Hon. L. A. Logan: Exactly the same.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If there had been a decrease in the cost of living, emphasis would have been placed on the word "shall."

Hon. L. A. Logan: You are doing me an injustice.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not think that possible. Mine might be a faint hope, but I trust that when the numbers are counted, most members will show that they have seen the light, and are prepared to do the right thing by having something definite in the Act so that the worker will know where he stands. This is a matter that should not be left to the whim of two or three men to decide. To permit three men to say, "You are not entitled to the adjustment," is a ridiculous position. Therefore I hope the second reading will be carried.

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

Ayes	12
Noes	15
Majority against	3

Ayes.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. F. R. H. Lavery
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. J. J. Garrigan	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. R. F. Hutchison (*Teller.*)

Noes.

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. Sir Chas. Latham
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. L. C. Diver	Hon. J. Murray
Hon. Sir Frank Gibson	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. C. H. Henning	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. J. McI. Thomson
Hon. A. R. Jones	(*Teller.*)

Pair.

Aye.	No.
Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. A. F. Griffith

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

House adjourned at 9.22 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 19th October, 1954.

CONTENTS.

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

QUESTIONS.

HARBOURS.

(a) As to Albany and Bunbury Boards, Finances.

Mr. HILL asked the Premier:

(1) When did the Albany Harbour Board take over the port of Albany?

(2) How much has the Albany Harbour Board paid into the Treasury since that date?

(3) In what year did the Treasury last receive any payment from the Bunbury Harbour Board?

(4) How much has the Treasury paid for—

(a) maintenance;

(b) interest on behalf of the Bunbury Harbour Board since that year?

(5) What was the accumulated deficiency or surplus on the 30th June, 1954, of—

(a) The Bunbury Harbour Board;

(b) the Albany Harbour Board?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) The 17th April, 1950.

(2) £15,897.

(3) 1944-45.

(4) Since 1944-45 to the 30th June, 1953, the amount owing to the Treasury by the Bunbury Harbour Board for maintenance and interest charges is £153,805 and £265,638 respectively.

(5) The audited financial statements for 1953-54 for the Bunbury and Albany Harbour Boards are not yet available.

(b) As to Cabinet Decision on Upriver Development, Fremantle.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

Will the successful motion of the member for Fremantle on upriver development of Fremantle harbour make any difference to the decision of the Government to extend the harbour upstream?

The MINISTER replied:

Subsequent to the passing of the motion by this House, the matter was referred to Cabinet by me. As the Government had already gone into all aspects of this question very fully before making its decision, Cabinet reaffirmed its decision that, when necessary, additional berths will be provided upstream.

MOTOR VEHICLE TRUST.

As to Payment of Commission on Premiums Collected.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

(1) Does the trust under the Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act pay any commission or other remuneration to local authorities for collecting premiums when dealing with vehicle licences?

(2) If so, what is the rate of commission or basis of remuneration so paid?

(3) What was the total amount paid out in the last complete financial year?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Sixpence (6d.) per licence or renewal.

(3) £2,937 13s. for the year ended the 30th June, 1954.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT.

As to Extension of Statutory Life.

Mr. BOVELL asked the Premier:

(1) In view of his past statements to the effect that Western Australia may be better served by an extension of the life of the State Parliament to four or five years in lieu of the existing three-year period for the Legislative Assembly, is it the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill during the life of the present Parliament to extend the term of future Parliaments?

(2) If not, will he convene a meeting of representatives of all parties in the State Parliament to discuss this position?

The PREMIER replied:

These matters will receive early consideration.

ELECTRICITY AND GAS.

As to Basis of Charges, Consumption, and Effect of Price Rise.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Works:

(1) In assessing its charges for electricity and gas does the State Electricity Commission still use a formula under which charges would increase for every rise in the basic wage and the cost of coal?

(2) If so, what variation upwards in prices of electricity and gas respectively takes place on an increase of 2s. in the basic wage, and what is the effect of such prices of an increase in the price of coal per ton, giving the figures which would govern the calculation?

(3) Can he give the average consumption per quarter per household of—

(a) gas;

(b) electricity?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes, but the presence of compensating factors could obviate a rise and there have been instances during the life of this Government where an increase in the basic wage has not caused a corresponding increase in the price of electricity and gas.

(2) In the absence of compensating factors, in the metropolitan area—

(a) an increase of 2s. in the basic wage would increase the price of electricity by .006d. per unit;

(b) an increase of 2s. in the basic wage would increase the price of gas by .0038d. per unit;

(c) an increase of 1s. per ton in Collie coal would increase the cost of electricity by .012d. per unit, and

(d) an increase of 1s. per ton in Collie coal would increase the cost of gas by .0031d. per unit.

(3) (a) 275 units.

(b) 700 units.

POLICE.

As to Launch for River Patrol.

Mr. YATES (without notice) asked the Minister for Police:

Has the Minister given further consideration to a request that a police launch be made available for rescue work on the river? This question was asked during the last session and also earlier this year on behalf of several river organisations and the National Safety Council. Can further information be now given?

The MINISTER replied:

As indicated to the member for South Perth, and to the member for Nedlands who sought information on this matter during last year, no finance was available at that time for the provision of a launch for police work on the river, despite the fact that this need was recognised. At that time it was decided to give patrolling the river by the Police Department in conjunction with the Harbour and Light Department a trial. Now that such a trial has been undertaken, it is found to be not entirely satisfactory, and Treasury approval has been received to enable a launch to be built locally for the exclusive use of the Police Department. It will be capable of not only patrolling the river, but also the outer harbour.

HOUSING.

(a) As to Land Resumptions in Metropolitan Area.

Mr. BOVELL (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

In view of the Press reports that large tracts of land, owned by private people, are to be resumed in the metropolitan area, presumably for housing, when the Housing Commission already holds a large amount of land in the metropolitan area, does he not consider that, in the interests of decentralisation, it would be advisable to erect Commonwealth-State houses in country areas where they are urgently needed?

The MINISTER replied:

As the member for Vasse should be aware, the Housing Commission takes into account the accommodation requirements of all parts of the State; and, of course, it cannot overlook the requirements of the metropolitan area. A public statement has already been made by me covering the land position in the metropolitan area and dealing with the necessity for the Housing Commission, because of its tremendous programme, to have additional areas in which to build homes.

I think it should be mentioned that the total of these resumptions is less than one-third of those undertaken several years ago by the McLarty-Watts Government. On that occasion the resumptions were all in the one area; and, of course, it is not possible, in order to cater for the requirements of the public, to build all the houses only in one portion of the metropolitan area.

(b) As to Utilising Government-owned Land.

Mr. BOVELL (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Why does not the Government proceed with its housing programme in the areas already owned by the Government?

(2) Why is it necessary to resume further lands when the areas resumed by the McLarty-Watts Government have not yet been utilised?

The MINISTER replied:

As I have already pointed out, all of that land was in the one general area, and it is impossible to erect all the houses there. The McLarty-Watts Government resumed land which was to be developed over a period of a generation or more, and, of course, that does not meet the requirements of today. If the State Housing Commission continues to build at the present rate in the Fremantle area, it will not have a single building block left in 12 months time. The same position applies in respect of the area between Perth and Midland Junction on the north side of the Swan River. For these reasons, it is necessary for the commission to acquire areas which need a great deal of developmental work before they can actually be used for building purposes.

(c) As to Operations of Registered Builders.

Mr. OLDFIELD (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

In view of the fact that quite a large amount of the land that has recently been resumed is owned by people engaged in the building industry, and upon which they were erecting buildings for sale to the public, will the Minister assure the House that where small parcels of land are being utilised by registered builders for building purposes, he will allow those people to proceed under the plans they have themselves adopted?

The MINISTER replied:

I can give no definite assurance without knowing the particular circumstances of any cases that might be raised. However, I can state that at the earliest opportunity, which will probably be within a period of three months, where there are completed houses or houses under construction within the resumed areas, those properties—the houses, that is—will be returned to the erstwhile owners.

(d) As to Safeguarding Current Building Programmes.

Mr. OLDFIELD (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

Where a builder has several, or a large number of building blocks set aside for a progressive programme of home building, will he be permitted to retain the blocks so that he may proceed with his building programme, even though buildings have not been commenced, but are intended to be erected within the next 12 months?

The MINISTER replied:

Every person who has had his land resumed will have the opportunity of appealing to the Minister, as has happened on previous occasions. The circumstances of each case will be taken into account when a decision is being arrived at.

(e) As to Investigating Country-town Requirements.

Mr. BOVELL (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

In view of the Minister's replies to my two previous questions, will he give an assurance that he will thoroughly investigate the position of country-town requirements in regard to housing, and see that those requirements are met as speedily as possible?

The MINISTER replied:

I give my assurance to the hon. member that the requirements of the country districts will be taken into account, hand in hand with those of every other part of the State.

(f) As to Approaches to Owners before Resumptions.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

If my memory is correct, when the Bill to extend the time in which the Housing Commission could resume land was before this House, the Minister stated that it was not intended to make resumptions on a large-scale basis, but that the authority was necessary only where some owner was reluctant to sell, and it was essential for the commission to resume the land. In view of that statement, was any approach made to these owners to see whether they would sell the land before it was resumed.

The MINISTER replied:

I am not certain that the version of the member for Mt. Lawley of what I stated when introducing the Bill last year, is the correct one and, accordingly, I would like an opportunity to check it. If he cares to place his question on the notice paper, I will answer him with pleasure.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM BRITAIN.

As to Result of Interviews with Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY (without notice) asked the Premier:

When the Premier was in London, he had an interview with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Butler, with regard to the provision of certain loan moneys for Western Australia. The Premier also attended, with other State Premiers, a conference in Canberra with the British Chancellor of the Exchequer. Has he yet had any information in regard to any benefits that have accrued as a result of his interview with Mr. Butler in London, or at the conference of Premiers in Canberra?

The PREMIER replied:

The understanding at the Canberra conference was that the British Chancellor of the Exchequer would, on his return to England, investigate the possibilities and also discuss with his colleagues some of the proposals that had been mentioned, and would subsequently advise the Prime Minister and the Premiers of the result. So far no advice has been received from him.

BILL—GUARDIANSHIP OF INFANTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—FAUNA PROTECTION ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 14th October.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [4.51]: This Bill not only covers ordinary mining activities but, as I understand it, also quarrying. In the metropolitan area a large number of minor accidents occur each year. In this category can be included cases where a man bruises his thumb or cuts his finger, and I cannot see any reason why the union representative has to be formally notified on such occasions. If the Bill is agreed to, a lot of extra red tape will be required. All these reports have to be written out, and that costs something. If they are forgotten, the employer concerned may suffer severe consequences.

Had he thought fit, the Minister could have limited it to "serious accidents," because they are dealt with in this particular section of the Act. I think that would have been more sensible, and I cannot see why the union should have to be notified about trivial accidents; it seems most unnecessary. As a matter of fact, no argu-

ments have been put forward so far as to why the union should be notified in such cases. Surely the man concerned, or his relatives, could notify the union. The union represents the man and why cannot it be made the man's responsibility to notify the union if he has a trivial accident?

Mr. Moir: When would they know about it?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: If a man had his finger jammed, he or his relatives could notify the union.

The Minister for Mines: What if he had no relatives?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The person concerned could notify the union in cases of hurt fingers.

Mr. Moir: You do not think they would worry about a hurt finger?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do, because if the employer does not report it, he can suffer penalties under the Act. One never knows when the union will prosecute, because it does so in some extraordinary cases.

Mr. Moir: Read the Bill. It says "serious".

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I cannot see the word "serious" in the Bill.

The Minister for Mines: You are wearing your wrong glasses.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Let the Minister tell me where it is.

Mr. Moir: Have a look at the Act.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: But this does not refer to the section in the Act.

Mr. Moir: It does.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not think it does, because I looked at it. The Bill amends an earlier section of the Act.

Mr. Moir: That section of the Act.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It covers every portion of it. If it does not, I hope the Minister will explain it. In my view it covers every portion of the Act.

Mr. Moir: It is not as wide as that.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Section 12 of the Act—

The Minister for Mines: Section 31 is the one we are amending.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: This is what the particular section has to say—and I would have thought the member for Boulder was a little better informed—

> The manager shall, on the occurrence of any accident in the mine—

Mr. Moir: Read a little further down.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It continues—

> —involving loss of time—

The Minister for Mines: Each accident does not necessarily involve a loss of time.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: If a man cuts his finger, he has to go to the doctor to have it dressed, and he must have time off to do that. This section continues—

> —to the worker concerned, give notice thereof to the inspector—

So the employer has to notify the inspector.

> —or in the absence of the inspector, to the warden or mining registrar or Under Secretary for Mines, within one week from the occurrence of such accident.

Mr. Moir: They could run off an extra copy.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: But why should they have to do that?

Mr. Lawrence: Why should the member for Mt. Lawley be here?

Mr. Moir: Paper is not scarce.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I think the member for Boulder should be more responsible; he is being facetious. He knows very well that every piece of red tape costs money, and I can see no good reason for it. After all, if a man is injured, the union becomes aware of it, and why should it want formal notice?

Mr. Moir: So many of them are getting injured.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: They have never before had so few accidents, and the hon. member knows it.

Mr. Moir: They have never had more.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: They have never had less.

Mr. Moir: Then you do not know very much about it.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: What does the hon. member know about quarrying in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Moir: You are only assuming.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I am talking about quarrying in the metropolitan area. Why should these employers be brought under the same provisions as those who operate deep mines?

Mr. Moir: Who will bring them in?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Under the section I read out, the inspector will have to be notified; that means the workmen's inspector. Why should the employers have to notify anyone else?

Mr. Moir: Where does it say "workmen's inspector"?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It says "the inspector."

Mr. Moir: That is not the "workmen's inspector."

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The employer has to notify the warden in the absence of the inspector. Why is there need for anything else?

Mr. Moir: It is only another carbon copy.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That section goes on to say—

> Where an accident results in serious, or apparently serious, injuries being received, it shall be reported forthwith.

Why not limit the Bill to "serious accidents"? Why make it cover minor accidents? I would like the Minister for Mines, when he replies to the debate, to give us some explanation. Presumably he would not have placed that provision in the Bill because he does not do things on the blind; as a rule he has reasons for doing things. He does not do everything that unions want, and I do not know whether this was done on the blind or not; or simply because the union asked for it. I can think of no logical reason why the union should have to be notified in cases of minor accidents. In cases where men are killed, the union has to be notified forthwith; that, too, is open to argument. But if a man is only hurt and he wants the union's help, why cannot he or his relatives approach the union? The man who is injured is a member of the union; he pays his dues. The secretary of the union is his official, and why cannot the man concerned go to him in cases of minor accidents and tell him about it?

Mr. Lapham: What harm will this do?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It is loading extra responsibility on to the employer. Why should we do that?

Mr. Moir: It will be only another carbon copy.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The carbon copy will have to be prepared and then posted —or else! It is more red tape and absolutely unessential. It cannot be justified, and I can only think that the Minister has not given serious thought to it. If he had, I am sure he would have limited it to "serious accidents," where the man might not be in a position to seek out the union official and notify him. But if the Minister wants this amendment, why not place the responsibility on the man concerned? Why should not he be the one to notify the union? We would then have no objection at all. If he were unable to do it, that would be a different matter, but in the case of minor accidents why should not he be the one to notify the union? Why does the Minister include this provision in the portion that deals with serious accidents? It is possible that the Minister may have some explanation of which I am not aware.

Mr. Lapham: A minor accident could become a major one.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. L. F. Kelly—Merredin-Yilgarn—in reply) [5.1]: I am at a loss to understand the attitude adopted by both the member for Dale and the member for Mt. Lawley. There is perhaps some excuse for the member for Mt. Lawley because I do not think he knows much about this Act. There is not quite as much excuse, however, for the member for Dale because he, at least at some stage of his life, had been employed in the mining industry. When speaking to the Bill, the member for Dale said that the Mines Department is notified. Of course, it is notified. The inspector is notified, the warden is notified and the mining registrar is notified. So it is not a great hardship, as pointed out by the member for Boulder, to include the A.W.U. The member for Dale said that it would not be hard for the Mines Department to notify the union. There should be no necessity for the department to notify the union; but it would be very simple for an extra copy to be put in, and that is all that is required.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: There is more than that to it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Not at all.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: The notice has to be served.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The other people concerned are not served; they are merely notified, sometimes by telephone, that a serious accident has taken place.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I am referring to a minor accident.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I know to what the hon. member is referring, and no mention is made of minor accidents at all.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Oh yes, there is.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I permitted the hon. member to make his speech and he should let me make mine without his continual yapping. Notification does not bring about any hardship whatever. The major companies on the fields realise it means only a stroke of the pen and, as we have said before, one extra carbon copy only is required to be placed in an envelope, or notification can be made by telephone. There is no departure from that method. We are only asking a little more, which would have the effect not only of the union being notified but of considerable co-ordination taking place.

The goldmining unions are not out to cause any embarrassment, or to place any unnecessary obligations on the companies; they have always worked in unison one with the other. There has never been any lack of courtesy between the unions and the companies, or between the companies and the unions. They have always been most fraternal in their dealings, and it is only the confidence they have, each in the other, that enables them to get on so well. This is not a matter of foisting something on the companies which they would find difficulty in fulfilling.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: They cannot give this notice by telephone; it must be formally served by registered letter.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It does not impose any hardship on the companies to comply with the request contained in

this amendment. The member for Dale said that the Minister should give an assurance of the co-operation of the unions. It is easily seen that the hon. member's knowledge of activities on the goldfields is out of date, because that co-operation has always existed. There is no lack of co-ordination or courtesy between the unions and the goldmining companies. They have always been able to get around a table and iron out their differences satisfactorily. Accordingly, there is no necessity for me to ask that co-operation should come from the unions; it already exists.

Mr. Wild: I mean co-operation to see that the unions police their members.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: By the cordial relationship that exists in the industry, I think the unions have demonstrated over a period of years that there is no lack of co-operation between them. I would say, in regard to accidents, that all concerned—whether it be the unions, the companies, or the Mines Department—are most anxious respecting the accidents that have occurred in recent months, notwithstanding that the member for Mt. Lawley says that there have never been fewer accidents in the history of the industry. Again, I must tell him that he is entirely off the beam. If the hon. member knew his bible as he should, he would know that the accident rate is causing unrest in all sections of the industry.

The notification to the A.W.U. could have nothing but a beneficial result. It would mean that it would become acquainted with the accident, and would have an inspection made if it were necessary. The A.W.U. would know the causes and would frequently be in a position to make suggestions to avoid accidents; indeed, their suggestions have very often been accepted. Accordingly, it could have nothing but a beneficial effect, and would afford greater satisfaction to both sides of the industry.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Are you going to deal with minor injuries?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. I thought I would take the matter in sequence, but as the hon. member is so anxious, I will deal with that subject now. The member for Mt. Lawley has made a lot of play with the word "quarries." The word "quarries" does not occur in the amendment at all; it is not mentioned in Section 31.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Yes, it is.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is not mentioned in the amendment. The whole amendment revolves around the term "mines."

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: And "mines" means "quarries."

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Let us consider the definition of the term "mine." It is a place within a mining district; it is not a quarry. One does not find quarries in mining districts. A mine is a place where any operation for the purpose of obtaining a metal or mineral has been or is being carried on, or where the products of any such place are being treated or dealt with, or where explosives are being used. There is no suggestion of quarries. The definition of "quarries" is different altogether. The member for Mt. Lawley set himself up as an authority and stated that a man might injure his thumb in a quarry. Both his contentions are wrong because a thumb would not constitute a necessity under this amendment as regards notification to the union.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Do not they use explosives in quarries?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The measure has nothing to do with quarries; it deals with the Mining Act.

Mr. Moir: It deals with mining districts.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: There are quarries in mining districts.

Mr. Moir: Where?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: On the goldfields in Kalgoorlie.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mt. Lawley should give the Minister a fair go and let him make his speech.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The member for Mt. Lawley was so far off the beam that it is necessary to put him back.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!. The Minister will address the Chair, and should not take any notice of the member for Mt. Lawley.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In the case of trivial accidents it is not necessary for mining companies to notify wardens at present; that is never done. If a man attends a dressing station and has a bandage put around his thumb, he generally goes back to work. That happens in nine out of every ten cases. So we are not dealing with trivial accidents.

But in the case of a man who is seriously hurt and is incapable of reporting to anybody, it is then necessary for the mining companies to notify these three or four different sections of the industry of the occurrence. That is where their obligation rests. If the union were to be notified at the same time, its representative would have an opportunity to go in with the rest of those who make an inspection and would be able to contribute—and very frequently does—something really worth while by way of a suggestion to eliminate, or overcome, a similar type of accident in the future.

We can dispense with the question of minor accidents altogether; it does not appear in this amendment at all, and I am surprised that the member for Mt. Lawley should try to draw such a feeble red herring across the trail. Far from no thought having been given to this matter, I would advise the hon. member that a great deal of serious thought was given to it before it was brought here. The whole matter was reviewed at great length before a decision was reached, and it was shown that it was possible to bring in an amendment which would be beneficial to all concerned in the industry.

The only other point to which I wish to refer is that dealing with hours. Sections 36, 37 and 39 were suspended on the 4th April, 1949. I have looked through the file to see whether there was an approach by any section of the industry to have this suspension put into operation and, apart from an Order-in-Council, there is absolutely no call whatever for having adopted the suspension of these sections. All I am asking is that the sections concerned be reinstated, and that the award as it now stands be put into operation. I have here the mining award, No. 11 of 1946, in the Court of Arbitration of Western Australia between the Lake View and Star Ltd. and others, as applicants, and the Australian Workers' Union (Western Australian Mining Branch) of Workers, as respondents. The award sets out—

> The Court of Arbitration of Western Australia doth hereby make the following award in connection with the industrial dispute between the abovenamed parties:

On the matter of the hours to be worked, it says—

> Thirty-seven and one-half hours shall constitute a week's work underground, including crib time.
>
> In the case of underground workers, the hours of each shift shall comprise seven hours thirty minutes on Mondays to Fridays inclusive, and the shifts shall be so arranged that an interval of thirty minutes will separate the finishing hour of one shift from the commencing hour of the next following shift.

That is all we are asking for under this Bill; we desire to enact the conditions contained in the arbitration award. I cannot see why there should be any objection to our doing that, and I am at a loss to understand why the member for Dale should have found occasion to make his comments on the measure.

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

Ayes	22
Noes	21
Majority for	1

Ayes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lapham
Mr. Brady	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Graham	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Moir
Mr. Heal	Mr. Norton
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Styants
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Kelly	Mr. May

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Ackland	Mr. North
Mr. Brand	Mr. Oldfield
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Owen
Mr. Court	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hill	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Mann	Mr. Yates
Mr. Manning	Mr. Bovell
Sir Ross McLarty	

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Cornell
Mr. O'Brien	Mr. Hearman
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Nalder

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 31 amended:

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It is all very well for the Minister to treat this matter lightly, but the Act provides for a penalty of £50 if a mine manager does not give the requisite notification. A quarry in a mining district is a mine and would be subject to all the provisions of the Act. Greenbushes is a mining district, and it might be necessary to declare the metropolitan area. I am not sure that the metropolitan area is not at present a mining district because, according to the Press, leases were recently pegged there.

I am concerned about the principle involved. All the quarries in the metropolitan area might be found to be within a mining district because at any time some mineral or other might be discovered there. I hope that the Minister will report progress and frame an amendment to cover only serious accidents. Under the clause, a manager at Greenbushes would have to notify the union secretary at Boulder. If an accident occurred in a quarry outside the metropolitan area, would it be reasonable to have to notify the secretary of the union at Boulder? Why not apply the provision to Boulder only? If there were a mine at Wyndham or Marble Bar, the union secretary at Boulder would have to be notified.

The Minister for Mines: Do not you think it would be as possible for a warden to be as far removed as the union secretary?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No, because there is a warden for each mining district.

The Minister for Mines: Not always.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: As I understand the position, every police magistrate whose jurisdiction covers a mining district is a warden. The Minister's proposal has not received reasonable thought. It should be limited to serious accidents.

The Minister for Mines: We are not proposing to include any accident not covered by the Act.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: But the Minister is doing so. Can anyone imagine anything more absurd than to require a manager at Greenbushes to notify the union secretary at Boulder? If a man were off duty for a few hours and a notice was not sent, the manager would be liable to a penalty. I hope that the Minister will report progress and give the matter further consideration.

Mr. MOIR: I hope that the Minister will not report progress.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You, being the member for Boulder, would not be likely to agree to that.

Mr. MOIR: I hope the member for Mt. Lawley will enable us to make progress. He has made a mountain out of a molehill. To anyone acquainted with the circumstances, his arguments are trivial.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: What do you know about the metropolitan area or Greenbushes?

Mr. MOIR: Probably quite a lot. The reason why the secretary at Boulder should be notified is because he deals with mining all over the State.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Quarries as well?

Mr. MOIR: The hon. member is confusing quarries with mines, whereas they are separate things. To argue that a man working in a quarry is engaged in mining is not right.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Read the Act.

Mr. MOIR: I do not need to do so, because I am familiar with its provisions. I would refer the member for Mt. Lawley to the definition of "mining" in the Act, and would point out the difference that exists when it is realised that quarries are worked only to obtain rock. That is what the quarries in the metropolitan area are worked for.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: But what is a mine?

Mr. MOIR: The Minister for Mines has already read out the definition of "mine." It was pointed out to the hon. member that the Act deals only with mining districts, and he said that the metropolitan area could be declared a mining district—

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I think it has been.

Mr. MOIR: The point is that at present certain people have to be notified when an accident takes place—not a minor accident, as referred to by the member for Mt. Lawley, but an accident involving loss of time on the part of the worker. That would, of course, be a fairly serious accident because miners do not knock off just because they have scratched a finger or something like that. On any day of the week one can see miners working with bandages or patches of plaster on their limbs. Those precautions are taken simply to avoid the risk of infection, but the miner does not lose time unless the doctor orders him off work.

In the case of other than serious accidents, there is a week in which to notify the persons concerned. The hon. member mentioned the distance from Boulder to Marble Bar, but that has nothing to do with the matter, because as long as the mine manager sends the notification, that is all that is required. All we ask is that another carbon copy of the correspondence be made and sent to the union. I can see no valid objection to that being done and on the other hand, I believe much good would come of it. If the union officials knew how an accident was caused, they might be able to tell the employees concerned how to avoid a repetition of it and surely it is desirable for that to be done! Does not the member for Mt. Lawley think that would be desirable?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Could not the employee tell them?

Mr. MOIR: The hon. member misses the point altogether. We feel that the people, whose duty it is to minimise the number of accidents, should be notified. Does the hon. member suggest that if a man did a stupid thing and was injured, he would rush around and tell others how stupid he had been?

Hon. A .V. R. Abbott: The union secretary could inspect the books and get the details.

Mr. MOIR: Is he expected to fly from Boulder to Marble Bar, for instance, to inspect the books? I can see no reason for opposition to this clause.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The wording of the Act in this respect is clear and concise. It lays down to whom accidents shall be reported and all we are asking is for this extra notification.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Who has to be notified if the accident is not serious?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The notification is still sent, but nothing is done about it. There is a week in which to send the notification. All they do is to fill in the details on the accident form, and make three carbon copies. We ask that a further carbon copy be made and sent to the secretary of the A.W.U. The Act says that where a serious injury or

apparently serious injury is received it shall be reported forthwith, but they still have a week—

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: No.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, they have a week before any penalty is involved. Of course, if the person responsible omits to give such notice he is guilty of an offence and all we are asking for is one further notification. With regard to unconsciousness, the Act says that where it arises from the inhalation of fumes, or poisonous gases, it shall be treated as serious. The stress is on the word "serious"—

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Why not limit this to serious accidents?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Because the present provisions of the Act have worked satisfactorily in this regard. All we ask is the addition of a few words.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Section 36 amended:

Mr. WILD: We see no necessity to amend the Mines Regulation Act to alter the hours in this respect because the hours were suspended by proclamation in April, 1949. If this clause were agreed to, there would be nothing to say that the Arbitration Court might not in due course amend the hours again. For that reason, I say we would be wasting our time to alter the hours laid down in the Act. It is therefore our intention to vote against this clause.

Mr. MOIR: The hon. member does not know what are the powers of the Arbitration Court, because it cannot limit the hours of labour or direct that the worker shall not work beyond a certain time.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Yes, it can.

Mr. MOIR: No.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: What about the 40-hour week?

Mr. MOIR: The court can set a standard, but cannot prevent overtime being worked.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It can stop carpenters from taking contracts. It can do anything.

Mr. MOIR: That is not so. That is why Parliament, since 1906, has, in the relevant Acts, laid down provisions governing and limiting the hours of labour in mines. As I said during the debate on the second reading, some men must be protected from themselves, and workers in a mine must be protected from others who are prepared to work to the point of fatigue where they become a danger to their workmates. In this respect mining differs from almost all other industries. Over the years Parliament has laid down conditions governing work in mines and that principle was never departed from until the McLarty-Watts Government had the Governor exercise his powers under this Act in 1949. That resulted in the suspension of the provision.

Mr. Wild: At whose request was the provision suspended?

Mr. MOIR: It seems a complete mystery as to who suspended it.

Mr. Wild: It would not have been Mr. Justice Dunphy, would it?

Mr. MOIR: It certainly would not, because I cannot imagine any judge asking for provisions of that nature to be suspended when they were inserted in the legislation to protect the workers' health.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You want to increase the hours of a shift.

Mr. MOIR: No.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Oh, yes, you do!

Mr. MOIR: I do not know how the member for Mt. Lawley gets that idea.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: The amendment says so. It says, "From seven hours 12 minutes to 7½ hours." That is an increase, is it not?

Mr. MOIR: The shift of seven hours 12 minutes has been inoperative for some time because, as I have explained, certain provisions were suspended and the Arbitration Court provided that the shift would be seven hours 30 minutes. All the Bill is seeking is for those provisions to be reinstated and to bring the legislation into line with the award which provides for a shift of 7½ hours.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Do you think a shift of seven hours 12 minutes is long enough for the miners to work?

Mr. MOIR: Although the shift is set down as seven hours 30 minutes, the men would work only seven hours 12 minutes. They could not be asked to work longer. However, the miners are quite happy with a shift of seven hours 30 minutes. The member for Mt. Lawley said that nobody desires this amendment. Does he think the Minister for Mines was looking around for a job and suddenly decided to amend the Mines Regulation Act? Despite what the hon. members says, there is a demand for the amendment. It has been brought about by the fact that some new Australians have been desirous of working an extra shift. That could prove to be a hazard and could cause serious industrial trouble in the mining industry.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You are always threatening that. There is a lot of wind in your remarks. You are always saying there will be industrial trouble.

Mr. MOIR: I worked for many years in the mining industry and was a union official during a great part of that time. If every other section of workers in Australia enjoyed as good an industrial record

as the goldminers of this State, Governments would not have much to worry about as far as industrial unrest is concerned.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You keep making threats of industrial unrest.

Mr. MOIR: I used no threats.

The Premier: The member for Mt. Lawley does not know what he is talking about.

Mr. MOIR: I am convinced of that. He lets his loud speaker go on and on, and it would be to somebody's benefit in this Chamber if he were switched off.

The Premier: Permanently!

Mr. MOIR: I would not say, "permanently" because at times he has some amusement value. The restoration of these provisions are extremely necessary.

Mr. WILD: I think the member for Boulder was foolish when he said that if a clause of this nature were not agreed to, it would lead to industrial trouble. Although he has many more years of mining experience than I have, I tell him that a stupid little thing like this would not cause any industrial trouble if it were not passed. The hon. member said that new Australians wanted to work an extra shift. That may be so, but the mining officials in Kalgoorlie would take a dim view of such a procedure in the same way as would the union officials.

Mr. Moir: In Kalgoorlie, yes, but what about outside Kalgoorlie?

Mr. WILD: If there were any policing of the shifts to be done, it would be carried out by the employers. We, on this side of the Chamber, believe in the right of the Arbitration Court to say what hours shall be worked. I do not care whether the provisions referred to were in the Act before or not, but in 1939 the Government of the day, at the request of Mr. Justice Dunphy, granted him the power to vary the shift hours. No objection to that has been raised whatsoever, and I can see no reason why we should alter them now. It is the prerogative of the Arbitration Court to determine what the hours shall be, and we on this side of the Chamber will not agree to fixed hours going into the Industrial Arbitration Act.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I would have thought that when a request was made for an increase in the hours of a shift some evidence would be produced to show that such a move would not be injurious to the workers. At present the shift is limited to seven hours 12 minutes.

Mr. Moir: No.

The Minister for Works: In theory, or in practice?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The Minister is trying to alter the shift from seven hours 12 minutes to 7½ hours.

The Minister for Works: What is the present practice?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I know what the present practice is, but I am asking the member for Boulder: Should the Act increase the hours of a shift? The Minister has not said whether that is reasonable or not. What has the wording in the relevant section to do with new Australians wishing to work an extra shift? I know that the sections have been suspended, otherwise it would be unlawful for them to do that. In view of the present amendment, does the Minister think that the shift hours set before were too short? I do not know. All I know is that the Government is increasing the length of the shift.

The Minister for Mines: You should have no complaint about that.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I have not, but I want to look after the interests of the underground miner, too. If seven hours 30 minutes is too long, let us stick to the shift of seven hours 12 minutes.

The Minister for Mines: The underground man would not get much of a spin if you had your way.

Mr. MOIR: The member for Mt. Lawley is slightly confused. Previously, when these provisions were in operation, 40 hours per week were worked on the mines, spread over six days. The shift was seven hours 12 minutes.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Do you think that was long enough for underground men?

Mr. MOIR: I hope the member for Mt. Lawley will be patient. On five days a week the length of the shift was seven hours 12 minutes and on Saturday four hours were worked. When the union approached the court for a new award it asked for a 35-hour week. The employers wanted a 40-hour week and the court compromised by granting a 37½-hour week to be worked in shifts of seven hours 30 minutes over five days. This cut out the six-day week.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: They could not have done that if this Bill had been in operation.

Mr. MOIR: But the Arbitration Court did do it, and the men worked under the new award. Later, however, it was found the award and the Act conflicted. Somebody must have made representations to the Government, but I cannot imagine it being the president of the Arbitration Court. The Minister for Mines has assured me there is nothing on the files showing who made the approach. The Act and the award being in conflict, the Government of the day suspended the provisions of the Act. No doubt, if Parliament had been sitting a Bill would have been introduced to amend the Act to make it conform to the award, as had been done previously.

Today the miners would like the Act to be brought into line with the court award so that there will be plain sailing in the industry.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Do you think the Arbitration Court should decide this issue and not Parliament?

Mr. MOIR: The Arbitration Court cannot limit the hours of labour. It can set a standard, but cannot prevent overtime being worked. In fact, the Arbitration Court lays down, in principle, that no worker shall refuse to work reasonable overtime. It has no power to say that a man shall work so many hours and no longer.

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

Ayes	22
Noes	21
Majority for	1

Ayes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Brady	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Graham	Mr. Moir
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Norton
Mr. Heal	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Styants
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Lapham	Mr. May
	(Teller.)

Noes

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Ackland	Mr. North
Mr. Brand	Mr. Oldfield
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Owen
Mr. Court	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hill	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Mann	Mr. Yates
Mr. Manning	Mr. Bovell
Sir Ross McLarty	*(Teller.)*

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Cornell
Mr. O'Brien	Mr. Hearman
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Nalder

Clause thus passed.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Section 44 amended:

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No argument has been put forward to prove that it is injurious for miners to work 40 hours a week. I am agreeable to miners working 37½ hours a week if it is proved by evidence that miners should be limited to those hours of work; but if the argument is that the Arbitration Court has fixed the hours at 37½ a week, then I would suggest leaving the Arbitration Court the power to decide the hours.

This Chamber should not attempt to dictate to the Arbitration Court unless there is evidence that, on account of the nature of the work performed, it is detrimental to the health of miners to work more than 40 hours a week underground. If we agree to the provisions before us, then it would be ultra vires for the Arbitration Court to fix different hours of work. The only reason given for the inclusion of this clause is that the Arbitration Court has fixed the hours at 37½ a week. Is there another reason?

Mr. MOIR: There is, it being that the health of the miners should be protected. That is the reason why the provisions in the Mines Regulation Act have, since 1906, limited the hours of work.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Do you think they should be reduced to below 40?

Mr. MOIR: Of course they should. We must remember that there is no limit on the hours to be worked underground, and 60 hours a week can be worked legally. The member for Mt. Lawley must agree that the provisions limiting the hours of work have been suspended and will not operate. Because it would be detrimental to the health of miners to work more than 37½ hours a week in five shifts, the Arbitration Court awarded those hours. It agreed with the contention of the union that the Saturday shift of four hours should be abolished whereby miners would be relieved from one shift during which they have to work in the unhealthy conditions and dust underground. That is a very strong reason why the limitation on the hours of work should be reinstated in the Act so as to prevent miners from being worked more than 37½ hours underground.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That does not require an amendment of this section.

Mr. MOIR: I do not know what other section the hon. member has in mind. Section 39 provides that 40 hours a week shall be worked. I am quite sure that all interested parties would be content if the old provision which existed before 1945 were reinserted, so long as there is some limitation, within reasonable limits, of the hours which a miner should work.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Do you think 40 hours a week would be unreasonable?

Mr. MOIR: It might not be unreasonable; but as a result of the evidence placed before the Arbitration Court, it reduced the hours to 37½ a week. To expose miners to the hazards and unhealthy conditions of underground work, and to enable their hours of work to be lengthened, is nothing short of scandalous.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: If miners want to work 40 hours a week, do you think they should be permitted?

Mr. MOIR: I am not prepared to split straws. The tribunal reduced the hours from 40 to 37½ a week because of the evidence adduced. All this measure seeks to achieve is to comply with the decision of the Arbitration Court. There are also other compelling reasons why members should agree to this clause.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Received from the Council and read a first time.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

1, War Service Land Settlement Scheme. With amendments.

2, Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act Amendment. Without amendment.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 29th September.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [7.30]: The Bill deals with a variety of subjects coming within the ambit of the Traffic Act, and a good deal of the measure is routine and, I believe, non-controversial, but, on the other hand, it contains provisions which are causing quite a degree of argument, particularly in farming areas. In a general way, the Bill contains a provision, which I believe is non-controversial, dealing with Guildford-rd., that is merely designed to correct a point which was overlooked when a measure dealing with this subject was before Parliament last year. The effect of this provision is, I understand, to bring the whole of Guildford-rd. within the coverage of the statute.

Another provision in the Bill deals with learners' licenses. I believe that the argument put forward by the Minister is a reasonable one, and I am prepared to accept it. A further provision deals with overwidth vehicles. Here again I believe the attitude of the Government is much more realistic than was the regulation which was debated at some length in this Chamber not long ago. Under this provision, the Minister will have power to delegate his authority for the issuing of permits, for the moving of farm machinery which has a width greater than the maximum provided in the Traffic Act, to the appropriate local authorities. After discussing this matter with various local governing bodies, I believe that what is proposed in the Bill should work reasonably well. The question is a difficult one, but, with the exercise of a certain amount of commonsense in the administration of the provision, it should be quite workable.

The Bill also deals with the licensing of vehicles and the appropriate fees therefor. Dealing first of all with what I consider are the non-controversial provisions, I notice that a new definition of "caravan" is provided. Here again I think the Government has been realistic, and, if this portion of the Bill becomes law, the Act then will fit the situation much better than does the present law. The Bill contains certain other provisions about which there is quite a deal of argument, and I refer first of all to the one which provides that the so-called concession licences for people engaged in farming or pastoral pursuits shall be modified. I am aware that there has been some abuse of this provision in the Act.

If members think back, they will recall that some time during the depression period—in the early thirties, I think—a concession was granted by which vehicles used solely or mainly in agricultural pursuits, including also mining, beekeeping and other activities, could be licensed at half the ordinary rates. This concession was made at that time in view of the difficult financial position that the farming community faced. The concession also meant a realistic approach to the question of what were the appropriate fees for vehicles used in different ways. While I have not read the debates that took place on the Bill at that time, I have no doubt that the points which influenced Parliament in granting the concession were not only the difficult financial position of many people on the land in those days, but also the fact that a great many farmers' vehicles ran many miles less on the road than did the vehicles of people engaged in pursuits which necessitated the transport of a great tonnage of goods.

Obviously, the most that any farm truck can be used is to the extent necessary to cart the produce of the property, or the requisites for the operation of the property. If it is used for any other purpose—if it is let for hire or reward in any shape or form—obviously the concession licence cannot apply. By and large, I think the concession has been a useful one to the rural community and, in the main, has not been abused. There are odd cases, however, where on some fairly large holdings a number of these concession licences are held.

I know that the Road Board Association has been perturbed about the question. It considers that an anomaly does exist, and hence the request to the Government. I notice that the Minister, when dealing with this part of the Bill, specifically said that it was included at the request of the Road Board Association; and I believe that is correct. But there is still a considerable difference of opinion on the subject in country districts. Of course, there is always some difference of opinion between those people who are elected to road boards and have the responsibility of carrying on

their particular local authority, and the rest of the farming community who are looking at the problem very largely from the angle of self-interest.

As a result, I think most members representing rural areas have had representations made to them by branches of the Farmers' Union requesting that this particular provision of the Bill should be opposed. It is difficult to satisfy both parties but, for my part, I feel inclined to oppose the provision because, after further discussion with some of the local authorities, the executive officers have admitted that, as a result of a closer examination of the position, they are of the opinion that, even if the Bill is passed in its present form, the local authorities will not be likely to receive much extra revenue.

I say this because it will be obvious to most members that, if this provision comes into force, there will be a strong incentive where a number of people are interested in a property and all the vehicles are licensed in one name, as is the position at present, for each of the people who have a financial interest in the property and who can produce some evidence of that financial interest—if, for instance, each can submit a taxation return in his own name—to claim the concessional licence for a vehicle. This would be done by transferring the licence from the name of the principal operator of the property to that of another interested party.

In almost every instance that I know of where a man and his wife are operating a property jointly at the present time, the vehicles are all licensed in the name of the husband. If the wife can show that she submits a separate taxation return, each executive officer of the local authorities with whom I have discussed the matter is of the opinion that they will have to grant the concession to her, if she applies for it. The Minister has provided in the Bill the words "but the provision that one-half of the licensing fee shall be payable is restricted to one vehicle so used in connection with each farm or holding of other land." I am not perefctly clear as to just what that language means.

The Minister for Police: It is there to stop what you say—the dummying of the wife or the husband, or two or three people from the one property.

Mr. PERKINS: In reply to the Minister's interjection, I shall ask him another question. What is the definition of "a farm or holding of other land"? There is no definition of that in the Bill. Does a farm mean one particular block? If it means a separate location number, there will be no difficulty about dummying because almost all of our agricultural lands carry a variety of location numbers. It is useless to say that the land must be held in the name of some particular individual because even the Taxation Department does not require that. That department is quite prepared to accept the proposition that the person is bona fide interested in the particular land.

Of course, if the Minister stops to think, he will realise that it will be impossible to apply any provision making it obligatory on the individual to say that he owns certain land, because what would happen in regard to share farmers, lessees and such other people throughout our agricultural districts? This is not a bright idea that I have thought up on the spur of the moment. I have given a good deal of consideration to it, and I have discussed it in detail with at least three road board secretaries. They agree that if the Bill is passed it will be comparatively easy to dummy—I use that term because I think members understand what I mean—in order to get more than one concession licence for one particular farm or other holding of land.

I went further into the question and I asked one local authority executive to look through his licences to find out exactly how much was involved. In this local authority they have a total income of something over £2,000 from vehicle licences and the maximum amount extra which they could obtain, if this provision were strictly enforced, would be not more than £200. This officer had a careful look at the names involved and from what he knew of their circumstances, he was of the opinion that, after allowing for those who would not license their trucks which rarely went off the farms—they are really the second trucks—and after allowing for the others who would be able quite legally to license the vehicles in other names, the extra money that the local authority would receive would be comparatively trifling. It would amount to no more than £20 or £25, and probably less than that.

Of course, I realise it is difficult to be definite on a point such as that because no one can tell, until it becomes law, how some particular provision will operate. But I feel certain that the local authorities will receive much less than some of them thought they would if this amendment were agreed to. I realise that the Government has given some attention to this aspect and has brought down the Bill at the request of the local governing bodies. As a result, I can imagine that the Minister will not be keen lightly to abandon an amendment which has been introduced after such a request has been received. But in addition to the fact that comparatively little money will be involved, greater anomalies could be caused by the enforcement of the law in this new form as compared with enforcing the law as it now stands.

I am quite prepared to admit that at present anomalies do exist, and I can see no way of overcoming them. But, on the

other hand, the majority of vehicles which are used on farms do much less running than vehicles used in businesses where the transporting of goods plays the bigger part. I know of many farm vehicles that would run scarcely 2,000 miles a year—and some of them possibly would do no more than 1,000 miles—on the roads outside the boundaries of the properties. But they are still licensed.

Mr. May: Some of them could not run 1,000 miles.

Mr. PERKINS: Possibly not; but they are still being used. Obviously, if this measure were to be enforced, they would not be licensed and the local authorities would lose some revenue on that account. But, in my opinion, the test should be: What mileage is done by these vehicles? I think the greatest abuse of the provision is by those who run utilities and light trucks at the concession rate. I consider that some local authorities, particularly those in the wheatbelt areas, would like to see the concession for those vehicles withdrawn. However, I realise that that could cause complications elsewhere and possibly in some of the districts of the State where small farms operate, it might cause a good deal of injustice. Members representing those areas can speak for themselves because they know much more about it than I do.

But on the face of it there is a case for any individual who is running a mileage comparable with the average run by vehicles of a similar type elsewhere, to pay the ordinary licence fee. If there is any way of achieving that, it would be difficult to resist an amendment along those lines. But if the Minister considers the position carefully, he must agree that the provision in the Bill could create just as many anomalies as it overcomes. For that reason, I would like the Minister to have another careful look at it before he continues with the proposal.

There are other provisions in the Bill relating to licence fees, which are provided for in the Third Schedule. When I first had a look at the fees I thought that some of them had been increased but on further examination I find that some have been raised while others have been lowered. Fees for lighter vehicles have been slightly raised but overall some further concessions have been made.

The Minister for Police: Which ones have been raised?

Mr. PERKINS: I think the one relating to "tractor other than prime mover, fitted with pneumatic tyres and not exceeding 10-cwts. in weight—£2."

The Minister for Police: No.

Mr. PERKINS: At any rate, it is not an important point because overall I must admit that some concessions have been made.

The Minister for Police: None of them has had the license fee increased. I will explain that.

Mr. PERKINS: To be quite frank, I have no quarrel in regard to the matter. The scale of fees to which I want to make particular reference concerns "tractors" other than prime mover type, fitted with pneumatic tyres." Previously these vehicles were licensed under the description of "locomotive or traction engines." But under the Bill there is provision for the tractive unit of a semi-trailer to be licensed under the heading of "tractor, prime mover type" and for all other tractors to be licensed under the heading of "tractor, other than prime mover type." The heading "tractor, other than prime mover type" includes a great variety of vehicles or implements as members will see if they have a look at the Bill.

The vehicle to which I particularly want to refer is the farm tractor. The Minister will notice that the licence fees for farm tractors go up to a maximum figure of £50 per annum. I noticed in his speech when introducing the Bill that he referred to an interpretation by the Crown Law Department and an instruction which had been sent out from the Local Government Department to local authorities that while the interpretation of a scale might be difficult, as the law previously stood, the £50 maximum should be observed. I take it that the Bill has been introduced in this form to make legal what has been the practice for some considerable time. I think this might be the right moment to have a look at the scale relating to farm tractors.

I consider that if the Minister were able to contact every local authority he would find that not more than half-a-dozen farm tractors in Western Australia are registered; the reason for this is that the scale is so high. Members must realise that the rubber-tyred farm tractor does less damage to roads over which it moves than any other vehicle; this is because of its low speed and wide tyres. As a result, it seems anomalous that the licensing fee should be so high. If the fee were more reasonable I think more use would be made of this section of the Act. Unless the Minister agrees to some amendment to the schedule, I believe we will continue to find that owners of farm tractors will find it unprofitable to license them other than to take out a licence to cover any third party liability. That, of course, does not entitle them to haul any load, other than a farm implement. I understand that legally they are breaking the law if they haul a trailer unless, of course, both tractor and trailer are licensed in accordance with the Traffic Act.

In dealing with this aspect, I have tried to obtain some comparable figures and I realise on examination of those figures that someone has given a good

deal of study to them to see that one part bears some relation to the other. If we take an 8-ton load of payable produce and put one load of that on to a four-wheeled truck with a four or two-wheeled trailer towed behind it, the licence fees for the truck and the trailer —the truck licensed as a truck and the trailer as a trailer—would be £72 per year. If one carted that same load on a semi-trailer type of vehicle, the licence would again be approximately £72 a year. If one licenses a tractor with a trailer, the weight of the tractor being five tons—which is the weight of the ordinary farm tractor—one would also pay a licence fee of £20 a year for the tractor and £52 a year for the trailer, which again makes a licence fee of £72 per year.

The anomaly is that the maximum speed of a tractor is about 15 miles an hour, whereas the average speed of either the truck and trailer, or the semi-trailer would be at least double that. Naturally, if a farmer considered licensing a truck or a trailer and tractor and trailer, once he had a look at the position he would realise that financially there would be no question as to which would be the more profitable from a traffic point of view. He would naturally license the truck and the trailer and the semi-trailer and not the tractor. For that reason I hope the Minister will agree to some reduction of the schedule of charges on pages 5 and 6 of the Bill relating to this clause dealing with "tractor other than prime mover type."

I think members representing the wheat areas in particular will back me up when I say that unless some amendment is made, it is not likely that many farm tractors will be licensed; and I think perhaps it could be of some assistance to a number of the men who are just getting established and who are hard put to it to provide all the farm machinary and equipment they would like to have on their properties. I have no doubt that the well-established farmer will continue to license his trucks, trailers or semi-trailers as it best suits him.

But in the case of the men who are just getting established, they must look to the capital they have and make one item of equipment do as much work as possible. It cannot apply far from the railway because speed becomes a factor. I cannot imagine that it would affect the local authorities detrimentally, because at the present time there are very few of these tractors licensed other than for third party cover. It is not a financial proposition for them to be licensed as the schedule stands at present. It is very desirable that some of the provisions in the Bill should be passed, but, from what I have said, members will gather that there are other clauses which I view much more critically. However, I support the second reading.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [8.5]: I, too, would like to support the second reading of the Bill, and also the points raised by the member for Roe. There are some provisions which, of course, are quite necessary and they have been explained by the Minister. I would like to say, however, that I oppose very definitely the move to make the producer of any agricultural product pay. This has been the trend in the past since the period when farmers in this State went through a very lean time. The points that have been raised already can be backed up because, as the member for Roe suggested, we will find that quite a bit of dummying will be done to overcome the obligation of paying for the extra vehicle licence.

For my part, I do not think the local authorities will gain anything from it because in a number of cases many of the vehicles that are licensed are used only on the farm itself. Only on a few occasions are vehicles taken off the properties, and I call to mind quite a number of farmers in the electorate I represent who use some of their vehicles on their properties and do not take them off at all. They are used for carting food for the stock to different parts of the farm; they are used for carting super and seed during the seeding operations, and they are used for root picking and many other jobs.

Because they may be needed once or twice to go to the siding, the vehicles are licensed because a reduction is obtained in the licence fee. But if this measure is enforced, we will find that the local authorities will be out of pocket, because a number of these vehicles will not be licensed; they will not be taken off the properties at all. The Minister believes it might be of advantage to the local authority, but it could apply the other way and the local authorities might find that the amount of money that was forthcoming in many cases from the vehicles used on farming properties, would not be available in future because of the fact that the increase in licence fees for the vehicles used would force the farmers not to license their vehicles.

Accordingly I feel we ought to take into consideration that fact. It is worthy of recognition that we should encourage the farmer to license all the vehicles he possesses. A great many people do not own vehicles for the sake of owning them; they own them for a particular use. We must encourage agriculture to the greatest extent possible, and if the Minister considers this point, I think he will probably find that a lot of the vehicles used will still be used but will not be licensed. I think that is a point worthy of consideration.

Another provision I regard as worthy of support is that relating to the local authority being responsible for the issue of licences for overwidth vehicles. It is ridiculous for a farmer to have to send to Perth

to obtain a licence to take an overwidth vehicle along the road or from one farm to another, or where a main road divides a property. I commend the Minister in bringing this forward because it will be quite reasonable for a farmer to contact the executive officer of the road board to obtain a permit to take his vehicle from one farm to the other, or from a siding to his property.

The Minister for Police: What did the regulation which you opposed early in the session provide? It was precisely the same thing.

Mr. NALDER: The position is clarified now and, if this Bill is passed, we will have a position which is very much more workable than it was before. I hope the Minister will also consider the point raised by the member for Roe concerning tractors. I would go so far as to say that I do not think any farmer in this State will have licensed his tractor under the provisions existing at present. If the Minister makes a survey throughout the State, I think he will find that that is a fact. Farmers have their tractors for drawing machinery which they require to sow their seed and harvest their crops. Very few farmers have tractors for hauling purposes; they use their trucks for that. I think it will be found that very few tractors are licensed. If the fee were reduced to £10, many more farmers would license or register their tractors, particularly those who take them on to main roads or on to roads adjoining their properties.

Mr. Oldfield: Does this Bill refer to machinery being taken from one farm to another?

Mr. NALDER: Yes, it does. I support the second reading.

MR. OLDFIELD (Maylands) [8.13]: I support the Bill because of one small clause that affects my electorate. I refer to that provision dealing with Guildford-rd. I wish the Government was only half as quick or interested in doing the job on Guildford-rd. as it is in putting the Act in order, because reference to 100 yards of that road was left out of the Act last year. This controversy as to whose responsibility it should or could be, and which body would have sufficient finance to keep the road in order, has been going on for the last 20 or 30 years.

Shortly after my election to this House the controversy started again and, after several years of trying to have the matter finalised once and for all, we were successful in having an agreement drawn up between the Main Roads Department, the Local Government Department and the road boards concerned which provided for a contributing basis from all concerned to put the road in order. Subsequent to that, the Government went a further step forward, and I commend it for doing so. It relieved the local authorities of any responsibility for the road.

In the agreement signed some three years ago, the Main Roads Department was to be responsible for the work, except for a certain amount of money which was to be contributed by the local authorities concerned. Very little work was carried out. Under the agreement £10,000 a year was to be provided for a period of six years, making a total of £60,000, which would enable the road to be put in order to cope with the traffic using it.

I understand that at one time an argument arose as to which should be the main route out of Perth—the present Great Eastern Highway or Guildford-rd. Despite the fact that the route along the Great Eastern Highway to Midland Junction is two miles longer, it was chosen. Traffic records in recent years have shown that the volume on Guildford-rd. is twice as great as that on the Great Eastern Highway, and people who travel along those roads know which one has been looked after to the greater extent.

The Great Eastern Highway is well surfaced, has concrete kerbing, is well drained, has the danger points truncated and has been widened so that it is quite safe for the travelling public. On Guildford-rd. however, less than £10,000 has been spent in the two or three years since the agreement was signed.

It is proposed that a very small portion of the road will be rehabilitated during the coming summer. I do not know what the reason is. Perhaps the Government or the department is short of the necessary finance. However, money can be found for reconditioning other roads in the metropolitan area and in the country districts. Only recently a considerable amount was spent on the Great Eastern Highway between Guildford and Midland Junction for widening. This, doubtless, was very necessary work, but money is being spent further out on a road that would carry less than half the traffic that uses Guildford-rd.

Apart from the eastern end of Guildford-rd. being narrow, the surface is in a shocking condition throughout the whole length. There is not a main thoroughfare in the metropolitan area that is in such bad condition. We have been told that during the summer a small section of the road at Maylands will be done, and that another section of 60 chains from Garratt-rd. to Slade-st., will be widened and resurfaced. That will still leave the section from the subway to Ninth Avenue and from Slade-st. to Guildford unattended to.

A bus service replaced the trams there three or four years ago, but the old tramlines are standing above the level of the road. Although not within my district, I have not seen such a wicked piece of road as that which passes through the townsite of Bassendean. I would say that there is not a road in Australia where the condition of the surface is as bad as that of the road at Bassendean.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is getting away from the Bill.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for having drawn my attention to the fact, but I wish to point out to the Government the urgency of repairing Guildford-rd. I support the second reading.

HON. D. BRAND (Greenough) [8.20]: The main provision in the Bill aims at increasing the licence fees for tractors and trailers.

The Minister for Police: We do not intend to increase any of them.

Hon. D. BRAND: I should like to hear from the Minister on that point when he replies, because I understand that the licences listed on pages five and six represent an increase, if not an entirely new application. It is proposed to restrict the provision for half licence fees to one vehicle used in connection with each farm or holding.

We in Western Australia have been very fortunate, inasmuch as we have benefited greatly from the population-area arrangement under the Federal aid roads agreement legislation of the Commonwealth. Members will recall that the non-claimant States, particularly Victoria and New South Wales, have felt that we have received more than our fair share under that arrangement, and it might be well to issue a warning to local government that we must bring our licence fees up to a standard comparable with those imposed in the non-claimant States.

This is necessary in view of the fact that the aid roads agreement is due for renewal within a year or two. The matter will be fought out at the Premiers' Conference, and representatives of this State will find it necessary to put up a reasonable argument in order to get the very favourable arrangement for Western Australia continued during the next period. I believe that the present period is one of five years.

Even at this stage, the farmers, especially those who belong to the new settler class, are experiencing great difficulty in view of the heavy cost of establishing themselves, and the Government must do whatever it can to encourage development and establishment on the land by securing a continuance of the arrangement that has existed over past years.

I think that an opportunity has been taken by the introduction of this Bill, as the member for Katanning has pointed out, to bring into line a matter which has been the subject of much discussion in this House. I refer to the provision to enable a farmer to move an overwidth vehicle along a road or from property to property without having to apply to the Police Department in Perth. The proposal is to include this as a provision of the Traffic Act, and I believe that a satisfactory arrangement will be arrived at. Apart from these remarks, I shall wait for the Committee stage to comment on the various clauses. I support the second reading.

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE (Hon. H. H. Styants—Kalgoorlie—in reply) [8.25]: I thank those members who have discussed and criticised, and, in some instances, approved of the measure. When listening to members opposite, my first reaction was one of astonishment that they should agree with the provision relating to overwidth vehicles after having spent some hours at an earlier stage of the session in supporting the disallowance of the regulation which provided for precisely the same thing.

The regulation sets out that the Minister could authorise a person, or persons, which would include a local authority, to issue a permit for the movement of an overwidth vehicle within its territory, and that is precisely the provision in the Bill. It just shows how members can misunderstand a regulation, occupy hours in debating it, eventually disallow it and then, within a matter of weeks, agree to precisely the same provision embodied in a Bill to amend the Traffic Act.

Regarding the comments of the member for Maylands about the amount of work being done or not being done on Guildford-rd., that does not come within the purview of the Traffic Act. It is a matter under the jurisdiction of the Main Roads Department. I believe that at least £10,000 was spent on the road last year. The hon. member said that the responsibility for the maintenance of Guildford-rd. had been in dispute for 20 or 30 years. However, the matter has been clarified, but, like so many other unreasonable people, the hon member wants the whole job done in a year.

I have heard members criticise the previous and present Governments for the time occupied in building the Causeway and the anticipated time to build a bridge across the Narrows—four or five years—completely oblivious of the fact that any Government has only a limited amount of finance at its disposal, and consequently has to apportion the available money in accordance with the urgency of the works in various parts of the State.

If £60,000 were devoted in one year to the reconditioning of Guildford-rd., how would people using the roads in other parts of the State fare in the matter of getting their roads repaired? One must adopt a reasonable approach and realise that for the whole of the requirements of the State, particularly as regards roads with their great mileages, a certain amount of work only can be done on each according to the urgency and the funds available.

The provision for half licence fees for vehicles for primary producers was a concession granted in 1931. That was a time when the primary producers were having the most arduous and poverty-stricken experience of their existence. It was not a matter then of receiving 3s. or 3s. 6d. a bushel for wheat; it was a matter of getting someone to buy it, because there was an exportable surplus in every wheat-producing country of the world. For those who have not endeavoured to infringe this provision, it has fulfilled the purpose for which it was intended. It was intended to be a concession to the primary producer enabling him to transport his produce along the highways of the State.

But like most concessions, this one has been subject to definite encroachment, approaching, in some instances, an infringement of it. I think it is that which has brought about the protest from the road boards and a request to the Government to limit the concession to one vehicle per farm. I have before me the expressed opinion of the Road Board Association that it knows of many instances where there are three or four licences at half-fees for vehicles on one holding. That is what is objected to.

The member for Roe says that he does not think there would be a great deal of extra revenue available to the various road boards if this provision were enforced. The estimate by the Local Government Department—it was got from the Road Board Association—is that the loss at present is from £12,500 to £15,000 per year.

Mr. Nalder: For the whole State?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: Yes; not for one board. The hon. member mentioned £200 in connection with one board, but I think that would be a conservative estimate, unless the road board was a small one.

Hon. D. Brand: How many road boards are there in the State?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: There are 127. I thought the hon. member would know that, as an ex-Minister for Works. At all events, it is the opinion of the Road Board Association that this concession is being imposed upon and the request was made by that body to the Government to see that the original intention is enforced. It is not intended to alter the original intention. It is considered that it will make a difference only to those who have imposed upon the concession granted, if the provision is enforced. I refer to those who have licensed for half-fees three or four vehicles on the one holding and who are using them extensively on the roads.

I think those who have opposed this proposal will realise that there are some hundreds of vehicles in the primary producing areas of the State being used almost as common carriers and doing very large mileages. The owners of those vehicles are bringing primary produce to the metropolitan area and are taking back in them all classes of goods used on the properties. Members of the road boards in the areas concerned—many of them are primary producers themselves—realise what is going on and know that unfair advantage is being taken of what, after all, was a fairly generous concession to the farmers.

On the question of dummying, I thank members for having drawn my attention to the matter. I think that some dummying, as between husband and wife or father and sons, could take place, but I will have that investigated and, if it is found necessary, will ask to have an amendment moved in another place to overcome the difficulty.

Mr. Perkins: How do you visualise preventing it?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I think there are at least two ways in which it could be prevented. After all, that sort of thing is not insurmountable. Unfortunately there is a type of person because of whom every piece of legislation must be made water-tight. If that is not done, they will exploit the law unfairly, just as some are doing in this instance. I know that a number of people take out a licence at half-rates for only one vehicle, although they possess three or four.

There is, of course, the privilege to the primary producer who has three or four vehicles in that, even if this provision becomes law and is enforceable, he can select which vehicle he intends to do the greatest mileage with and license it at half-rates. It would probably be the vehicle which he used between his farm and the metropolitan area.

Mr. Perkins: It would probably be the one on which he paid the biggest licence fee.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: Perhaps. It might be the vehicle he would bring to the metropolitan area, although that might not be so as it would not be profitable to bring a 14 or 15-ton truck to the city if he had only 5 tons of freight to take back to the farm. At all events, the primary producer will have the privilege of selecting which of his vehicles he wants to license at half-rates. I think it would be the one which he used most on the highways of the State.

It is not intended to raise tractor license fees. It is considered that the way in which the provision reads in the Bill could be misleading if one does not pay close attention to it, but if members will examine the measure, having before them also a copy of the principal Act, and refer to the Third Schedule, they will see the appropriate provision. At page 5 of the Bill, following paragraph (d), there is provision for the new heading "For a tractor other

than a prime mover type fitted with pneumatic tyres" and there follows a schedule of licence fees which will operate in relation to the new heading to come in prior to the heading in the Act and which is "For a trailer or semi-trailer (including a semi-trailer type of omnibus)."

Those which appear on pages 5 and 6 of the Bill do not apply to a trailer or semi-trailer including a semi-trailer type of omnibus, but will apply to a new heading which will be for a tractor other than a prime mover type fitted with pneumatic tyres. When the member for Roe first drew my attention some days ago to what he thought was an increase in licence fees, I, upon first examination of it, was under the same impression, but if members have before them the Bill and a copy of the parent Act, they will see that this comes under a new heading and does not apply to the heading to which the hon. member and I thought it did.

As far as the alteration of tractor licence fees, as suggested by a couple of members, is concerned, I would say that while it may be desirable, there is no intention under this measure to make any attempt to reduce tractor licence fees. Those fees have been in operation for many years and no complaint has been made about them by either the Road Board Association or the primary producers. If it is found to be waranted at some future date, an amending Bill can be brought down to deal with those fees.

I think we are particularly fortunate in this State in the matter of motor-vehicle licence fees. If members compare the fees not only for tractors and wagons, but also for motor-vehicles of all kinds in this State, with those in the other States, they will find that the fees are much lower here than are those in the Eastern States of Australia. Rather than a case for reducing motor-vehicle fees in this State, I think one could put up a strong case for increasing them. As a matter of fact, a suggestion was made by a meeting of the Road Board Association that, instead of the Marshal Dendy formula being persisted in—the formula on which the fees are now assessed—the R.A.C. formula should be introduced. If that were done, it would involve, in some cases, an increase of 50 per cent. in motor-car and other motor-vehicle licence fees.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Police in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 11 amended:

Mr. PERKINS: As I have already indicated, I intend to oppose this clause, and I do not think the Minister gave a convincing reply to the points I raised in relation to it. I would like to hear his interpretation of what "a farm or holding of other land" means. There is no interpretation of it in the Bill, and I think it could be interpreted in many ways by the executive officers of local authorities. We should not pass legislation and then expect the community at large to try to decide what it means.

Let us assume there is a farmer operating in his own name, in his wife's name and in his son's name, and that they have a location with three separate numbers, with an area of perhaps 1,500 acres of land. If they each have separate location numbers, are they separate farms? If they each send in separate income tax returns, I take it they can say they are each bona fide farmers. In such a case would each of those persons be able to get a concession licence for a vehicle? If so, I believe that the £12,500 visualised by the Minister will disappear into thin air and that the financial benefits of this provision to the local authorities will be more apparent than real.

For that reason, the Minister should give some further thought to the proposal before he proceeds with it. I know it is not actually his worry, as the Bill has been prepared by the Chief Secretary, but we should not pass provisions that cannot be clearly understood. If the question can be cleared up with further legislation, and the provision is made specific, we shall be quite agreeable to it. I object to it in its present form because I do not think it is a desirable amendment and also it is one that could be misinterpreted.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: After hearing the member for Roe, I think it might have been advisable, if there is to be an evasion, or an attempt at evasion, to have had inserted in this provision a definition of a farm holding. However, that could be rectified in another place if considered necessary. The majority of the people to whom this concession has applied have appreciated and honoured it. There are not many abusing it.

If there is any attempt likely to be made to evade it, should the clause be passed in its present form, the Crown Law authorities can draft a suitable amendment to ensure that the intention of Parliament is carried out. There is no doubt that Parliament's intention is to grant the concession for one vehicle only. The Committee has to consider whether it is fair and equitable that certain people, after a concession has been granted to them to license one of their vehicles at half-fee, should endeavour to gain a concession for three or four vehicles. If members consider that fair, they will vote against the proposal.

Mr. NALDER: I do not think we should allow this type of legislation to be passed. We must legislate to ensure that the public is in no doubt about what the legislation means. It is all very well to appeal

to the decency and honesty of those enjoying the concession. No matter what section of the community may be affected, there are always some that will abuse any concession granted. Therefore, Parliament should legislate to ensure that it is not abused. The Minister would be well advised to again approach the Crown Law Department and, if an amendment is required, ensure that the provision made is quite clear. I hope the Committee will not agree to the clause.

Mr. PERKINS: The position is not nearly as simple as the Minister makes out. I strongly object to his use of the word "evasion." I cannot see that there is any question of evasion when one obeys the law. If we are to pass laws that no one understands, we are not doing our duty. The Minister is not clear about the position at all. I am not happy about having the matter corrected in another place. The Minister has said that, while some producers are being honest in regard to the concession, others are doing something which, by implication, he says, is dishonest and unreasonable. That is not the position. Two properties could be run in different ways. One man could do all his carting with one large modern truck for which he receives a concession by paying only half the licence fee. The Minister has implied that a person who operates in that fashion is a law-abiding citizen.

However, a man on a similar property could cover exactly the same mileage as his neighbour by using three vehicles because it might suit him to operate in that way. All those vehicles would be licensed with the local authority. I venture to say that some of those trucks would not be licensed if the full licence fee were charged. In fact, if they are all licensed at the concession rate, the individual with the three vehicles would be paying more in licence fees to the local authority than the individual who used only one large vehicle.

So the problem is not a simple one. I object to the method of approach adopted by the Minister. The position is not as clear-cut as he thinks it is. I know he is doing only what the representatives of the local governing bodies have requested, but there is more in this provision than the Local Government Association thought. At least we should be specific in the legislation we pass; otherwise, how can we expect people to interpret it?

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

Ayes	20
Noes	19
Majority for	1

Ayes.	
Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Graham	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Moir
Mr. Heal	Mr. Norton
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Styants
Mr. Lapham	Mr. May
	(Teller.)

Noes.	
Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Brand	Mr. Owen
Mr. Court	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hill	Mr. Watts
Mr. Mann	Mr. Wild
Mr. Manning	Mr. Yates
Sir Ross McLarty	Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Nalder	*(Teller.)*

Pairs.	
Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Cornell
Mr. O'Brien	Mr. Hearman
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Tonkin	Mr. North
Mr. Brady	Dame F. Cardell-Oliver

Clause thus passed.

Clauses 3 and 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Section 46A amended:

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I do not think the amendment proposed by the clause is satisfactory to solve the problem. The Minister referred to the discussion which took place in this Chamber when the regulation under Section 46A of the Traffic Act was disallowed. He seemed to take some comfort in the fact that because members of the Opposition had spoken to the Bill and had not torn Clause 5 to pieces, they were satisfied with it. I say quite frankly that I am not satisfied with it because the clause does nothing to remedy the difficulty which existed and still exists.

The motion was discussed at considerable length and it gained the support of a majority in this Chamber. The same cumbersome method of having to obtain the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police before a person is permitted to do anything is to be deleted from Section 46A, and reintroduced in another form. It will then be merely a question of the Minister on the one hand, and the Minister delegating authority to the local authorities in country districts on the other, to deal with overwidth vehicles.

I suggest that other matters also require attention, and the amendment to Section 46A, as envisaged in this Bill, is quite inadequate to cope with the problems which were then discussed. I do not think that warrants my voting against Clause 5 because there will be some improvement in Section 46A in that the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police—one part of the machinery which did hamper these people—will be deleted. To that extent Section 46A will be improved.

To the Minister and to the department controlling local government I suggest that the advent of modern farming

machinery of very considerable width, and the constant use that is being made of it from farm to farm, warrant some measures being taken to prevent the necessity of the owners having to approach anyone to obtain permission to move them a few hundred yards on roads. If users can be given some reasonable and well-defined regulation which will enable them to move their machinery in the circumstances I have outlined, then they will not become dangerous to other users of the road.

In fact in most places, there will be few other users of the road. In rare instances, where there is necessity to travel over long distances, the provisions of Section 46A should apply. If this amendment is passed, I will ask the Minister to compare Section 46A with the regulations, including the regulation which was discussed some weeks ago, to see if they are exactly the same. They are not in verbiage or anything else. It is no wonder that the motion to disallow the regulation was carried, indicating that members want something better, but only to a small degree are they getting it.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I cannot understand the objection raised by members opposite. The maximum width of any vehicle which can be moved without a permit is 8 ft. In the metropolitan area if a person wants to move a vehicle or implement in excess of 8 ft. in width he must obtain a special permit from the Commissioner of Police. There is a difference in the Bill affecting the metropolitan area as compared with the country areas. It provides that in country districts the local authority shall have power to issue permits for the moving of vehicles or implements in excess of 8 ft. I cannot see where there is any injustice in the provisions of the Bill, as indicated by members opposite.

A farmer with a property on one side of the road and another on the other knows well in advance his requirements. There is no great injustice or hardship in his having to apply to the local authority for a permit to move his implement or vehicle across the road. The member for Stirling suggested a differentiation between implements to be taken a quarter of a mile along a road and those to be taken many miles along a public highway. Is it suggested by members opposite that these vehicles should be permitted on roads without restriction?

Hon. A. F. Watts: No one suggested that. I said, under reasonable conditions as to their movement.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: What the hon. member wants is the ridiculous proposition defined in the Act to the effect that for a quarter of a mile a person need not hold a permit. Cannot a motor driver crash into an overwidth vehicle moved a quarter of a mile along a road just as he can crash into those moved longer distances? Is not the safety of the other users of public highways the main consideration in the minds of Oppositon members? The regulation intended that the Minister should be able to depute local authorities to issue permits, and that is the intention of the provisions of the Bill.

When the discussion to disallow the regulation took place some months ago, it was pointed out that a permit could be issued for a six-month period to cover seeding and harvesting when farmers, in isolated instances, had to move implements along public highways for short distances. The Bill provides that a farmer can obtain such a permit for a period of six months and it may be possible to extend that period longer. The permit will set out the precautions to be taken by the mover of overwidth vehicles or implements. It is not unreasonable to ask that certain precautions should be taken when these vehicles are moved along public highways. Exactly the same procedure operates in the metropolitan area as is proposed in the Bill.

Hon. D. Brand: What are those conditions?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: That the vehicles would have a red flag attached. Someone must be sent in advance around curves to warn oncoming vehicles, and other precautions which a local authority may decide upon. All the precautions are not set out in the Bill. The local authority of a country district would have exactly the same powers as the Commissioner for Police, the power to safeguard the life and limb of other users of the highway from the dangers of overwidth vehicles.

Mr. Nalder: How many such accidents have been reported?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I have no knowledge of any. All accidents are reported to the local authorities. The hon. member can find out from the two local authorities in his electorate. Simply because an accident has not been reported, it does not mean that none has occurred. There is no hardship imposed by this clause. Precisely the same conditions are required in the country as in the metropolitan area.

Mr. PERKINS: The Minister has a touching faith in permits and he seems to be developing a real bureaucratic mind. Fortunately, the Australian public is very much more realistic in dealing with these questions than are Government departments which seem to have an unbounded faith in regulations they issue. Unfortunately even members of Parliament are inclined to follow the same blind alley.

A great number of Acts on the statute book are only partly enforced. If an attempt were made to enforce them all, the business community would be brought to a standstill, and if the Minister has his way, he would impose on the public this Bill and the regulation which was made some time ago.

The Minister for Police: They are precisely the same.

Mr. PERKINS: We do not want a debate on that question. The virtue I see in the clause is that it will give the local authorities a reasonably free go. They are composed of practical people in close contact with the local community, and I am sure they will arrive at something that works, even if it is not strictly in accordance with the law. The better way, in my opinion, is just to lay down general regulations with which people who move implements about have to comply. The matter of getting a permit every time a person wants to move an implement will not work. In most cases it will be ignored.

The Minister for Police: They take the rap if there is an accident.

Mr. PERKINS: That may be, but fortunately the courts take a reasonable view of these matters and, while some penalty has to be inflicted if the law is broken, should the individual have exercised reasonable care, he suffers only a nominal penalty. I lodge my protest against this type of legislation, but I agree with the member for Stirling that it is a big improvement on what was previously imposed. I accept it because the Minister is passing the matter back to the local authorities.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: The remarkable part about this is that the law as it appears on the statute book was passed by the present Opposition. It was found to be totally unworkable. The Government, by the promulgation of a regulation which failed to pass both Houses, endeavoured to ease the position in a logical way for people in the country areas; and this Bill proposes to do the same thing. What is proposed here inflicts no hardship. If members can suggest an amendment which will have the effect of protecting the lives and property of other users of the road, I am prepared to consider it, because I am not wedded to this proposition. While we get criticism of what is proposed in the Bill we get no suggestion for bettering it. This removes 95 per cent. of the objectionable features of what was put on the statue book by the present Opposition.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Third Schedule amended:

Mr. PERKINS: I move an amendment—

That the words "but not exceeding 50 power weights" in the last two lines on page 4 be struck out.

If I am successful in this amendment I shall move to delete the balance of paragraph (d) on page 6. The effect of my amendment will be to make the maximum licence fee payable on a farm tractor, and on all other machinery that comes within that category—road graders, chaff cutters, etc.—£10. It is of no use the Minister saying the schedule of fees has not been altered by reason of the introduction of the Bill and the refusal to delete Clause 2. It has probably automatically doubled the scale of fees.

On most properties there would already be some other vehicle to which the concession licence applies; and if the Minister has his way, and prevents any splitting up of licences, then the full licence fee will have to be paid on tractors, whereas until the introduction of this Bill, the concession could be obtained so that these figures would be halved. At the present time the local authorities are receiving practically no revenue from this source. I know of no instance where a farm tractor is licensed in accordance with this provision. Many licences are taken out to cover third party risks, but in those cases the tractor is licensed free, and the fee paid is designed only to cover third party insurance.

But if this scale of fees is put on a reasonable basis, I believe it may suit some agriculturists to license their tractors and also trailers, and perhaps the local authorities would benefit financially to some degree. I desire again to stress that it could be of assistance to certain of those who are trying to become established on new farms at present in that they could make a farm tractor and a trailer do the work which more affluent farmers would do with a truck or some other vehicle.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I cannot agree to the amendment, as it seeks to limit the licence fee for any type of tractor, irrespective of weight, to £10, which would be ridiculous. If members turn to page 6 of the measure, they will see that some tractors weigh 12 tons. It would be ridiculous to license such a tractor for use on public highways for a fee corresponding to that payable for a fair-sized motorcar I have the assurance of the Local Government Department that the fees provided here, and which would come under the new heading to which I referred, will in no way increase the fees that have applied over the years. I repeat that there is no case for a reduction of motor-vehicle fees in this State at present because they have remained stationary while those in the Eastern States have been increased.

Mr. PERKINS: I would ask the Minister where are the 10-ton or 12-ton rubber-tyred tractors? The fact is that they do not exist in this State.

The Minister for Police: If the amendment were agreed to, such tractors could be licensed for £10 if they came here, and I would not agree to that, or even for a 8-ton tractor.

Mr. PERKINS: I know of no tractors of that type in this State heavier than five tons.

Mr. Ackland: The heavier ones are all of the crawler type.

Mr. PERKINS: Apparently, this scale of fees is supposed to bear some relationship to the damage vehicles do to the road and the use they make of the highway. I submit that a tractor fitted with rear tyres up to 12-in. or 14-in. wide, so that it can pull itself and an implement over soft ground, would do less damage to a highway than almost any other type of vehicle, more particularly in view of the fact that the maximum speed of a tractor is 12 or 15 miles an hour or, in a few isolated instances, up to 20 miles an hour. I submit that those factors make this scale of fees unrealistic. I think the Minister should ask the department to have another look at this because I think he is being unrealistic.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: The hon. member says that the Minister is not being realistic. The hon. member is not being factual. He told us in the early part of the debate that people would not license this type of tractor because the fee was too high and now he says that the licence fee has been doubled.

Mr. Perkins: It will be.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: Is it likely that the owners of these vehicles will license their tractors and get the benefit of the half licence fee? They will license the heavier vehicles that they run to the city filled with produce and take back their own requirements.

Mr. Perkins: What if they have utilities?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: They are not much good to farmers unless they are members of Parliament. They cart a lot of what I would refer to as contraband.

Mr. Ackland: Does the Minister love the primary producer!

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: If there are no 12-ton tractors in the State, members have nothing to worry about. The effect of the amendment will be to halve the licence fee and no logical argument can be advanced as to why there should be a reduction in vehicle licence fees in this State.

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

Ayes	19
Noes	20
Majority against	1

Ayes.	
Mr. Ackland	Mr. North
Mr. Brand	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Court	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Hill	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Mann	Mr. Watts
Mr. Manning	Mr. Wild
Sir Ross McLarty	Mr. Yates
Mr. Nalder	Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Nimmo	*(Teller.)*

Noes.	
Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Graham	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Moir
Mr. Heal	Mr. Norton
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Styants
Mr. Lapham	Mr. May
	(Teller.)

Pairs.	
Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hearman	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Bovell	Mr. Guthrie
Mr. North	Mr. Tonkin
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Brady

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—ARGENTINE ANT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 5th October.

MR. YATES (South Perth) [9.37]: The Minister, when introducing the second reading, gave us some interesting facts—

Hon. D. Brand: Data, not facts.

Mr. YATES: —concerning the ravages of Argentine ants and the damage that they had caused in the greater metropolitan area and, to a lesser degree, in country centres. Just after the start of World War II, Argentine ants were noticeable in the Great Southern districts and the pest became most apparent at Albany. A number of homes were inundated with ants and they caused a good deal of damage to property. The ant has a knack of getting into houses or buildings, even into ceilings and eats practically anything. It has a particular liking for nylon stockings and I know of ladies who keep their nylon stockings in jars to prevent the ants eating them at night.

The only fortunate feature about the Argentine ants is that they do not spread disease. However, they cause a good deal of damage. Arguments arose in many households as a result of millions of ants getting into beds and clothing or swarming

over food. Husbands would arrive home from work and be met by irate wives and to get rid of the ants they would have to spray with D.D.T., which has some killing powers but which does not completely eradicate the pests. These ants entail a great deal of work and cause much expense to householders because they are forced to purchase insecticides to be used as sprays.

I can remember that some years ago the Argentine ant started to infest City Beach and then travelled along to Wembley and finally invaded Floreat Park and surrounding areas. The member for Wembley Beaches could tell quite a story about the invasion by the Argentine ants. I do not know whether the Minister for Railways could tell us a similar tale, but as he lives on higher ground he may be more fortunate.

The Minister for Railways: No.

Mr. YATES: Later, other districts were inundated by this pest and finally my electorate was affected by them. About this time the Government tried an experiment to eradicate them and South Perth was one of the districts selected for the conduct of the experiment. A new type of spray called chlordane was used and this proved highly successful. In the parts of the district that have been sprayed no reports of the presence of the ant have been made. In fact, Mr. King, the chairman of the South Perth Road Board, has told me that the ants will travel right up to the boundaries of those parts which have been sprayed with chlordane but will go no further. He was extremely pleased with the results of the spraying and hopes that the use of chlordane will be extended to other parts.

It is unfortunate that the Government did not heed the warnings given to it when the ant was first reported in this State. A select committee was appointed to inquire into the control of vermin and subsequently it was made into an honorary Royal Commission. In 1945 it issued its report and recommended alterations to the Vermin Act. In paragraph 35 of its report this is what it had to say about the Argentine ant—

> Strong representations were made to us (particularly by the Albany Municipal Council) in regard to the Argentine ant and we conducted a special examination of Mr. C. F. H. Jenkins (the Government Entomologist) on this subject. So far as actual evidence is concerned, the Argentine ant is present only at Albany and in the metropolitan districts, although your committee from personal observation is inclined to suspect its existence at one or two other places, including Moora. We asked Mr. Jenkins at p. 2039—
>
> > What is the reason for the great danger of the spread of these ants compared with other ants?
>
> In the course of his answer he said—
>
> > The Argentine ant has colonising possibilities which are far in excess of most of our native species .... Apart from its being a household pest it also fosters scale and aphis on fruit trees and thus creates a menace to the fruit-growing industry. In South Africa the mealy bug is a serious pest in the case of vines, but there the first thing to do is to control the ants before the mealy bug can be controlled. Red scale on citrus trees is another pest that is encouraged by the ant.
>
> He was asked—
>
> > Do you think that tourists would carry it from one place to the other?
>
> In the course of his answer he said—
>
> > Unfortunately it nests in all sorts of places, say in rubbish at the back of a merchant's premises. It may have a nest in wood wool in a box and the box may be moved. Apparently that is how it has spread.
>
> The Albany Municipal Council made strong representations to us that a great deal more help should be available from the Government in connection with this matter and stated that if no suitable action is taken to control the pest, its spread over a wide area may be slow, but a stage will be reached when a costly and extensive campaign will be necessary.
>
> In view of the evidence of Mr. Jenkins it is apparent that this may happen and if it did, yet another danger would be added to some of our major producing industries. Once again we are of the opinion that, in order to give the Agriculture Protection Board the right to render some assistance in the control of this pest, which is undoubtedly extremely difficult to destroy, the Argentine ant should be included in the schedule to the Vermin Act.

That report by the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the control of vermin was dated the 17th November, 1945.

Hon. D. Brand: Who were the members?

Mr. YATES: The member for Stirling; the present Minister for Agriculture; the Leader of the Opposition; Mr. L. J. Triat, an ex-member of this House, and the member for Avon Valley. What heed was taken of that report? Very little! In fact, there have been no amendments made to the Vermin Act to include a provision to control Argentine ants and so the spread of this menace, although slow, was sure.

Today we find ourselves in a very unfortunate position because we are now forced to spend colossal sums of money to

eradicate a pest which, ten years ago, could have been eradicated at much less cost. Had we taken heed of the recommendations made by the Royal Commission on vermin control in 1945, the pest could have been controlled within 12 months and the cost would not have been more than £25,000 or £30,000. Today we find ourselves committed to an expenditure of many thousands of pounds for at least the next five years and we do not know whether the pest will be eradicated in that time. Nevertheless, we sincerely hope that it will be.

In the Bill provision is made for all local authorities—that is, road boards and municipalities—in the South-West Land Division, to come under the scheme. The extent of the South-West Land Division might not be known to all members. One or two have thought that it embraces only a small part of the State. However, after studying the map, I find that it takes in quite a large portion of Western Australia.

The South-West Land Division goes as far north as Northampton—or just below Shark Bay. It takes in such towns as Mullewa, Perenjori, Northampton and the district of Mt. Marshall. It includes the towns of Merredin, Narembeen, Kulin, Lake Grace, Ravensthorpe and the districts of Sussex, Vasse, Warren, Blackwood and Stirling. They are only a few of the towns and districts that are embraced by this division. It takes in all of the metropolitan area, of course, and many thousands of square miles of the most productive part of this State.

Experts tell us that it is unlikely that the Argentine ant will spread beyond the boundaries of this division because they will not live in a dry climate and if they did venture further afield, they would not live very long. Accordingly, there is very little fear of the Argentine ant spreading outside the boundary of the South West Land Division. The main provisions in the Bill make it encumbent on the local authorities within that division to enter into the proposed scheme in conjunction with the Government.

I have discussed this matter with the Local Government Association, and the secretary of the Road Board Association, and the gentlemen with whom I conferred represent most of the local authorities concerned with this measure. In the main all those local authorities are in favour of some form of legislation dealing with the control of this pest. It would be unfair for the Government to pay for the entire cost of the scheme. The Government is hard put to it to find finance for the many projects in which it is engaged—such as schools, education, the building of roads, highways and public works—and these absorb practically all the finance the Government can lay its hands on.

As in all such schemes, it is encumbent on those who will reap the benefit to pay at least some of the cost. Under the Bill the local authorities will pay the greater share because there are so many of them. Individually, their annual payment will not be great, but collectively it runs into many thousands of pounds. The Government will pay a certain proportion of an estimated expenditure of £105,000 a year.

If in any one year the expenditure is not reached, the Government will pay pro rata its share towards the cost and the local authorities will do likewise, using £105,000 as the maximum. Any lower figure will be worked out in ratio to the amount spent as their share share of payment. I think it is left to the local authorities to charge the rate on the unimproved or the improved value of land. I think that is so. They are not completely tied own to a fixed formula.

The Minister for Agriculture: Either way they expect to bring in the required amount of money.

Mr. YATES: As the Minister has said, whichever way the local authorities rate, the income will be similar. Accordingly, the local authorities that are committed to pay their share, will contribute according to the formula set out in the Bill. The districts that pay a vermin rate will be exempt from further payments under the Bill. The towns will not be exempt, because a vermin rate is not struck for them. Accordingly we will find in the country centres that the towns will pay this rate through their local authorities, and those paying a vermin rate—farmers out on a farming property—will be exempt from payment. I think that scheme is very satisfactory and it has received full support from the local authorities and those with whom I have discussed the Bill.

The only objection that has been raised to the measure by the Local Government Association concerns the extending of the life of the measure to more than five years. At a round table conference between those bodies and a representative of the Government, I think it was agreed that the Bill would have a life of five years and no longer. Owing to a misunderstanding of the number of years, one or two of them were under the impression that after five years the Bill would come to an end. I believe, however, that the representative of the Government wanted to include in the Bill the right to have it continued if it was thought the pest had not been eradicated at the end of five years.

The Minister for Agriculture: That was at the request of the local authorities; not at the request of the Government.

Mr. YATES: The local authorities did not request that it should go on after five years.

The Minister for Agriculture: Yes, if necessary.

Hon. D. Brand: I am informed differently.

Mr. YATES: I would like to quote from a Press item dated the 12th October, 1954. It is as follows:—

> Limit to Ant Bill Sought.
>
> Strong representation for deletion of any clause in the Argentine Ant Control Bill which extends its provisions beyond a five-year limit will be made to the Minister for Agriculture (Mr. Hoar) by the Road Board Association. Mr. W. W. Fellows, a great Southern ward representative on the executive of the association, said yesterday that if the period was extended the Government would be breaking faith with country road boards which had been told that they would contribute to the scheme for only five years.

The Minister for Agriculture: Yes, I saw that Press item.

Mr. YATES: That was brought up because of something they had heard and it was contrary to what they were told earlier.

The Minister for Agriculture: He is wrong in what he says in the Press item.

Mr. YATES: We have had a number of continuance Bills, and it is necessary to pass some of them. But should we continue a Bill dealing with a subject about which we know so little. The pest might be eradicated in less than five years. Experts say they will have the ants under control in four years. I think the Minister should be commended for providing that extra year, but that should be the end, and there should be no provision for continuing the measure. If at the end of the fourth year the experts inform the Minister for Agriculture that it would be wise to have a further Bill introduced, there would be plenty of time for a new measure to be drafted, which could incorporate any alterations proved to be necessary through the experience they had gained in eradicating the ant. There could be no objection taken to that course, and I feel sure the measure would be passed.

In order to keep faith with the Local Government and Road Board Associations, the members of which have had a long and varied discussion on this matter, I think the Minister should agree to the amendment I have on the notice paper which provides for only a five-year life for the Bill. I would also like to explain that I require one of the amendments on the notice paper to be altered because, if it is agreed to in its present form, it would delete the scheme period altogether from the Bill. That is not my intention, which is to delete the reference to the extension of the measure beyond five years.

The Minister did not tell us much about the new chemical which it is proposed to use, but I was interested to read in the Press today, or yesterday, that action has already been taken by the Department of Agriculture to start work in the eradication of ants in the metropolitan area. I trust that if the chlordane, or newer type of spray, proves a success, that this House will be informed from time to time of the progress made by the special squad the members of which are doing an excellent job in eradicating the pest.

The Minister for Agriculture: Members can always obtain that information by questions in the House.

Mr. YATES: I am quite certain that all members of the Opposition, including Country Party members, will fully support this measure because it is directed at eradicating the pest in four years' time. If not checked now, the ant invasion will get out of hand entirely and cost, not only the State but local authorities, a great sum of money, much more than is envisaged in the measure. I feel sure that local authorities, with their rating systems, can meet any burden on the community. In the first year the Government was generous in making arrangements to meet the cost of combating the pest until such time as the necessary rates were received to enable the local authorities to make a start.

Every aspect seems to be covered and the Bill appears satisfactory with the exception of the provision that requires an amendment, which I trust the Minister will accept. It is not a vital amendment, but it will please the local authorities, and its acceptance will prove that the promise the Minister gave will be honoured. As I mentioned earlier, if a further Bill is found necessary, its merits can be discussed in this House at a later date. I support the second reading.

MR. NIMMO (Wembley Beaches) [10.1]: In supporting this Bill, I would like to recount some of my experiences with Argentine ants in Wembley. After spraying my own place with chlordane, the ants came back not many months after. The reason was that the lawns and paths were hosed with water. What I want to bring to the notice of the Minister is the question of rights-of-way. They have been a bugbear in my electorate, because they do not seem to be anybody's responsibility. People can spray every house in one street, but after a short time they will find the ants returning, via rights-of-way. When the Perth City Council sprayed the footpaths in that area, the ants were driven into the properties of the residents.

On one occasion when I went into a house where an electrician was engaged on rewiring, I saw millions of ants on the conduits which were taken out. The ants

had caused all the trouble. Fruit trees in my district have been affected by this pest. It does not matter what sprays are used on the fruit trees, eventually they die from the depredations of the Argentine ants.

Elderly people in my district are not able to look after their backyards because they cannot get any labour, and even if they can, it costs too much, with the result that backyards are neglected and become breeding grounds. In my own property I have pulled up slabs and found nests of this pest and after spraying the area with chlordane, I found them inside the house, and in the beds.

The Premier: Flower beds?

Mr. NIMMO: Even flower beds. In one instance when my wife was making fig jam I sprayed all around the kitchen but, the next morning the figs were black because the ants came in through the ventilator and down on to the fruit. I commend the Minister on the introduction of the Bill because Argentine ants are a great menace. My point in speaking tonight was to draw the attention of the Minister to rights-of-way. After going into the matter he may come to the conclusion that rights-of-way can be closed because they are seldom used. If the Minister inclines to this view, I shall do all I can in asking people to assist in the closing of rights-of-way. In one instance where a paddock was sprayed with kerosene and burnt, the ants appeared the following week in just as large numbers. The fire over the paddock did not seem to have made any difference.

MR. OWEN (Darling Range) [10.7]: The Bill, the object of which is to eradicate the Argentine ant, can do the State much good if all the precautions envisaged are carried out. In his speech the Minister said that the ants were a serious domestic nuisance, but, from my own knowledge and from what I have read, it can be described as a serious economic pest, because it can do a lot to interfere, not only with households, but with commercial gardens and small farms.

In some suburban gardens I have seen the ground so tunnelled that it could be easily mistaken for miniature rabbit warrens. I say "miniature" because the tunnels are small, not because the tunnelled area was smaller than that covered by rabbit warrens. The ground can be so undermined that one could sink to a depth of six inches when walking over it. As was mentioned by the member for South Perth, these ants are a big influence in building up scale insects in gardens and orchards.

In some overseas countries, particularly where citrus is grown, the ants are a serious pest. If it is possible to eradicate them, then I am prepared to support the measure. It was mentioned that Argentine ants were first reported in Albany in 1941. The Department of Agriculture realised it could become a serious pest and steps were taken in an endeavour to limit its spread, but at that time the insecticides used were by no means as efficient as the present-day types. The aim then was to endeavour to control and keep it within the areas already infested. It was believed that, as the pest was spread mainly by transporting goods, one of the chief places that could spread it was the nursery from which pot plants were being forwarded to various centres. Restrictions were placed on the movement of all pot plants in a nursery at Albany.

Only a short time afterwards, the pest was reported to have made an appearance in other places, including parts of the metropolitan area, so it was realised that it was making rapid headway. Although some experimental work was done, this was mainly directed at control or limiting its spread rather than eradicating it. I am not altogether in agreement with the member for South Perth in his statement that the Argentine ant could be eradicated easily within five years. The insecticides used previously were very ineffective against the pest unless the spray could reach each insect. Later on, with the introduction of D.D.T., a much better form of control was possible, and later again, with the advent of chlordane and other insecticides, there is every chance of the pest being eradicated. This may take longer than five years, and I do not oppose continuing the measure if good progress is made in that time.

It has been said that a colony of Argentine ants can be compared to a colony of bees in a hive. Strange worker ants cannot form new colonies. When a colony of ants contains a queen, she usually forms a bed or nest in a place preferably containing soil. Flower pots containing plants and other parcels of plants are ideal for harbouring colonies of ants. These are frequently transported from place to place so that flower pots can be one of the chief means of distributing the pest. It has been stated that the ant is unlikely to spread beyond the boundaries of the South-West Land Division. I believe that it could spread quite easily to the Goldfields and that, in the conditions prevailing there, it could thrive and go still further afield. Consequently, I consider that we would not be justified in saying that it can thrive only in the wetter areas. We have to regard it as a potential pest over the whole of the settled part of the State. True, it thrives mostly in the built-up areas, where food is more readily available than in the rural areas, but it could become a pest in the country districts also.

The Bill aims at eradicating the pest, possibly within a period of five years. I think we could compare this pest to the one we debated recently, namely, the fruit-fly. Fifty years ago, fruit-fly was confined to very small areas and, had it been tackled on the right lines then, its spread might have been checked, although in that instance again the control and methods of eradication had very little effect. Fruit-fly continued to spread until about 1914 when legislation was introduced to deal with the pest. The Government and people engaged in the fruit industry spent large sums of money every year merely to control the pest. Therefore, if any campaign directed to eradicate the Argentine ants pest be within the realms of possibility, it should receive every support. Referring again to the fruit-fly, the Government in South Australia has spent over £500,000 in trying to eradicate that pest and appears to have been successful.

In like manner, the Bill aims at eradicating the Argentine ants. As explained by the Minister, a committee will be set up and given powers and machinery to undertake the campaign. The great difficulty is to provide the requisite finance and it is estimated that for the five years' campaign £500,000 will be sufficient. I hope it will prove to be so. If we have made considerable progress at the end of five years and the pest has not been completely eradicated, we should extend the duration of the measure until the ant is exterminated throughout the State.

The Minister has explained that those districts which are already infested will be asked to rate on the unimproved value at ½d. in the £ and on the rental value 2½d. in the £. In non-infested areas, the rates are to be one-sixth of a penny and five-sixths of a penny respectively. I have heard that there is some opposition to this proposal in non-infested inland districts, which feel that, because the metropolitan area does not contribute to the control or eradication of the rabbit pest, they should not be called upon to contribute to the control or eradication of the Argentine ant. I cannot agree with that line of argument because, although some districts may not be infested at present, tomorrow they might be, and it behoves everyone to contribute to this campaign. I believe that if we make a concerted effort, success can be achieved.

The Bill proposes that the collection of rates for this purpose shall be retrospective to the 1st July of this year. Of course, the local governing bodies received ample warning of that intention. They were asked, when preparing their estimates last July, to make provision for finance to cover this year's operations, and doubtless most of them have done so. The Minister mentioned, as is stated in the Bill, that the rate would be based on 1952 values. I am not altogether in agreement with that proposal because in many instances there have been revaluations since 1952, values in some areas having been stepped up considerably. We should make the rating as equitable as possible, and I cannot see any objection to adopting the 1954 values.

We are all concerned in this and should be prepared to be rated on the most up-to-date valuations. Therefore why should it not be based on the values adopted by the local authorities at the 1st July last? I know that in the district of the road board in which I am particularly interested, the rating is ½d. in the £ on the unimproved capital value and so in the townsites—because the rural areas will not be rated—it will mean that more than 10 per cent. of the general rates collected will go to the eradication of Argentine ants.

Although my area is classed as being infested, because there are within it two outbreaks that have not yet been eradicated, we are in reality only slightly infested as compared with the areas of many metropolitan local authorities. However, we make no protest because, if steps were not taken to eradicate these ants, it would be a matter of only a few years before the whole of our area was thoroughly infested. As I mentioned previously, pot plants seem to be one of the chief means of dispersing this pest over a wide area.

Of the four outbreaks we have had in the district, three have been in nurseries where, of course, there would be many pot plants. After all, it is the townships that are most likely to become infested first and as they are the only areas to be rated, my board supports the measure. I understand that several of the neighbouring road boards around the area of that in which I am interested, have had their valuations raised considerably since 1952 and therefore I think that the present-day valuations should apply.

There is another point to which the Minister might give further attention. It appears that any member of the committee set up to administer the machinery of this measure will have power to appoint a deputy if he cannot be present personally at a meeting. That is all right, if the power to appoint a deputy is limited to one meeting, but there is no provision to that effect in the Bill. The result is that a member of the committee could attend one meeting and then appoint a deputy to carry on, and no one could do anything about it. For that reason, I think that when the committee is nominated, the Minister should appoint two deputies to act for any committee member who is absent on more than one occasion.

I feel that this is a measure which all members can support and I hope that the committee, when appointed, will do everything within its power to eradicate this

pest. If that end can be achieved in five years and at a cost of £500,000 we will be fortunate, but should it be necessary to have a longer period and extend the legislation beyond the five years, I shall have no objection to that.

HON. C. F. J. NORTH (Claremont) [10.25]: I rise to support the measure and would point out that one of the questions so far not raised during this debate is that of how the Argentine ants first got here. The answer to that question is important, because if they did it once they could do it again—

Mr. J. Hegney: I understand that they came by boat from South Africa to Albany.

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH: I hope that under this scheme attention will be given to the prevention of any future invasion of the State by these pests, because after spending £500,000 to get rid of them, we certainly would not want them to reappear. We have been told that Cottesloe is infested and I know that in the area where I live we had a very unpleasant experience with these ants and it cost us a lot of money to try to control them. In the end both my neighbours and I said that the infestation must be due to other people, but eventually I came to blame myself only and I now believe that if every person dealt with the ants thoroughly on his own block we would be able to get somewhere in the effort to eradicate them.

Personally, I can confirm the remarks of the member for Wembley Beaches, and I know that in the lanes and about the fences these pests congregate under every bit of rubbish. One could take a spade in my area and, having dug down three or four feet in the sand, still find some ants. They were to be found in thousands at the bottom of our well and made their homes in the electric light conduits and in all sorts of other places. Eventually we had to hire Grays to spray every bit of the house and grounds and that, where it is done perhaps twice a year, is fairly expensive.

Next door to me is a picture theatre and beyond that again is the Lido tearooms, well know to many members. The proprietor of those premises often told us all the foodstuffs in his place were black with ants at night. It is no use merely spraying and hoping for the best; the department will need to have power to enter premises and to take drastic steps to compel property owners to deal with the ants. Anyone who doubts my statements can visit the Cottesloe civic centre, which has had a terrible experience with these pests.

It is very important that under this measure power should be given to the officers concerned to enter premises and direct operations because, if only a few ants are left in each district, they will soon multiply and all the work will have been done for nothing. When the Bill becomes law, as I am sure it will, I hope the Minister will have every success and that at the conclusion of the five-year period, the campaign against this pest will have proved successful.

I am sure that Parliament, at that stage, if the work has not then been completed, will give a further authorisation. I cannot imagine a Bill more necessary than this. The ant is a nuisance and the amount of time that householders waste at week-ends has become an absolute loss of public wealth. A person can spend days and weeks and still not achieve his objective. As a result I support this measure.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [10.31]: I have much pleasure in supporting the proposition because it will mean an organised attempt to try to deal with a difficult problem. However, I am not as optimistic as the Minister and his agricultural advisers who think they will eradicate this pest within five years. I think I was the first member to make representations regarding this matter to the Department of Agriculture. The member for Melville was Minister for Agriculture at the time and unfortunately neither he nor Mr. Jenkins was available. So I discussed the question with an entomologist who is not now with the department. The question was raised because members of the road board under whose jurisdiction Inglewood came, had received many complaints. At that stage I was not troubled with these ants but I met a number of ratepayers who complained of the pest and as a result we made representations to the department.

At that stage I had not imagined that the pest was so difficult, but after I listened, particularly to the complaints of the women who had had their clothing eaten by these ants, I realised how bad they were. If a spot of grease was left on a frock, the ants immediately attacked. From my discussions with the agricultural officers at that time I learned a good deal, and I listened attentively to what the member for Darling Range had to say this evening. However, he should have gone further because at one time he was an officer of the Department of Agriculture, and I am informed that in parts of America the Argentine ant is so bad that it absolutely decimates citrus orchards.

People in the agricultural areas might think that this pest does not affect them. That might be so now but unless it is eradicated it certainly will affect them in the immediate future. More than 11 years have passed since I saw the then Minister for Agriculture and it is only now that we are making an organised attempt to tackle the problem. I was also a member of a deputation that met the member for Subiaco when she was Minister for Health. We wanted to know what could be done

with the funds available. The problem is a serious one for Western Australia because these ants are a menace.

Fruit-fly is a pest but these ants will become more general. They have extended throughout the metropolitan area and unless they are checked they will invade country districts. If we can eradicate them for £500,000, as has been suggested, we will be lucky. It is not an easy problem to overcome and the onus is on the department. There is no doubt that householders have to spend a large sum of money in controlling this pest. The member for Claremont told us what he has to do. I have a Rega spray and at least twice a year I spray my gardens with chlordane. My wife paints the cupboards with D.D.T. before she lines them with paper.

Hon. C. F. J. North: Are you free of them now?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: For the time being, although they are outside. I sprayed before I went away on my trip overseas and so far we have not been troubled with them. However, as soon as we get warmer weather they will be back again and I will have to spray once more. I know that many other people, —some of them are tenants—do not go to the same trouble. Rights-of-way, too are a problem and when I repaired a dividing fence before I went away I dug up one of the posts and the rotten portion at the base was alive with ants.

We have to concentrate on this problem and keep on the task until they are eradicated. If the job can be done in five years we will be lucky. Had the department recognised earlier that these ants would be a problem they might not have spread so quickly. As the member for Claremont said, pot plants, rubbish and suchlike help to spread this pest and we must do everything to stamp it out. I commend the Bill to members and I hope that within the period stated—five years—we will hear no more of Argentine ants.

MR. HILL (Albany) [10.35]: I support the Bill and my only regret is that it was not introduced 12 years ago. The member for Darling Range compared the Argentine ant with the fruit-fly pest. However, I can remember his predecessor, the late R. S. Sampson, who represented what is now known as the Darling Range electorate but which was then known as Swan. At the request of the Fruitgrowers' Association a Bill was introduced to register orchards with the object of providing funds for combating fruit-fly. The Bill was opposed by the then member for Swan, the late Mr. Sampson. When I spoke in support of it I pointed out that although I was a fruitgrower I did not know what a fruit-fly looked like; I have not seen one in my orchard, and I do not want to. However, I supported that Bill because, as I pointed out, I would sooner pay a few shillings an acre to fight the fruit-fly in the Swan electorate than pay several pounds an acre to fight it in my orchard on the banks of the Kalgan.

The Argentine ant was first discovered in Albany and I can remember talking to Dr. Teakle. He said "It would pay the Government to vote £100,000 now to stamp out this pest." What a pity the Government had not the same attitude then as I took regarding the fruit-fly and decided that it was better to pay £100,000 to fight the Argentine ant in Albany before it spread over the rest of the State.

Mr. Jamieson: Did you make representations to the Government at the time?

Mr. HILL: Yes, and the Albany Municipal Council made repeated representations to the Government. The council was always told that it was its own job. The Vermin Royal Commission made a similar recommendation and said that a concerted effort should be made to stamp out the Argentine ant.

The Minister for Labour: How long ago was that?

Mr. HILL: In 1941 or 1942.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: A Labour Government!

Mr. HILL: I am not blaming any particular Government. I had an argument with the present Leader of the Opposition because he said it was a matter for the Albany Municipal Council. This is a fight that concerns the whole of the State.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is now.

Mr. HILL: It should have been 14 years ago.

The Minister for Agriculture: No. It was found only in Albany. Why should not you look after it. You are the member.

Mr. HILL: What an attitude to take! If some Japs had landed at Geraldton, would the Minister have adopted the attitude that it was the responsibility of the people of Geraldton to fight them? Is Albany the only place that has ever had Argentine ants? I doubt it. Can the Minister state that they have never been brought into Fremantle in cargo off the boats?

The Minister for Agriculture: At the time you are talking about, Albany was the only place.

Mr. HILL: Can the Minister say that he knows for certain that these ants have not been brought into Fremantle on cargo from ships? I do not think he can. Why should one place any more than another have to fight this menace? Let us suppose that rinderpest had broken out at Bunbury. Would the Minister have said that the Bunbury Municipal Council should be the only municipality to fight it? No! He would appeal to the Commonwealth to

stamp it out. I am protesting because the Minister is complaining that the Albany people were responsible for allowing the pest to spread.

The Minister for Agriculture: No, I did not.

Mr. HILL: I beg the Minister's pardon.

The Minister for Agriculture: You can beg what you like. What you wanted at the time was for the whole of the State to get behind Albany when nobody else had ever heard of the Argentine ant.

Mr. HILL: The operations of the Department of Agriculture cover the whole of the State. The fruitgrowers have a trust fund to which I, as a member of the organisation, contribute. If there is an outbreak of codlin moth in, say, the Darling Range area, we in Albany contribute towards combating the pest. When we have an outbreak of any pest in a part of the State, it is the Government's responsibility to stamp it out. However, it is no use indulging in recriminations now. We have the ant here, and we have to fight it. I welcome the Bill and I stress that what we want is a concerted effort by the Government, by householders and everyone else in all parts of the State.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [10.41]: Having had great experience of Argentine ants, I, too, support the Bill. My residence must have been among some of the first to suffer from this pest. I remember my wife suggesting that we should sell our house and move to an area where the Argentine ant had not spread. This was before D.D.T. had been made available. That insecticide made it possible to control the Argentine ant on private property, provided the householder carried out the spraying operations. I would like to stress the danger of this ant in carrying insect pests to shrubs and fruit trees.

I have discovered that it deposits insects on such unlikely hosts as the Victorian ti-tree which is planted as a hedge. It is a first-class spreader of aphis on roses and fruit trees and generally it is very difficult to deal with. It is exceedingly intrusive. It goes right through the house if the householder is not constantly on the watch. I would be quite happy to pay a small rate over and above the excessive rate which is now imposed on my property, against which I have objected on many occasions.

If such a surcharge will save me £4 or £5 a year which I now spend to keep Argentine ants out of the house—even although they cannot be kept out of the garden—I will be quite happy to pay it because, as I have said, it is a very difficult pest to deal with. I hope that it will be completely eradicated within five years.

There is one point I wish to refer to. That is, the method of finance. This Bill, when passed, will come under the heading of "Special Acts" in the next Budget. I am not satisfied about that method of finance. I would be much happier if the money came up for discussion each year. Money provided by legislation which comes under the heading of "Special Acts" is outside the scope of parliamentary control. It is obvious that the amount provided should be subject to a decrease or an increase.

The programme envisaged might not be as simple as it should be. Furthermore, the extension of the period during which the legislation will operate, and I presume the extension of the period for providing the finance, will, if this legislation is placed under the heading of "Special Acts", be outside the sphere of Parliament, and that would not be right. I would like the Minister to consider that aspect. I am not opposing it; I am merely asking that that question should be examined. I for one am not happy about provisions which come under special Acts. I would like to see every Act made available for discussion.

Being one who has been a victim of the pest ever since it became apparent in the metropolitan area, I can sympathise with the member for Albany. Those people who were not bothered with the Argentine ant were inclined to laugh at those who complained about it as being a pest. We had to wait until the ant spread to other parts of the metropolitan area before full support could be gained to take action for its eradication.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren—in reply) [10.45]: I will not take long to reply to the debate, other than to thank members for the way in which they have received the Bill. I have no doubt that once it becomes law we will be able to do what we say we can. The Bill will not be taken into Committee this evening, and in the meantime I hope the member for South Perth will contact the advisers that he mentioned a few minutes ago with a view to seeing whether they will change their minds. I do not think they realise what they propose doing through the hon. member. At present we are receiving contributions to the fund to which the Government contributes a considerable amount and it is proposed to continue these contributions, if necessary, after the five-year period has elapsed.

If the scheme is extended, it will only be to "mop up." Unless we have a continuation of the scheme, as proposed in the Bill, the Department of Agriculture will have no other method of attending to the mopping up process, other than throwing the whole of the expense on to each individual householder, because it will have no power to extend the provision under which the money is collected. Unless the

House agrees to the Bill going through in its present form, no one will contribute anything towards the mopping up programme.

Mr. Yates: You will still have to extend the period of the legislation after three or four years.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Only perhaps for mopping up operations. On the committee there are representatives of four separate local authorities and only one Government officer. That commitee will control the funds. The bodies represented are the City of Perth, the Local Government Association, the Country Municipal Councils Association of Western Australia, and the Road Board Association of W.A. When the committee was formed to go into ways and means, which eventually led to the introduction of this iBl, it discussed the question of whether the Government could guarantee to complete the whole of the scheme within five years. No one was so silly as to suggest that it could.

The programme might be completed in four years or in five years and one month. It cannot be provided for certain that the ant will be eradicated in five years. The Government therefore considered that this provision was necessary, as did the local governing bodies, because they said that the Government of the day could not dictate as to whether this scheme should continue or not. It is not a question of the Government breaking faith with local authorities; it is a question which the representatives of the local governing bodies themselves will decide, namely, as to whether the scheme will be extended or not. I do not think they appreciate that point. The Government cannot order the continuation of the scheme unless first of all the representatives of the local authorities make such a request.

Mr. Yates: What was the idea of the view expressed in the news item?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have not the faintest idea, and I do not know on what authority Mr. Fellows is speaking.

Mr. Yates: He mentioned approaches that were going to be made to you. Evidently they did not make them.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not certain whether the letter has come through or not, but I do not know what is in the mind of Mr. Fellows. I do not think he knows the purport of the Bill.

Hon. A. F. Watts: He knows all right, because he is a member of the Agriculture Protection Board and a member of the Road Board Association.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That makes it all the more difficult to understand, because in that newspaper cutting Mr. Fellows said that if there were a continuation of the scheme, it would be a breach of faith on the part of the Government. How could it be when the proposed continuation of the scheme was not at the request of the Government at all, but at the request of the committee with four local government representatives. I do not think Mr. Fellows knows what the Bill means.

Hon. A. F. Watts: I think he was interested in Parliament deciding whether it should go on or not.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I suggest that the hon. member inform his advisers that this committee will be responsible for any continuation of the scheme, not the Government. If it is not done in accordance with the Bill, it will mean that the Government will not contribute towards any mopping-up programme after the five years, and I think it should. I think it would be in the interests of the local authorities and the public generally that the Government should continue to contribute its share, and should not cut out when two or three months' work is still necessary. I leave that thought with members, and perhaps the member for South Perth could indicate in the Committee Stage what is desired.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 10.53 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 20th October, 1954.

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