 5, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—GROWERS CHARGE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 25th September.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [9.40]: I do not intend to delay the House for long. The circumstances of farmers in Western Australia have been such as to invoke a general feeling of sympathy throughout the community. The difficulty I see in connection with legislation of this type is the danger of threatening the security of advances that the farmers now obtain. I would not like to be a party to threatening the privileges that remain to the farmers in securing what credit they can. Under the Bill, the hon. member desires that the farmer shall receive certain guarantees of prior rights and an assurance of income from the acreage he has planted at the rate of 3s. per acre up to 500 acres, or 4d. a bushel for grain harvested from crops sown. For over 500 acres he proposes that there shall be a return of 1s. per acre on the area assessed. The Bill is designed to make very definite that part of

the proceeds specified in the Bill shall be received by the farmer unencumbered and without doubt shall be used for his own purpose at his own discretion. One very interesting feature of the Bill to which I expect the Leader of the Opposition will object—in fact, I shall expect him to move during the Committee stage for the deletion of the provision—is Clause 7.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Minister must not mention clauses of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I shall be disappointed if the provision in the Bill which relates to regulations receives the endorsement of the Leader of the Opposition. If ever there was a Bill designed and meant to be controlled by regulations, this is it.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I have not yet indicated my support of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have listened with amusement and sometimes with amazement to statements the Leader of the Opposition has been pleased to make in this Chamber in respect of legislation which has embodied the power to make regulations.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Now get down to facts.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the power to make regulations were excluded from the measure, the Bill under discussion would not be operative at all.

Mr. Patrick: Yet you want the Leader of the Opposition to move to exclude that provision!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I hope the Leader of the Opposition will be definite on this occasion regarding his attitude.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You are supporting it and you want me to oppose it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I anticipate that the Leader of the Opposition will move for the deletion of that particular provision and that I shall sit with him. If he is consistent, I take it, in his attitude towards this class of legislation, he will move in the direction I have indicated, so that there shall not in this instance be any government by regulation regarding the administration of the legislation. One thing that puzzles me is just how this Bill, if it becomes law, will be administered. I think there will be many difficulties in the implementation of its provisions. The member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) when introducing the Bill referred to similar legislation in New

South Wales but the Bill is not altogether parallel with that legislation which deals with farmers who have their assets either assigned or under the control of an authority, and administered not by themselves but by a separate authority. I wonder whether the privileges of the farmer under this legislation will be in conflict with the collections made under prior liens or under priority claims, which system obtains both with Agricultural Bank and institutional clients. I am afraid the minds of those responsible for seasonal advances will be disturbed by the authority given under this measure. Just how all these repayments will be made is very indefinite. Who will be the controlling authority? I hope the hon. member will be able to show just what is intended in that direction and also indicate that in giving prior claim to the farmer under the proposed terms and conditions there will be no conflict with those who have undertaken the responsibility of providing additional advances.

I have no particular objection to the Bill. While the system of administration is open to question and there is doubt as to whether it will not impair the farmers' existing credit, the hon. member has introduced the measure to give farmers some right to control a part of their proceeds, and to apply them in the best interests of themselves and their families. If the Bill is passed, he will have some say, irrespective of his indebtedness, in the expenditure of a certain proportion of the proceeds of his crop. I am not prepared to vote against the Bill but would like some explanation on the points I have raised.

MR. BOYLE (Avon—in reply) [9.50]: The Minister has been very fair in his resume of the provisions of the Bill. I am very glad to be able to make that comment because a similar measure did not have such a reception from the former Minister for Lands. The points raised by the Minister are quite capable of solution. No more difficulty will be experienced in the collection of this right due to the farmer than is experienced in the collection of any other debt due from the proceeds of the farmer's crop. The Bill provides for payment to the farmer of 4d. per bushel, or 3s. per acre—whichever he elects to take—from his own crop. If a farmer is under no obligation to a licence for any moneys advanced to him to put in that crop, the Bill does not apply

to him. Obviously there would be no need to secure to a man a portion of a crop which he already had in full.

The object of the Bill is to secure to the indebted farmer—to the farmer who has put in a crop and entered into lien obligations and who has no right, title or interest in that crop until the whole of his obligations have been discharged, and the proceeds of whose crop are likely to be taken by other creditors—some portion of his proceeds. It often happens that a farmer having produced a crop, finds he has no interest in it although everybody else is provided for. Reference has rightly been made by the Minister to the framing of regulations to make the Bill workable. There is no need for me to emphasise that no Bill that becomes an Act is workable without regulations.

The Minister for Lands: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOYLE: What I object to is fragmentary Bills which provide for everything to be by regulation. Such Bills become beaucroatic measures. With Ministerial sanction, an officer in charge of the department administering the Act, proceeds to draw up endless regulations.

The Minister for Lands: Of which the House approves.

Mr. BOYLE: Some regulations actually exceed the powers the department should have, and consequently the House rejects them. The Bill provides power to make regulations. It is quite obvious there is only one safe collecting agency in matters of this kind, and that is the first lienec, who has advanced money to the farmer to enable him to sow his crop and carry on for the year. Of necessity, under our law, he takes the whole of that farmer's proceeds and, after his own claims have been satisfied, returns the surplus to the farmer or to other people who lodge claims. The object of the Bill is that, for a small commission, the first lienec—and while I could not include this in the Bill, it can be included in regulations—shall, after having satisfied his own claim—and in the case of the Agricultural Bank having satisfied all statutory liens—proceed to give to the farmer 4d. per bushel or 3s. per acre. That would mean that the farmer would rank next in lien conditions to the first lienec and would come before all the other rapacious gentlemen who lodge claims against the farmer's proceeds. In other words, the Bill provides some little portion for the farmer out of the crop, ranking him,

to the extent of 4d. per bushel, next to the first lienec, that is, the owner of the bill of sale. I do not foresee the difficulties that the Minister foresees in that regard. The regulation would provide that the first lienec, before any of the moneys pass out of his hands, secures to the farmer the small amount laid down in the Bill.

It was stated by the Minister that there would be difficulty in regard to farmers securing credit if the Bill were passed. What does it matter to the man concerned—that is, the lienec or the man prepared to advance seasonal requirements to the farmer—if the farmer has a right, laid down by law, rating next to his own but not preceding his own? One would think the grantor of a bill of sale would be only too glad to see that the farmer was also secured in a small amount for his crop. I doubt whether this payment would amount to more than £50 or £60 per year to the average farmer. It was pointed out when the Bill was introduced that it would give the farmer the right to provide medical attention for his family and himself, a certain amount of pocket money that is denied him to-day, and the means to buy clothing, which he does not now possess.

Reference was made by the Minister to the New South Wales Farmers' Relief Act. Those references were quite correct. That Act is administered by a board and according to the report of the board, the number of farmers served by it is nearly 4,000. The board receives the whole of the proceeds of the farmer's work for the year but the Act lays down that he is entitled to 10 per cent. of the gross proceeds. In many instances that amounts to several hundred pounds. The New South Wales Government recognised that there should be a legal right as well as an inherent right of the farmer in his crop. Consequently the board allows 10 per cent. to the farmer for medical and all other purposes except carrying on the farm. Under this Bill, the first lienec could fulfil the same purpose as is served by the board in New South Wales. Either the bank which makes the advance or the mercantile firms which do so would know that they must, after the satisfaction of their own claims, provide for the farmer's needs. If there is a second lienec, the first lienec is responsible for payment of the second bill of sale. If there are more lienecs, he is responsible for their payment. There is not a firm of wheat merchants in Perth that would dare to dis-

tribute the proceeds of a farmer's crop until all legal requirements had been met. The Agricultural Bank issues a blue book or lien book, in which is set out the claims against about 7,000 farmers. No merchant would give to a farmer the proceeds of his crop until the Agricultural Bank had been satisfied. If the farmer owes nothing, this Bill will not apply to him. This is a humanitarian measure, which seeks to establish for the farmer the right that every other creditor of the farmer has. I do not see how it can interfere with the farmer's credit. The Bill is purposely designed not to undermine the established rights of the man who provides seasonal requirements, that is, credit, for the farmer. If a firm goes to the aid of a farmer and advances up to £300 to enable him to put in and take off his crop, that firm has a right in law to secure 20s. in the pound, should that amount be available. That right would not be interfered with by this legislation. The man who has grown the crop and made something out of nothing has, under the existing law, scarcely any rights whatever. He has no rights to payment for his own labour, judgment summonses can be served upon him upon slight provocation, and in certain circumstances even if he has a good crop he may be left destitute. The Bill is designed to obviate that sort of thing, and I commend it to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

MOTION—YOUTH EMPLOYMENT.

Debate resumed from the 20th November on the following motion by Mr. Sampson (Swan):—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should take action to ensure the greater employment of our youth, particularly in the direction of liberalising apprenticeship quotas in the various arbitration awards and agreements, and in regard to extending the facilities for vocational and technical training, includ-

ing lads who may engage in primary production, thus helping to provide for post war conditions and the future welfare of youth.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [10.5]: The motion contains two main points. It is true the hon. member dealt mostly with generalities, and did not appear to have a grip of the subject under discussion.

Mr. Sampson: That is not so.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: He did not explain in what specific direction industrial agreements should be liberalised, neither were the steps the Government might take explained with any clarity. It was evident from his speech that he was discussing the delicate and difficult problem of youth employment without having inquired very deeply into it. The present practice is for an employer voluntarily to take an apprentice. If the trade, calling, or industry concerned is subject to an award or industrial agreement, the apprenticeship agreement has to be registered with the court. The apprentice is then covered by the conditions set out in the Apprenticeship award or agreement and by the apprenticeship regulations issued thereunder. The Arbitration Court has adopted a standard set of regulations, and these are usually incorporated in awards and industrial agreements. The hon. member desires that steps should be taken seriously to interfere with the system set up under the regulations, but he has not been very helpful in that direction because he has failed to come to grips with the problem. The ratio of apprentices to be employed in any industry is determined by the court when the parties to an award or agreement are not able to come to an understanding. The same principles apply in regard to the number of junior workers or junior labourers who may be employed in any industry that is subject to an award or industrial agreement. There is no limitation as to the employment of junior labour in an industry that is not subject to an award or industrial agreement. Even the Factories and Shops Act places no limitation upon the employment of junior labour in such industry. In regard to the vexed question of apprenticeship, I point out that the motion actually asks the Government to interfere with the law of the

land, namely, with registered awards and industrial agreements. The Government has no intention of doing that, and I do not know what would be said if it made the attempt. I have always understood that awards of the court are not to be interfered with by any political pressure. Now the hon. member suggests that the Government should do this. These things are regulated by law. Evidently the hon. member has not studied the question.

The subject of youth employment has led to much speculation for some time past. A little while ago a Commonwealth-wide organisation was set up with branches in every State to deal with the problem of employing the youth of Australia. The branch operating in this State is known as the Youth Adult Employment Research Committee. That committee has presented its first progress report and Parliament received it a few weeks ago. Amongst other recommendations the committee makes the following—

(a) The creation of an authority charged with the industrial welfare of youth.

(b) The institution of a continuous survey covering the demand for juvenile labour and the social and economic factors which affect that demand from time to time. The committee believes that a full-time research officer should be appointed to deal with this particular problem, and to act as liaison officer between the departments of Education, Labour, Employment and Industries.

(c) That early action be taken to provide for the necessary extensions in the collection and compilation of statistics, particularly relating to employment in commercial, industrial and kindred activities.

Following a recommendation made by the committee to the Government some time ago, a sample survey was made in the metropolitan area of children leaving school during the period extending from the 1st October this year to the re-opening of the schools next year. The Director of Education is co-operating with the committee in this work, which will determine the nature of the employment taken on by children leaving school, and the prospects of such employment continuing. It will also indicate whether the most effective placements according to the natural and other ability of the children are taking place. In respect of technical education, in which I am sure we are all interested, to show what

has been done in recent years and the progress made, I quote statistics supplied to me by the department. These deal with the number of young people up to 21 years of age provided with technical and vocational training in technical schools and the School of Mines for the years between 1930 and 1940 inclusive. The figures are as follows:—

Year.	Males.	Females.
1930	2,463	1,282
1931	2,652	1,386
1932	2,515	1,498
1933	2,651	1,574
1934	2,831	1,501
1935	3,179	1,446
1936	3,598	1,676
1937	3,545	1,563
1938	3,613	1,711
1939	3,896	1,812
1940	4,166	2,010
	<hr/> 35,109	<hr/> 17,459

This table presents the same figures in three-year periods—

	Males.	Females.
1931-32-33	7,818	4,458
1934-35-36	9,608	4,623
1935-36-37	11,054	5,086
1940 (one year) ...	4,166	2,010

It will be seen there has been a substantial increase in the number of young people who have received technical and vocational training in recent years. It could be said that increase has been very noticeable since 1933, when the Government which the member for Swan supported was heavily defeated at the polls.

I now quote a table which sets out the increased accommodation provided in our training schools during the last five years—

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Narrogin School of Agriculture	1,120	13	8			
Muresk Agricultural College		2	19	8		
Kalgoorlie School of Mines		28	5	8		
Wiluna School of Mines						
Perth Technical School	20,707	15	7			
Perth Junior Technical School		61	7	1		
Boulder Technical School						
Fremantle Technical School		6	14	1		
Midland Junction Technical School						
Collie High School—Metalwork Centre		417	2	7		
Manual Training Centres	2,431	16	2			
Domestic Science Centres	2,482	8	5			
	<hr/> 27,218	<hr/> 2	<hr/> 11			
Total Expenditure from Loan Funds				27,218	2	11
Commonwealth Grant	28,000	0	0			
Jubilee Appeal	15,000	0	0			
				<hr/> 43,000	<hr/> 0	<hr/> 0
				<hr/> £70,218	<hr/> 2	<hr/> 11

Increased plant and equipment to the value of £7,500 has been provided for the use of such schools and colleges during the same period.

The Commonwealth Government has allotted £15,000 for machinery for the training of tradesmen in this State for defence purposes. One thousand pounds of that amount has been expended and contracts have been let for the balance of £14,000. The whole of the plant and equipment will be on loan from the Commonwealth to the Perth Technical College.

The numbers of apprentices registered at different periods since 1929, up to and including the registrations as at September last, are as follows.—

STATEMENT SHOWING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF APPRENTICES REGISTERED AT THE COURT OF ARBITRATION AT VARIOUS DATES.

Date.		New Registrations for Month.	Cancellations and Completions.	Total Apprentices Registered. (a)
Year.	Month.			
1929	May	....	....	1,700
1929	July	(b)	(b)	1,608
1930	October	(b)	(b)	1,692
1932	August	(b)	(b)	1,136
1933	October	(b)	(b)	821
1935	July	(b)	(b)	950
1935	October	(b)	(b)	885
1936	August	(b)	(b)	1,148
1937	April	(b)	(b)	1,370
1939	October	35	32	1,759
1939	December	37	25	1,785
1940	March	33	66	1,728
1940	June	32	36	1,727
1940	September	35	31	1,740

(a) Number of total apprentices registered, excluding those employed by the Commissioner of Railways, and Trainee Nurses.

(b) Particulars not available.

Note.—Until October, 1939, systematic statistics taken out at regular periods are not available.

The foregoing facts and figures indicate that the State Government, together with the help of the Commonwealth Government and the trustees of the Jubilee Appeal for Youth and Motherhood, has done a great deal in recent years to extend the facilities for vocational and technical training. There is no shortage of skilled tradesmen for defence activities at present being carried out in this State. There may be a slight shortage of certain types of tradesmen at certain times due to rush orders, but generally the number of skilled tradesmen available is sufficient to meet all demands. It is very doubtful if the same thing can be said of any other State of Australia. The Government by providing increased accommoda-

tion, plant and equipment is making it possible for many additional young people to receive skilled training. In all the circumstances it can reasonably be claimed the Government is dealing with the whole problem in a constructive way and in the right way. It can also be fairly suggested that the proposal of the member for Swan, if given effect to, would not assist in the direction he desires, but would create endless dispute and confusion among the workmen and in the industries of the State.

I believe that on reflection the hon. member will agree that it would be highly unwise to attempt to interfere with the industrial position set up as regards apprentices. Some people have an idea that there is a short cut to a tradesman. I attended the recent technical conference at Canberra, and the Director of Technical Education there said that in his opinion it took five years to train a competent tradesman. He added it was true that some were rushed through in a shorter period but they would be only 50 per cent. efficient. In regard to tradesmen needed at that time for the manufacture of aeroplanes, he stated that those men who came from garages and were used to internal combustion engines were most serviceable and could be quickly trained to take their places in the factories; but I could see that the Director of Technical Education, although anxious to speed up the training of mechanics in Australia, especially for the manufacture of war munitions, was of opinion that in order to obtain competent tradesmen we had to train them properly.

In respect of factories the position is different. I agree that in this State we are at a disadvantage as to employees in factories. In the first place, there is not the opportunity or scope here that there is in Eastern Australia; but the Technical College with its manual training facilities is endeavouring to cope with the matter. In conclusion let me say there is a highly dangerous proposal in the motion, "that the Government should take action to secure the greater employment of our youth, particularly in the direction of liberalising apprenticeship quotas in the various arbitration awards and agreements." That is exactly what the Government is not prepared to do. I point out that there is no limitation regarding youth employment where neither awards nor agreements obtain. Further-

more, in the matter of technical training the Government, within its financial limits, is doing the best it can. I could become quite enthusiastic in extending facilities for technical training, but the Government is doing its utmost in that direction already, and what the motion proposes certainly will not have the effect of bettering the position, but rather of confusing it. Therefore I disagree with the motion, and propose to vote against it.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan—in reply) [10.29]: The Minister, I must admit, has gone to some pains to pour contempt upon a motion the justification for which is generally admitted. The hon. gentleman complained that the motion indicated a lack of consideration, and then, probably realising that that did not quite meet the case, proceeded to read from a specially prepared statement a quantity of matter which, I submit, does not apply to the case.

The Minister for Works: That is because you do not understand the case.

Mr. SAMPSON: If I fail to understand the association of the arguments adduced by the Minister, it is the Minister who is largely to blame. The hon. gentleman criticised what he termed interference in respect of the Arbitration Court and generally.

The Minister for Works: Not generally—with the Court.

Mr. SAMPSON: As a matter of fact, according to the Minister the motion has no virtue in it whatever.

Mr. Raphael: Are you trying to break down Arbitration Court standards?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SAMPSON: The interference referred to by the Minister is intended to provide advantages for the boys of this State. The Minister read a statement to the effect that an apprenticeship for a term of five years was necessary in order thoroughly to qualify a tradesman.

The Minister for Works: I quoted an authority.

Mr. SAMPSON: Anyone who has had even a passing acquaintanceship with a trade will agree that a term of five years is unnecessary nowadays, because trades now are specialised portions of trades as they were known in the past.

Mr. Holman: You would not say that about printers.

Mr. SAMPSON: I certainly would. In the old days a much wider range of knowledge was required in the printing industry, because there was an absence of specialisation. The member for Forrest (Mr. Holman) has referred to printers. In the old days the printer not only prepared the formes for the machine, but also made the ink. He had to mix his inks. I admit that then there was justification for such a long period of apprenticeship, but not so to-day. On a previous occasion, I gave the House some facts regarding the time it took to become a thoroughly competent linotype operator. A man without any previous experience whatever—I can prove this statement—qualified as a linotype operator in 15 months. He was declared to be proficient by a board of examiners and has not lost one hour's work since.

Mr. Raphael: For whom is he working?

Mr. Holman: Can he set up a job?

Mr. SAMPSON: A linotype operator works a keyboard. I challenge the Minister, in view of what I have just said, to say whether it takes five years to train a tradesman.

The Minister for Works: The person I quoted is a great authority.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am not concerned about that. I can present indisputable facts.

The Minister for Works: You are thinking of backyard factories.

Mr. SAMPSON: If a person can qualify in 15 months and secure a position in one of the leading newspaper offices of the city as a linotype operator, then the argument adduced by the Minister must fail.

Mr. Holman: Is it not a fact that some young chaps in the United Press cannot get a job elsewhere in Perth?

Mr. SAMPSON: I am not discussing personal matters at the moment, for which perhaps the interjector should have cause to be thankful.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. SAMPSON: After all, objection to this motion is objection to affording our boys an opportunity to qualify in a trade. I venture the opinion that not one member in this Chamber is anxious to deny boys that opportunity. The motion speaks for itself. It is reasonable, it is fair, it is proper and it is overdue.

The Minister for Works: It condemns itself.

Mr. SAMPSON: If there is any condemnation of the motion, it will be in the presentation of it and in the reply by the Minister. Undoubtedly, the position with regard to boys learning a trade to-day is scandalous. The Minister touched on two points. One indicated the steps which the Government should take. I say that if the Government is convinced that steps are necessary to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act so as to provide for a larger quota of apprentices, then the Government has the power to amend the Act. The Minister said that the present practice was for employers to take apprentices. I remind the Minister that the employer is severely restricted in the number of apprentices he may engage. I have urged that the number should be increased. We should have more apprentices in the State. No lad should be born into this world, pre-condemned, as it were, to become a sustenance or a relief worker.

Mr. Holman: Some employers take on juniors without apprenticing them.

Mr. SAMPSON: The position undoubtedly is that there is no possibility for most lads to learn a trade. The views of the Minister reflect the opinion of those who are satisfied with things as they are. They are quite satisfied with the restrictions which exist and the consequent denial of the opportunity to boys to learn a trade. The Minister also stated that no limitation is imposed on the number of workers coming under the Factories and Shops Act. Whoever prepared the Minister's speech ought to look into the matter further, because that statement is absolutely and completely wrong. The Minister said that the limitations are regulated by law. I admit that, but it is a wretched, improper and immoral law. It is a law preventing boys from being equipped in such a way as to enable them to earn a living. What is the use of the gift of life to a boy who is predestined by a conspiracy—that is what it amounts to—which prevents him from learning a trade? The law requires amendment.

Mr. Holman: What about the United Press?

Mr. SAMPSON: The member for Forrest—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Do not mind the member for Forrest. Address the Chair.

Mr. SAMPSON: The member for Forrest should have no objection to the United Press Ltd.

Mr. Holman: Why?

Mr. SAMPSON: Is there need to prove a negative? The interjection was most improper. If the member for Forrest desires to say something, he should say it without mental reservation and leave an opportunity for reply.

Mr. Raphael: Who owns the United Press?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SAMPSON: Here is the member for Victoria Park, flushed with victory! He spent a few months or a few weeks at his profession and by some means or other was able to become qualified.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SAMPSON: He is certificated.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. member to confine himself to the reply.

Mr. SAMPSON: Very good. I congratulate the member for Victoria Park on having done so. I want others to get the same opportunity.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order in congratulating the member for Victoria Park at this stage.

Mr. Raphael: Mr. Speaker, I ask for a withdrawal of the remark made by the member for Swan.

Mr. SPEAKER: Which remark?

Mr. Raphael: The remark regarding certain examinations.

Mr. SAMPSON: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will resume his seat.

Mr. Raphael: It is not so much a personal reflection on myself.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not permitted to make a speech.

Mr. Raphael: I do not desire to make a speech. The reflection was on the Dental Board and upon men who have passed its examination. I ask that the member for Swan withdraw the remark he made.

Mr. SAMPSON: Any remark I made to which the hon. member takes exception I unreservedly withdraw. I would not hurt his feelings on any account, but a reply must be made to some of these irresponsible statements.

Mr. Raphael: You got a reply to yours.

Mr. SAMPSON: As I was endeavouring to say, there is a crying necessity in Western Australia for consideration of the fair

and reasonable needs of youth. They are not receiving such consideration. I recently gave the House some figures showing the number of our apprentices. I said that the number of lads who left school each year was about 3,000. About 2,500 girls left school each year, but girls do not come under this motion. On the 30th September of this year 1,740 apprentices were registered with the Arbitration Court, and an additional 231 at the Railway Workshops, a total of 1,971.

Mr. Holman: How many were there in 1930?

Mr. SAMPSON: I have not the figures, but they are available to the hon. member.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Do not notice interjections.

Mr. SAMPSON: The figure 1,971 should be divided by five, and then we would have the approximate number coming out as tradesmen each year. In my remarks when moving the motion, I added 100 to provide for those taking up accountancy or other skilled callings. That I think is fair. I have said that one-fifth of 1,971 would come out each year. That is a very small number, because all those who learn a trade do not remain at it. Many were selected without proper care and never had a real liking for the trade. An offer was made to them to learn the trade; and, without proper consideration as to their inclination for the trade, they accepted the offer. They later found they had made a mistake, so that I am afraid the one-fifth of 1971 must be further reduced. That point is an important one. I regret the Minister made no reference to it in his reply, because members and he are concerned about it. For some reason or other the Minister is opposing the motion. I have stated on many occasions that some boys have not the opportunity they should have because the conditions in various trades are such that employers are discouraged from engaging apprentices. The motion is well justified, and I should be lacking in my duty to the people of the State if I failed to express my opinion on the matter. I hope that members, realising the importance of impressing those in a position to improve the outlook for boys, will vote in favour of the motion. The Minister finally agreed that in this State there is not full opportunity for boys, and I presume he meant boys who desire to be apprenticed. My motion asks that, so far as our circumstances permit and our powers extend, we should afford that opportunity

and should not restrain boys from acquiring knowledge that will enable them to gain a degree of independence and a capacity to maintain homes of their own and provide such service to the State as is needed not only in the city but also throughout the country. Boys in Western Australia should be given consideration that will enable them to make a living, marry and bring up families in comfort and content. I hope that members will approve of the motion and that there will be implanted in the mind of every member a resolve to do whatever can be done in order to improve the position of our lads.

Question put, and division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	17
Noes	..	..	..	20

Majority against .. 3

AYES.	
Mr. Abbott	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Boyle	Mr. Patrick
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hill	Mr. Seward
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Warner
Mr. Latham	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Mann	Mr. Doney
Mr. McDonald	

(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Fox	Mr. Panton
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Raphael
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Holman	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Triat
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wise
Mr. Millington	Mr. Withers
Mr. Needham	Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

BILL—ESCHEAT (PROCEDURE).

Council's Amendment.

Returned from the Council with an amendment, now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

Clause 5—Delete the words "published in Perth" in lines 9 and 10.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Notice of an application may still be published in the "West Australian." If the property was situated at Albany, the notice need not be published in the local paper, but it must be published in a paper circulating in the district.

Mr. Sampson: It would be optional.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. There is no objection to the amendment, and I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. DONEY: The amendment seems to be satisfactory. A solicitor may utilise the Perth paper and/or the local paper.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—SALE OF LAND (VENDORS' OBLIGATIONS).

Council's Message.

Message from the Council notifying that it had agreed to amendments Nos. 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6, and had disagreed to amendment No. 2 now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; Mr. Fox in charge of the Bill.

No. 2. Clause 3, line 35—Delete all the words after "pounds."

The CHAIRMAN: The Council's reason for disagreeing to the amendment is that the seriousness of the offence justifies the retaining of the imprisonment penalty.

Mr. FOX: The Committee has considered the matter and I have no wish that it should stultify itself. Therefore I move—

That the amendment be insisted on.

Question put and passed; the Assembly's amendment insisted on.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

MOTION—CHILD WELFARE DEPARTMENT.

Maintenance of Children.

Debate resumed from the 25th September on the following motion by Mrs. Cardell-Oliver (Subiaco):—

That in the opinion of this House, consideration should be given by the Government to the advisability of granting institutions an in-

creased allowance for the care and maintenance of State wards, and also the advisability of extending the period of maintenance until the end of the fifteenth year.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon.

H. Millington—Mr. Hawthorn) [11.1]: The motion contains two requests for consideration. One relates to increasing the allowance paid for State wards in institutions, and the other to the desirability of increasing the age to which such wards may be provided for in institutions, to 15 years. Similar requests have been previously considered by Governments, but so far they have been unable to accede to them, much as they would desire to do so. There is no doubt about the splendid work carried out by the institutions referred to, and we all admire their efforts. When I was in charge of the Child Welfare Department, I was closely in touch with them and appreciate their magnificent work. The House should remember that various organisations undertake the responsibility to conduct these institutions, and the Government subsidises them to the extent of 7s. per week per unit. I can see no objection to the motion, which merely asks the Government to give consideration to the two points mentioned, and there is certainly no reason for opposing that request. On the other hand, I regret I cannot give any assurance that an increased allowance will be granted. The Treasurer will have to go into that phase. In these days many requests for increased expenditure are placed before the Government. I notice, however, that when the Government requires more money, it often meets with a very definite refusal. The request for the increase in the age for children to be provided for in these institutions is somewhat similar to the movement to increase the school-leaving age to 15 years. These objectives, while most desirable, are yet beyond our reach. Nevertheless, we should aim at achieving them. I certainly shall not oppose the motion, although I cannot promise that the Government will accede to the request. Certainly sympathetic consideration will be extended to the matter. I take this opportunity to express the appreciation of the Government and the State regarding the splendid work carried out by the charitable institutions in undertaking the responsibility of looking after children who would otherwise be homeless.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [11.4]: I was glad to hear the assurance given by the Minister for Works that the motion will receive the sympathetic consideration of the Government. I recognise the difficulties associated with Government finance at all times, and particularly in these times. It is a matter of deciding which call upon the Government is the most urgent. In the last analysis there is no direction in which the Government could invest its money with so sure and satisfactory a return as in the rising generation. All other investments are comparatively trifling as regards the return in value contrasted with money invested in the on-coming generation with a view to making the young folk more healthy, better nourished and more physically fit. If there is one lesson we can learn from the totalitarian countries it is the recognition of that fact. They direct all their movements and propaganda towards bringing up the youth of those countries along the lines they desire. We do not admire those lines, but we can realise they have appreciated the importance of youth and have taught the world a lesson that could be applied by us on correct lines to the great advantage of future generations. The substance of the motion has already received the commendation of Mr. Justice Wolff in his report on youth employment. Referring particularly to farm schools, where orphans and State wards are supported, he recommended that an allowance of 10s. per week should be paid in respect "of each destitute orphan boy maintained and trained by the school until the boy reaches the age of 15 years, on condition that the methods of vocational training comply with the requirements laid down by the Education Department and that the schools show that they are instructing the boys and keeping up an educational standard satisfactory to the department." The Royal Commissioner was referring particularly to farm schools and orphanages and to State wards supported at those schools.

The Minister for Works: I forgot to mention that the Lotteries Commission has rendered additional assistance.

Mr. McDONALD: I know that certain funds have been made available by the Lotteries Commission, but Mr. Justice Wolff, in his report, analysed the position of the farm schools and found that, apart from donations in kind and the products of the

schools themselves in the way of milk and so forth, it cost on an average more than 15s. per week to maintain a child. As State wards are very often orphans, which means there is little chance of securing financial support from relatives, if no increase is granted on the present amount of 7s. per unit paid by the Government, the institutions will be faced with increasing difficulties in providing adequate instruction and maintenance for the children entrusted to their care.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [11.8]: I hope the House will agree to the motion.

The Premier: We are not opposing it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Only a little while ago this House passed a motion asking the Commonwealth to do what the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) urges the State Government to do. We cannot dictate to a superior Government and then refuse to proceed along the same lines ourselves. So long as I have the assurance of the Government that it will give effect to the motion—

The Premier: We will give consideration to it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Of course we cannot move for more than consideration, but I want something more than that. If we are to dictate to a superior Government, we ourselves should set the example. I wish particularly to appeal to the Government in the interests of those institutions that are not now receiving the assistance that the Minister for Works mentioned. I refer to the Werribee farm and the institutions conducted by the Methodists, Presbyterians and the Salvation Army.

The Minister for Works: Those people have conscientious scruples.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: As the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) said, it costs more than 15s. a week to feed and clothe the children.

Mr. Cross: Sister Kate receives only 5s. 6d. a week per child.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I would be ashamed to admit that I represented an electorate in which such conditions could obtain.

Mr. Cross: I am not particularly proud of the fact.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I would not expect the hon. member to be proud of it, and I anticipate he will support us on this occasion. I want the Premier to give the

House an assurance that he will do more than merely give consideration to the motion. Effect should be given to it. Do not let us be hypocrites. We shall be if we dictate to the Commonwealth Government and do not act accordingly ourselves. The member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) has rendered good service in bringing this matter before the House. I only wish we could instruct the Government, but our standing orders will not permit us to do so. If there ever was justification for the expenditure of public funds, it is on the children dependent upon the State for help. We should do everything possible to encourage the charitably-minded persons who are giving their lives and their services to the orphans, and at present we give them little enough encouragement. The greatest encouragement would be financial help, and I appeal to the Premier to give effect to the motion. At the outside the cost would be £5,000 and good would result.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [11.12]: I hope the Government will give effect to the terms of the motion. Every member is anxious to increase the assistance to children dependent upon the State for support. Expenditure could be saved in different directions and the money made available for the better support of the rising generation on whom we will depend in the future. It is difficult to rear a child on 7s. a week, and we have been informed that to maintain a State ward at any one of the institutions mentioned in the motion costs between 14s. and 15s. per week. These children are the best immigrants that the Commonwealth and the State could obtain. In past years we spent money galore on bringing people to this country, and the motion sets out that boys and girls born and bred in Australia should receive better consideration. I marvel how the institutions are able to carry on and nurture the children at such a low rate of maintenance. Those children should be given a chance in life. They are entitled to it, and on such a meagre allowance as that now paid it is not possible. I support the motion whole-heartedly.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [11.14]: I particularly desire sympathetic consideration to be accorded the motion. I stress the position of the children who are maintained in

Sister Kate's home. Those in charge of the institution spend the whole of their private incomes in assisting the work.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And are spending their lives there too.

Mr. CROSS: Yet Sister Kate receives only 5s. 6d. per child per week, which works out at about 3d. per meal for 21 meals each week. Of course, quite a considerable amount of money is raised in support of the institution but at the very least Sister Kate should receive the same as the amount paid to other institutions. Although quarter-castes are maintained there, the ladies in charge of the institution are devoting their lives to the work, and the least the State can do is to recognise that fact and increase the allowance paid per child. I do not know how Sister Kate or the other institutions can maintain a child even on the basis of 7s. a week, and, as I have said, Sister Kate does not receive that amount. The cost of living is rising and certainly consideration should be given to the motion. One of the main duties devolving on the State is to safeguard the interests of the rising generation. I hope the Government will give effect to the motion.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle) [11.15]: Every hon. member will agree with the necessity for greater assistance being given to those institutions that are doing such wonderful work for the State. I have had an opportunity to visit the Swan Boys' Orphanage many times during the last few years. I also visited the Salvation Army Home some time ago but I believe that institution is on a better footing now than it was then. The Swan Boys' Orphanage has a wonderful superintendent and I desire to place on record the good work being done for that institution by the members of the Fremantle Lumpers' Union, of which I was secretary before coming to this House. It speaks volumes for that institution that a man, many years after being an inmate, thought so much of it that he raised a fund to give assistance and amusement to the boys resident there. During the last eight years a committee organised by the Lumpers' Union has spent hundreds of pounds on that institution and afforded a good deal of pleasure to the boys who have passed through the home in the last seven or eight years. The material for a gymnasium was provided. Last

year a lathe costing £60 or £80 was supplied. That could well have been provided by the Government. The Government did supply a little of the material for setting up the lathe. Members of the Fremantle Lumpers' Union are to be congratulated on the fine work they have done.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is getting away from the motion. There is nothing in it dealing with the Fremantle Lumpers' Union.

Mr. FOX: The work of the union has relieved the State of—

Mr. SPEAKER: There is nothing about the Lumpers' Union in the motion and the hon. member is not in order in discussing the union.

Mr. FOX: If the Government has been relieved of its obligations by some organisation providing money that would otherwise have to be spent by the Government, I think I am justified in mentioning it.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order in discussing the Fremantle Lumpers' Union under this motion and I must ask him to discontinue doing so.

Mr. FOX: I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

MR. SAMPSON: (Swan) [11.19]: I desire to support the motion, but I think there should be a more scientific method of determining the amount to be allotted per week. The figures provided should keep step with the basic wage and rise or fall as that wage varies.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco—in reply) [11.20]: I am glad the Government is not opposing the motion though I felt it would not do so. There is one point which has not been mentioned but which was stressed when I moved the motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in saying anything except in reply to the debate:

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: These children are State children. That has been mentioned, I believe.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think everybody agreed with the motion. I have not heard any opposition to it.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: That is what I wish to say. These children are State children, but what has not been stressed is the fact—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in saying what has not been stressed. She can reply only to what has been said.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I do not know how to get over the difficulty. All I know is that the children I desire to be helped are those children who belong to the State. They were compulsorily taken by the Government from the court and sent to these homes and I want to see that the institutions receive sufficient money to provide them with food and drink.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not replying to the debate, but introducing fresh matter.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I trust the Minister will give due consideration to the motion. The Government has not given any guarantee that it will help the children, but I trust it will do so.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 11.22 p.m.