Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 15th September, 1955.

CONTENTS.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

HOUSING.

Land Purchase, Brentwood.

Mr. NIMMO asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) What was the total area of land purchased by the Housing Commission in the Bull's Creek area now known as Brentwood?

(2) What was the purchase price per acre?

(3) What was the actual cost of clearing, subdivision, and cost of any roads paid for by the State Housing Commission?

(4) Into how many blocks has the area been subdivided so far?

(5) Will there be a further number of blocks when subdivision is completed?

(6) At what prices are the blocks being sold?

(7) If all the blocks—

(a) now subdivided;

(b) to be subdivided,

were sold at the prices being asked by the State Housing Commission, what would be the total sale value?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 232 acres.

(2) Approximately £36 per acre.

(3) 145 acres only designed and developed to date. The cost of resubdivision, survey, clearing, road construction and other developmental charges of this section is estimated at £48,600. Actual cost not available.

(4) 382 gross. 371 residential sites.

(5) Yes.

(6) At current values, as has always been done since inception of Workers' Homes Act and State Housing Act and as laid down by these Acts. Average values approximately £430.

(7) It is not customary to answer hypothetical questions.

DAIRYING INDUSTRY.

Advisers, Stations and Resignations.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) How many officers of the dairy branch of the Department of Agriculture, whose job is to advise farmers, are stationed in the dairying areas?

(2) Where are these officers stationed?

(3) How many of these officers have resigned during the last 12 months?

(4) Can he advise the House of the reasons for any resignations?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 35. In addition six other officers of agricultural adviser status or higher work part time from Perth.

(2) Present district headquarters for agricultural advisers are established at Manjimup, Bridgetown, Denmark, Bunbury and Busselton.

Dairy instructors are stationed as follows:—

Bunbury—Three officers covering the following districts—

(a) Yarloop to Greenbushes.

(b) Capel to Augusta.

(c) Factory supervision and milk and cream quality.

Manjimup—One officer covering—Bridgetown, Manjimup, Northcliffe, Albany and Denmark.

Perth—One officer covering—Perth to Yarloop, plus some factory supervision.

Twenty-six herd recording units are maintained, one herd recorder operating in each.

(3) One.

(4) He was not prepared to carry out all the duties of an agricultural adviser (dairy), which includes testing, when required, of herds in the pure breed herd recording scheme.

EDUCATION.

Expenditure on School Buildings.

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

(1) What was the total expenditure on school buildings in each of the financial years 1952-53, 1953-54, and 1954-55?

(2) How much of such total was, in each such year, spent outside the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER replied:

		£
(1)	1952-53	1,450,225
	1953-54	1,235,072
	1954-55	1,586,223
(2)	1952-53	791,404
	1953-54	684,644
	1954-55	793,520

WATER SUPPLIES.

Reticulation, Kondinin and Cunderdin Areas.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

In view of the assurance given by his predecessor and the order of development laid down in the brochure issued by the department in October, 1947, what is the reason for giving priority to the reticulation to Kondinin ahead of the area north of Cunderdin?

The MINISTER replied:

The order of procedure as laid down in the 1947 publication has not been achieved at the rate originally anticipated and some adjustments have been necessary to ensure maintenance of supply on the G.W.S. system to meet its rapidly increasing demands, calling for more attention in the early years of the scheme to enlargement of the main conduit and the development of the new pumping station at Mundaring.

The 1947 order of development for the first three years made provision for approximately 40 per cent. of the work south of Merredin compared with approximately 30 per cent. actually completed. No provision was made for Cunderdin north and no work was undertaken.

Further development was provided for south of Merredin in the fourth year of the 1947 publication, together with substantial work north of Cunderdin.

It is essential that Kondinin be reached this financial year to give urgent relief to the existing system, for which the Government has a prior responsibility. Only limited work will be possible in connection with the Cunderdin north section and this will be on the pumping station at Cunderdin.

RAILWAYS.

(a) Cost of Laying Sleepers.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What is the average cost, as reckoned by the Railways Commission, of laying a sleeper in the road bed?

(2) Was a contract let recently for the relaying of sleepers on the Burakin-Bonnie Rock section?

(3) If so, what is—

(a) the total contract price;

(b) the cost on a per-sleeper basis?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Approximately 10s. 7d.

(2) Yes.

(3) (a) £13,125.

(b) 10s. 6d.

(b) Use of Diesels for Suburban Traffic.

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is it intended to equip the suburban railways entirely with diesel cars, so that it will not be necessary to mix the present service with steam trains?

(2) If so, how many more diesel cars will be required?

(3) Have orders been placed?

(4) If so, where?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Eighteen more if the suburban services are to be dieselised entirely. With increase in traffic in future years more might be required.

(3) and (4) Open tenders for 10 railcars were invited and these are now being considered by Cabinet.

(c) Flashing Signal, Robinson-rd. Crossing.

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Railways:

Can he state when a flashing signal will be erected at Robinson-rd. crossing, Bellevue?

The MINISTER replied:

March, 1956.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

Position at Kellerberrin.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) On what date will the electricity supply in Kellerberrin be taken over by the State Electricity Commission?

(2) When is it expected that the supply of alternating current will be available to Kellerberrin consumers?

(3) What will be the price of the alternating current when supplied?

(4) Will he give an assurance that all the existing consumers will be connected to A.C. mains?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No date can be fixed because negotiations with the concessionaire are still proceeding.

(2) See No. (1).

(3) If the commission takes over:—

24 units per month @ 7.31d. per unit.
24 units per month @ 4.31d. per unit.
4,952 units per month @ 3.31d. per unit.
All over—
5,000 units per month @ 2.31d. per unit.

(4) Yes.

DE-SALTING OF WATER.

Use of Process at Wellington Dam.

Mr. MAY asked the Premier:

(1) Has he seen the report in "The West Australian" newspaper, dated the 13th September, 1955, regarding the possibility of a new process, known as electrodialysis, being used for the purpose of desalting water, enabling it to be used as drinking water for householders?

(2) Will he have this matter thoroughly investigated with a view, if possible, to using such process to purify the water in the Wellington Dam, thus enabling the land, now embodied in the Wellington Dam water catchment area to be used for agricultural purposes?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) Yes.

DRIVE-IN THEATRE.

Use of Cottesloe Reserve.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Has any decision yet been reached regarding the siting, on a Class "A" reserve, of a drive-in theatre in Cottesloe?

(2) If so, what is the decision?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The Government has decided against such a proposition on that site.

STATE LAND TAX.

Amounts Collected.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Treasurer:

Can he advise the House of the amounts actually collected in State land tax during the years—

1950-51;
1951-52;
1952-53;
1953-54;
1954-55?

The TREASURER replied:

State land tax collections were as follows:—

1950-51—£180,323.
1951-52—£209,094.
1952-53—£269,062.
1953-54—£296,843.
1954-55—£390,466.

TRAFFIC.

(a) Proposed Road from Narrows Bridge.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Works:

Is it correct that the proposed new road from the Narrows over Mount-st. will prevent free movement of traffic up and down Mount-st. from and to St. George's Terrace, and that traffic desiring to get to or from the south-west side (i.e., the high side) of the Mount-st. crossing must get there via Malcolm-st. and Bellevue Terrace?

The MINISTER replied:

Not necessarily. In the Stephenson plan, Mount-st. is shown as being closed by the new road from the Narrows, but whether there should be an overway or not has not yet been decided.

(b) Photographic Evidence of Offences.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Police:

(1) How many prosecutions for traffic offences have been proceeded with in which photographic evidence has been submitted to the court by the police?

(2) How many of such prosecutions have been successfully proceeded with?

(3) Is the system of obtaining photographic evidence of traffic offences proving satisfactory in the opinion of the Traffic Branch of the Police Department?

(4) Is the evidence available to defendant or his counsel before the court hearing?

(5) Is there any system whereby photographic evidence, whether submitted to the court or not, is filed or destroyed under strict supervision?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Separate records have not been kept, but to date approximately 200 have been successfully prosecuted and no cases have so far been dismissed. Other cases are in the course of being listed for hearing.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) Yes. Magistrates have also favourably commented upon it as being very conclusive.

(4) Yes.

(5) All photographs to date have been filed. In those instances where prosecutions have not been proceeded with—where the offender has either been cautioned or the photos have been filed where a satisfactory explanation has been given, or where the offender cannot be located—the photographs are attached to the papers dealing with the particular incident and filed at the Traffic Branch, and where the photograph has been produced in court as evidence, it is filed at the office of the Court of Petty Sessions.

TAXI RATES.

Railway Department Decision.

Mr. NIMMO asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is it a fact that the Railway Department has informed the members of the Railway Station Taxi Association that they must make a uniform charge of 2s. flag fall and 1s. 6d. a mile, and that any infringement of this requirement will result in cancellation of licence?

(2) If so, by what authority does the Railway Department purport to override the maximum rates laid down in the traffic regulations?

(3) If not, how does he account for a circular dated the 3rd May last, addressed to the various members of the association—signed by Mr. Ashdowne for the deputy chief traffic manager—which makes such statements?

(4) Is it considered that a charge of 1s. 6d. per mile as required by that circular is equivalent to 9d. a mile each way?

(5) If so, does he consider that 9d. a mile on any reasonable weekly running would pay costs of running and other expenses properly to be taken into consideration, and leave a reasonable wage for the taxi driver?

(6) If so, how is such a conclusion arrived at?

(7) If not, will he take steps to direct the department to review the decision referred to with a view to seeing that reasonable justice is done to the operators?

(8) If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

(1), (2) and (3) The Railway Taxi Association was informed that its members must conform to a uniform scale of charges and because of lack of agreement by the association, these rates, which do not exceed the maximum rates laid down in the traffic regulations, were fixed from the 1st July, 1955. The commission is willing to accept any varied rates conforming to the requirements of the Police Traffic Branch presented as a uniform scale and acceptable for general application by the association.

(4) For the same route, yes.

(5) Yes.

(6) Because the charge is common on other ranks.

(7) and (8) Answered by No. (5).

NARROWS BRIDGE.

Naming.

Mr. YATES asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Has a decision been reached in connection with the naming of the proposed bridge across the Narrows?

(2) If not, when is a name likely to be selected?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) It is suggested that when the construction of the bridge is under way will be soon enough.

BILLS—(3)—FIRST READING.

1, Marketing of Barley Act Amendment.

2, Soil Fertility Research Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Agriculture.

3, Parks and Reserves Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands.

BILL—ACTS AMENDMENT (LIBRARIES).

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn) [2.30] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this Bill, as members will observe, is to effect an amalgamation between the Public Library of Perth and the Library Board of Western Australia. Last year, after due consideration, the Government decided it would be advisable to bring about a merger between the Public Library and the Library Board, and consequently divorce the activities of the Public Library from that of the Museum and Art Gallery.

It will be at once evident that the two Acts involved in the necessary amendments are the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery of Western Australia Act, 1911, and the Library Board of Western Australia Act, 1951. After a series of discussions between representatives of both bodies at which Mr. A. J. Reid, the then

Under Treasurer, presided, agreement was reached on the principles that should be embodied in an amending Bill.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Was that unanimous?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: As far as I know, the draft that is now before members had the endorsement of both bodies.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: They were unanimous on the broad principles.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That is so, and I think it will be found when the contents of the Bill are studied that there is very little room in its provisions for contention. I would like at this stage to briefly express my thanks to Mr. Reid, who has since retired from the position of Under Treasurer, and indeed to the members of the committee and members of both bodies, for the co-operative manner in which they considered the recommendations which enabled the Chief Parliamentary Draftsman to draft the Bill in due course.

It will be noted that the one measure will affect the necessary amendments to the two Acts I have mentioned. I may indicate that consideration was given to the better method of the two when amending this legislation—that is, whether it was desirable to amend the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery of Western Australia Act and the Library Board of Western Australia Act by separate Bills or to effect the necessary amendments by one amending Bill. The latter course was decided upon.

The Library Board of Western Australia Act was introduced by the then Minister for Education, the present Leader of the Country Party, and the Library Board consisted of 13 members of which there were three ex officio members, namely the Director of Education, the Director of Adult Education and the chairman of the Public Library. There were 10 nominee members including representatives of the Perth City Council, the Fremantle City Council, the Road Board Association of Western Australia, the Local Government Association, the Country Municipal Councils Association and three members representing the Library Association of Western Australia. There were also two nominees of the Minister who did not have the qualifications of any of the nominees I have mentioned.

The main amendment in addition to effecting a merger will provide for a board of 12 members. That will include two nominee members. The chairman of the Public Library will not automatically be a member of it, and the Minister will nominate five members—which is an increase of three—and the three members representing the Library Association of Western Australia will vacate their office on a given date. They will cease to represent that body, but they will be eligible for re-election.

That is the main amendment in the Bill and, as I said earlier, it has the endorsement, in its general principles, of both bodies. Provision is also made in the measure for vesting in the board all the land on which the Public Library is built. There are consequential amendments in the Bill to the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery of Western Australia Act.

Members may raise the question as to why there is the necessity for an amalgamation, or why the necessity to alter the position in relation to the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery of Western Australia Act which has been in existence for some 44 years. I can assure the House that the move has not been made lightly. Inquiries were conducted in the other States of the Commonwealth and the position in those other States—according to those in authority and the officials whom the Library Board contacted—indicated that it was preferable to divorce the activities of the library from the Museum and the Art Gallery. That obtains in South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and, I understand, Tasmania.

Since the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery of Western Australia Act was passed in 1911, the trustees have performed very creditable service in an honorary capacity over a very long period. Some of the members have held office for a considerable number of years and they have been imbued with a desire to further the public interest in relation to those institutions. I think they are entitled to the thanks of the Government of the day. The Museum and the Art Gallery will continue to function as such, and if this Bill is eventually placed on the statute book, I believe it will be for the benefit of the State.

I turn now for a few moments to the activities of the Library Board of Western Australia. Although it has been in operation for aproximately four years, it has performed a wonderful service and is still performing a most essential public duty. Libraries have been established in various centres of the State, including Moora, York, Mt. Barker, Darkan and several other towns. As Minister for the time being interested in the Library Board, I think that, being very representative in character, it is adopting a very sound policy. It is not attempting to establish a library in every town of the State instantly. Rather is it feeling its way and building up a solid foundation. From my observations and inquiries I believe that the work of the Library Board, in conjunction with the local authorities in various parts of the State, will help to inculcate into the people—I suggest it is more necessary in regard to the younger members of the community—a love of reading, of study, of profitable use of leisure time.

It will extend opportunities to people to follow in any line of study in which they are interested. I feel that many members are interested in this subject. I know that the member for Cottesloe is a trustee of the Public Library and Art Gallery, and that other members are interested in the library movement. I feel sure that after studying the Bill, together with the two Acts already on the statute book, members will form the opinion that it will be in the interests of the State to pass the Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. V. R. Abbott, debate adjourned.

BILL—MINING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. L. F. Kelly—Merredin-Yilgarn) [2.44] in moving the second reading said: From time to time we find that various provisions in the Mining Act present a little difficulty when it comes to dealing with current affairs. Under the parent Act temporary reserves are only possible to the extent of 300 acres, which is the maximum which can be granted on an application for extra prospecting areas. In many cases where new minerals are concerned we find that such a restriction has a detrimental effect.

Members will recall that last year I introduced a similar measure to the one now before the House, which related to prospecting for diamonds. Today it is desired to encourage prospecting for nickel within Western Australia on a basis similar to that applying to prospecting for diamonds. The actual prospecting for nickel is of a specialised nature and the amount of available territory which can be granted under the existing Act is totally inadequate to enable nickel prospecting to be carried on, so it is necessary to make available to those interested in prospecting for nickel much larger reserves.

There is every probability that an organised attempt to develop this branch of mining will be made in the very near future and a geological examination will be undertaken in which some of the territory adjacent to the South Australian border will receive attention. If it proves satisfactory, there is a possibility that, if a larger reserve can be made available, boring will follow closely the granting of such a reserve. Under this short Bill it is proposed to amend Section 277 to enable the granting of 3,000 square miles of land to an applicant as a maximum area for each reservation, to enable him to carry on whatever is desired in that area.

As in the last session, in reply to a query regarding the availability of land which can be granted on a 3,000 square mile basis, I assure the House that the granting of such an area will not preclude prospecting for gold or any other mineral being carried on as well. The area of 3,000 square miles to be granted will be specifically for the purpose of prospecting for nickel. There are no complications in the Bill and I feel it is very necessary that we make it possible for prospecting for nickel to be carried out on an organised basis. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Wild, debate adjourned.

BILL—COMMONWEALTH AND STATE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY AGREEMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 13th September.

MR. WILD (Dale) [2.47]: I was very pleased to hear the Minister for Housing introducing this amending Bill the other evening because I feel that the provision of opportunities for individuals, at long last with the aid of the Commonwealth Government, to be able to purchase their homes, is well overdue.

Over the past seven to ten years various governments have pressed the Commonwealth to do something along these lines. Why it has taken all this time for the Commonwealth to agree to our point of view, I do not know. I wish to repeat that we join the Government in saying that we are very glad that the people of this State are to be given the opportunity of buying their homes on a reasonable deposit and ultimately enjoying the benefit of owning them. We know that once people own a square inch of territory in this vast country of ours, it brings about a state of stability in the citizen that is of great benefit to the Commonwealth.

It is very interesting to note that the Commonwealth, since the inauguration of this agreement with the five participating States, has loaned just over £200,000,000, and that of the 81,000 houses that have been built under the Commonwealth-State rental agreement, no fewer than 10,719 have been built in Western Australia. That number represents 12½ per cent. of the total erected in the five States that have been participants in the agreement. Coupled with that, we were told by the Minister that 1,600 of these houses have been sold in Western Australia out of a total of 3,800 sold in the whole of the Commonwealth.

That is a remarkably good effort showing that we were able to build the houses here at a much quicker rate than elsewhere and that we were able to persuade tenants to purchase them. The Minister probably knows that in the Eastern States,

particularly in New South Wales, this purchase of homes has been practically a failure. I can recall that when I was over there four or five years ago, I was told that not 1 per cent. of the people who were renting Commonwealth-State rental homes in that State had taken the opportunity to purchase them.

This agreement is due to expire at the end of the financial year 1955-56, and so it behoves all of those 9,000 or 10,000 people still in occupation of these rental homes to avail themselves at the earliest possible opportunity of owning them because, with the expiration of this agreement next year, the chances are that it may not be carried on upon the large scale that has been operating since 1945.

I must say that I have not been entirely in agreement with the policy of building rental homes for all and sundry. Last evening I was reading the introductory speech made by Mr. Wise in December, 1945, in which he pointed out that Western Australia's participation in the agreement was largely due to the fact that we had agreed to and abided by the recommendations of the then Prime Minister that there should be no building during the war years. This was attributable to the large number of men serving in the forces and the difficulty of obtaining materials. Consequently, when hostilities ceased in September, 1945, we were starting well behind scratch. This State entered the scheme, recognising that something must be done at the earliest possible moment. As Mr. Wise said, it was a form of temporary accommodation to overcome the housing problem in the early postwar years. He went on to say that he had just received a white paper from England in which it was indicated that 50,000 houses were to be imported into England from America to overcome the same problem as that confronting us.

That short-term scheme has gone on and on. We have been receiving increased amounts from the Commonwealth year by year. I think that Mr. Wise said the number of houses that could be built under the scheme was 146 a year, whereas last year about 1,500 were built, bringing the total, as the Minister told us, to 10,719. I am not sure that this has been in the overall interests of the community because many of these people have become tenant-minded, and a matter that always caused me concern was the question of maintenance, which as the Minister pointed out, is something that will become a colossal problem.

When one thinks that 9,000 houses are still occupied by tenants, some of them in places in the far North and right down to Albany in the south and Kalgoorlie in the east, we are going to need a colossal army of men to maintenance those homes. We have been slow to appreciate that it is only private enterprise that should build houses for renting. We have failed to recognise that point and have been tardy in giving the man who is prepared to invest his money in bricks and mortar a better go so that he might obtain a reasonable return on his investment. That statement may be regarded as fair criticism.

In the last twelve months, since Parliament determined that there should be an easing of the restrictions, a larger number of homes under construction have been financed by private capital. At the moment this is manifested largely in flats, but it represents a step in the right direction. Three years ago it would have been very difficult to find in the metropolitan area more than one or two suites of small flats being erected by private capital, but now that investors know that they may get a fair return on their outlay, we find large blocks of flats going up all over the place. Of course, these in effect represent capital being invested in the hope of securing a fair return on the money.

I am only speaking for myself—I have not discussed this matter with my colleagues—but I think that if we are going to have a Commonwealth-State rental scheme in future, the policy should be altered. There is an obligation on us to look after the aged and indigent, and as has often been said, the Commonwealth-State rental agreement was really instituted—apart from its emergency provisions—to provide assistance to those people suffering hardship and those in the lower-income groups. We have departed from that idea, as the Minister is well aware, and I accept as much blame for it as no doubt he will accept his share, but these houses have been let to all sorts of people from one end of the State to the other, and we have got away from that incentive which has made Australia the great country it is, namely, the incentive for the individual to do something for himself.

We know that when a large number of British migrants arrive, it is regrettably true that one of their first ports of call is at the Housing Commission, virtually saying, "Where is my house?" Our forbears back in 1829 did not have a Housing Commission to appeal to; they had to do something for themselves, and while we do not want to revert to those dark and difficult days, we must, if we are going to build up a great nation, have a bit more of their spirit inculcated in the community at large. This measure is going to be the means of giving individuals occupying these rental homes a grand opportunity to own their own dwellings.

The Minister quoted one or two instances the other evening, and I have thought of another which I believe is worth recounting to the House because there were interjections from both sides as to what would happen in regard to the rent a man had paid prior to making his decision to own his home. I quote the

case of a man who decides to purchase, and the price is determined at £2,500. He may have been a tenant for about five years. During that period the portion of capital repayment would be approximately £100, so that in effect he would owe the Commonwealth £2,400. He has to pay 5 per cent. of the first £2,000, and 10 per cent, thereafter.

It would boil down to this, that he would have to pay the Commonwealth his deposit of £125 plus the £100 that he is allowed because he has been in the house for five years. His capital repayment would be £2,275 which, over the amortisation period of 45 years that has been agreed upon, would amount to £2 5s. 8d. per week, which would probably be less than 75 per cent. of the rentals that are paid today. Because of the higher costs these times, the rentals are £2 15s., £3, and more. All a man has to do today is to find £125 to £150 deposit, and he can then own his own home and pay less, by way of repayments over 45 years, than he had been paying as rent during the term of his occupancy.

The time is long overdue when the tenants in these homes should have the opportunity to own them. I look forward to hearing from the Minister, in the shortest possible time, that many hundreds of applicants have availed themselves of this opportunity, because I feel that next year, when this agreement comes up for review, there might not be quite the easy provisions that there have been in the past few years. My wish is that this agreement, if we are to continue it, and to some degree I think it should be continued, should be confined to those in the low income group and that the money that comes to the State through the Commonwealth Loan Council should be distributed as to £1,000,000 for the low income group and as to £4,000,000 for finance through our own Workers' Homes Board rather than what occurred last year when £5,000,000 was made available for the purpose of Commonwealth-State rental homes.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [3.4]: I likewise support the motion. The Minister, in the course of his speech, made several points which I feel merit emphasis, namely, that too large a number of State rental homes creates pressure groups which can be a menace to any shade of political thought; and, secondly, he emphasised, without putting it in precisely these words, the need for economics of home ownership to be observed. He quoted examples of where rents had been fixed in the Eastern States in the early history of Commonwealth-State rental homes, which were now an embarrassment to the governments of those States. I would say that was mainly from the threat of political pressure that could be exerted by the occupants of those houses who would resent being put on to a rent that would be an economic factor today as compared with the time when they first obtained the house.

There are some recent instances in the United Kingdom where that usually conservative country has experienced riots in some of the more important provincial towns because of arguments between tenants and local authorities who, in many cases, are the home-owners and rent the homes in the same way as homes are rented under the Commonwealth-State scheme in this country. Last week I saw some pictures in an English journal which rather amazed me, because we know that the English people as a rule are very law abiding. But here were pictures, which cannot be disputed, of the occupants of these municipal-owned houses, rioting, and of the police having to deal with them physically because of their campaign against an adjustment of rents.

I make these observations, not inferring that political advantage has been taken by one side or the other in this State, or any other State, but, with the swing of the pendulum and the change of government from time to time, this process of excessive State ownership of rental homes could react against either of the major political parties. Particularly is this likely when we have a large number, running into several hundreds, of tenants of State-owned homes in an electorate which might be very close in its political expressions at elections. We have several such electorates in this State, and if the scheme continued at its present rate and in the present form, I am certain it would become an ever-increasing embarrassment.

The further point I touched on, namely, the economics of home ownership, was demonstrated by the Minister when he explained the method used by the Housing Commission to reappraise rents when there was a change of tenant. I do not think any reasonable person can disagree with that principle. Particularly on this side of the House do we have to acknowledge that it is merely what we have been asking for in various forms in the debates that have taken place regarding rents and tenancies legislation. So we find that the Housing Commission, in properly appraising the economics of State ownership has to adjust the rents when there is a change of tenant. For that reason we have seen increases made in the rent of a house, owned by the State Housing Commission, when there has been a change of occupant. The Minister did impress upon the House the fact that the commission does not adjust the rent while the same tenant continues in occupation.

The Minister for Housing: Other than increases in rates.

Mr. COURT: That is so. I am pleased to see this change of approach to home ownership for a further reason which I

think will become more apparent in, say, 10 years' time. The dangers of a terrific maintenance commitment, which is ever increasing with the age of the houses, will be avoided if this scheme is adequately pursued, if requisite publicity is given to it and if every encouragement is given to people to take advantage of it. It is well nigh impossible to appraise what would be the full maintenance commitment on any government owning 9,000 or more rental homes. Experience shows that the house lived in by the owner receives greater care and attention than does the one that is rented.

It is not unusual for the owner of a house to progressively improve and enlarge it as his family expands and his means improve, and as further progress is made with the reduction of his capital liability. I take it that once the purchaser signs up under this agreement he will assume full responsibility for maintenance, and the Government can then write "finis" to a liability which is now an unknown quantity. Last night, by interjection, I suggested that the outstanding commitment for maintenance on 9,000 homes could at this moment be calculated at approximately £500,000. Roughly, my calculation was 9,000 at £50 each, or about £450,000, and I do not think that is an extravagant estimate, as we all know that a minor plumbing repair, a painting job, a fence repair or something of that nature leaves very little change out of £50. Add to that the fact that some of these dwellings have already been up for a few years, and, with the passage of time, the ravages of the weather and other factors become more apparent. I think that the estimate of £50 is not extravagant and probably is the reverse.

The Government, therefore, is being relieved of a responsibility which cannot be accurately determined. I do not suggest that the acceptance of this responsibility by the owner is unfair; on the contrary, it is a logical and proper responsibility for the occupant of a dwelling who, I feel, will be a better citizen for having that responsibility. I have no further comment to make in commendation of the Bill, beyond suggesting that the widest possible publicity should be given to this measure so that all concerned will understand that they can come under this scheme. If it is not already proposed by the Minister, I suggest that it would be worth while if a suitable letter could be forwarded to each and every tenant so as to make certain that each of them understands the very generous terms that are available under this measure and through the agreement effected by it. I support the Bill.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [3.12]: Until the outbreak of the last war, almost all the tenancy houses in Western Australia were controlled by private landlords but, owing to a number of factors—mainly the increased cost of building homes—the Government, since the cessation of hostilities, has had to step in and provide tenancy houses. I must say that I am impressed with the conditions, outlined in the schedule to the Bill, to encourage the present tenants to purchase the homes they are occupying. I have never thought it a satisfactory state of affairs that the State should become the greatest landlord in the State, and I have some recollection of reading in the Press that the present Minister for Housing claimed to be the greatest landlord in Western Australia.

I believe, as the member for Nedlands has said—I emphasise it now—that the widest publicity should be given to this matter so that the occupants of tenancy homes may know the generous provisions of the Bill. I would ask the Minister for Housing to concentrate on the erection of dwellings in country towns that are developing. Families in my electorate are constantly coming to me with inquiries about housing and their need for accommodation. Only yesterday I had discussions with members of the staff of the State Housing Commission with regard to three applicants, and that is only one instance of the need for the building of houses in country areas.

The financing of such projects is now beyond the private investor, and so the State has to take the initiative in the provision of housing, especially in country areas. For some time there was a lag in the number of applications for war service homes, but in the past two years a great number of ex-servicemen have been married, with the result that the provision of war service homes is vital. A further point which I would emphasise is the necessity for providing adequate water storage for houses in areas where there is no scheme water available. The Housing Commission has built houses in country towns where no water supply is available, and I urge the Minister to see to it that a capacity of at least 3,000 gallons is provided as a minimum requirement in the heavier rainfall areas, and perhaps 5,000 gallons in the areas of lighter rainfall.

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

Mr. BOVELL: This has to do with housing. However, I commend this matter to the Minister's attention. I support the Bill, which I think is a move in the right direction and which, if given sufficient publicity, will encourage the tenants of State rental homes to purchase those dwellings.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [3.17]: I support this measure, the purpose of which is to give legal effect to an agreement existing between the Commonwealth and the State. Members opposite have criticised

the State for having become a big landlord, inasmuch as it has many thousands of houses from which it collects rent, but if one reviews the past few years one must realise the Commonwealth and the State were forced into the position of having to provide homes for the people. I well remember before the war, when the Workers' Homes Act was in operation and many workers sought to build homes under it, but unfortunately finance was limited and no funds were available for that purpose.

As I understand the position, before the outbreak of war there were no less than 700 applications for workers' homes and the reason why people could not get them was that the attitude adopted then was not to allow too many to be built at a time as it might increase the value of the houses and consequently the applicants might have a heavier capitalisation than would be the case if perhaps only half-a-dozen such homes were built at a time. That was the policy in those days, and the Government which I supported was at its wit's end to find money with which to give the workers of this State an opportunity to acquire workers' homes.

It is true, as the Minister pointed out, that in those days a worker's home could be secured on a nominal deposit, in many instances £10, and in other cases a man might have a block of ground on which the Workers' Homes Board would provide the accommodation. Many such homes are today owned by those who were then applicants. The difficulty before the war was to find the money, and I think a former Premier, Hon. J. C. Willcock, secured some funds from the State Government Insurance Office and other sources for the purposes of housing. When he could not get sufficient loan money to build workers' homes, funds from the sources I have mentioned were made available for the building of homes under the Workers' Homes Act.

Then the war started and from that time until 1946 the building of homes ceased. In 1947, if my memory serves me rightly, members opposite, through their Leader, during the election campaign, complained about the inactivity of the State Housing Commission and stated that there were cobwebs on that department. We listened to the same members this afternoon and now they offer criticism because the State is engaged in housing activities and they want the building of homes to be left to private enterprise.

We all know that the Commonwealth Government of that time, under the leadership of Mr. Chifley, knew the problems that confronted Australia generally in regard to housing and as a result that Government made moneys available for the building of houses under the Commonwealth-State housing agreement. By doing so an impetus was given to the building of homes throughout the Commonwealth. That government knew that young men who had been in the army would need homes, because so many of them had married. As a result of the lag during wartime, there was a tremendous demand for homes. Private enterprise could not undertake the task, and it was left to the States to provide accommodation.

For three years the member for Dale was Minister for Housing and during that time I was an employee of the State Housing Commission. He, as well as I do, knows the conditions under which thousands of people lived at that time. They could not get homes because not sufficient materials were being produced to build them. At that time there was a control system and a person had to get a release for materials before he could build a house. Hundreds, in fact thousands, of people were living under conditions of extreme hardship. In my opinion, the State cannot vacate the field of house building; neither can the Commonwealth because, with the large number of migrants coming to this country, the Commonwealth Government has to provide a considerable sum of money to enable these people to be housed.

However, I think the time has arrived when the Commonwealth, through the States, should provide funds to enable houses to be built and sold at a lower rate of interest than is being paid at the moment. This would encourage young men to buy their own Commonwealth-State homes and would be an inducement to increase the population of this country. Some encouragement must be given to the native-born Australian to own a home and then produce a family because we need plenty of young Australians. If this money could be made available it would be money well spent and I think the Commonwealth and the States should make every effort to tackle the problem along those lines and give our young people an opportunity of becoming home owners. Even under the agreement a person has to pay 5 per cent. on the first £2,000 and 10 per cent. on the remainder, up to just under £3,000. That is a fairly substantial sum for a lot of young people to find.

In my electorate, where there are many tenancy houses, I try to encourage the workers to become owners of their own homes, but when one hears their stories and realises that many of them have four, five and even six children, one can appreciate how difficult it is for them to provide even the deposit. If the deposit could be reduced, say, by half, I think we would encourage many of these people who are at present tenants of Commonwealth-State rental homes to purchase them. Once a man starts paying off his home and knows that it will eventually become his own, he tends to take more pride in it and so the public asset would be protected. Many of these workers are

handicapped by a lack of capital. Many of them are on the basic wage and, owing to the high cost of living and the fact that in many instances they have to provide for a number of children, they are prevented from finding even the deposit.

Under the Workers' Homes Act people were permitted to purchase their own homes and only a negligible deposit was required. As soon as they started to pay off the homes, they became the owners and so took the responsibility. If the same could be done in regard to Commonwealth-State rental homes, I am sure that it would be of considerable advantage both to the workers and to the Government. However, I realise that this agreement cannot be varied and we have to accept it as it stands. It is of benefit to the State and had it not been for the Commonwealth-State housing agreement, I feel sure we in this State would have been in a far worse position than we are today in regard to housing. I commend the Bill to the House.

MR. O'BRIEN (Murchison) [3.27]: I rise to support the Bill because I realise the importance of the agreement and the benefit that this measure will be to the people of the country districts and, in particular, those on the Murchison. We have housing difficulties throughout the Murchison electorate, but I am pleased to say that the Labour Government of today is the first for the last 50 years to my knowledge that has ever ventured to build homes for the people of the country outback. I refer particularly to those in my own electorate.

Mr. Wild: That would not be true.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I congratulate the Government and I am grateful to the Minister who acceded to my appeal on behalf of the people of the Murchison, and Mt. Magnet in particular. The result is that we now have Commonwealth-State rental homes in that district. If this Bill is passed—and I am sure it will be—it will entitle those people, after a short time as tenants, to become owners of the homes.

The member for Dale intimated that it would cost a large sum of money to have houses built in the far North and in the south. No expenditure should be thought too great if it provides houses and amenities for those who work so hard, particularly those who toil in the bowels of the earth, and their brave wives who battle for years and years to provide homes for their families. People like these put the Ned in Nedlands, the Cot in Cottesloe and the Bus in Busselton! They are the people who pioneered this country, and we should provide for them as well as for the migrants.

Mr. Wild: Did I hear the member aright when he said that this is the first Government that has built houses in the country?

Mr. O'BRIEN: On the Murchison.

Mr. Wild: Ah!

Mr. O'BRIEN: The hon. member should listen carefully.

Mr. Wild: It is a very big State.

Mr. O'BRIEN: If the member for Dale will listen carefully he will learn plenty. I know this is a good Bill for the entire community and I commend it to the House. The provisions it contains will mean a tremendous lot to the people in the outback and will help them to build their homes and to carry on in those remote areas. These people have a great many difficulties to contend with, and it takes a brave heart indeed to suffer some of the disadvantages that exist. I know they do exist, because I was born and bred there.

Surely the Government and the people of the State can afford the small finance that will be necessary to provide for collections and inspections in connection with the homes built in the outback. A very weak excuse has been put up by the Opposition. These are the people who are responsible for building up the suburbs here and in the Eastern States by means of the gold they won years ago on the Murchison. I do not wish to speak at length on the measure because I know it will get the support of this House. I trust it will have a safe passage.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth—in reply) [3.32]: First of all, I wish to express my appreciation of the reception given this Bill. Indeed, I think I anticipated this in my opening remarks, because surely no member could oppose a proposition to allow occupants of rental homes to purchase on reasonably easy terms, those places over an extended period of years.

I think there is some substance in what was mentioned by the member for Middle Swan, namely, that small as the amount of the deposit might appear, there may nevertheless be quite a number of people anxious to make a purchase and well able to meet regular instalments or commitments, but at the same time not in a position to raise the amount of deposit required under this formula. That, of course, contrasts with the very small amount which could be paid under the State Housing Act.

This point was emphasised very strongly with the Commonwealth and I think it will be recalled that in his policy speech the Prime Minister stated that his Government was in favour of a 10 per cent. deposit. Fortunately, the States were able to prevail upon him to the extent that he finally agreed to 5 per cent. on the first £2,000 and 10 per cent. in respect of the balance. Over all, I feel, it is quite satisfactory as far as it goes.

I think I am right in saying that in Tasmania where as I intimated earlier, the Government of that State has paid all its obligations to the Commonwealth—which means that those houses belong to the Government of Tasmania—and has sold quite

a number of them with no deposit whatsoever. An instalment is worked out on a basis of so many years repayment, and the occupiers are able to acquire the houses merely by paying the £2.15s. a week, or whatever might be the sum involved.

As we, under the State Act here, allow people to purchase homes for deposits of £50, and in some extreme cases for as low as £25, it does indicate that it is quite a practical proposition to allow people to obtain their homes with the very smallest of deposits. I do not know wether I heard correctly when the member for Dale was speaking, but I imagined that he said he was pleased to see that the Government had come to the Opposition's point of view in connection with the sale of these homes.

Mr. Wild: I did not say that.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I am pleased, then, that I misunderstood the hon. member, because I pointed out very definitely that the present Government within its first weeks of office—and other governments of the same political colour throughout the Commonwealth—were most insistent in their approaches to the Prime Minister, requesting that there should be a supplementary agreement to provide for the sale of homes on terms. So far as this Government is concerned, it is now well known that it has taken a period of approximately two years before that has been given effect to.

For the information of members, I may say that I have taken the trouble to make inquiries in other States and, as the member for Dale has already indicated, in the matter of sales to date under the old system whereby the full purchase price must be paid, Western Australia has the best record of any State of the Commonwealth. The same applies over the short period that homes have been on offer on a terms basis. I indicated that 70 had been finalised in this State. I find that in South Australia no more than six houses have been sold. In Queensland 17 have paid their deposits and I suppose they can be counted as sales.

Inquiries have been made in other States and it is impossible to say whether any sales have been actually finalised. For instance, Victoria conveys to us the information merely that several applications have been received. One would have thought, out of, I suppose, not less than 30,000 of these rental homes erected in Victoria, that more than just several applications would have been received. Accordingly it is a very real problem and one that leads up to what was mentioned by the member for Nedlands concerning pressure groups.

We noticed just recently that the new Victorian Government sought to make some upward adjustments in the rent levels of houses built some time ago. There were protest meetings held and fiery resolutions passed, calling upon all the tenants to refuse to pay the increase sought. This will tend to reduce that state of affairs. I agree that so long as the State is building rental homes, there should be emphasis on doing something for the older people of the community.

Running true to form, the Government has anticipated the situation and is a little ahead of the suggestion of the member for Dale. If the hon. member cares to traverse any of the new suburbs in the metropolitan area, which he could do any morning of the week, he would find that in every one of the new areas being developed, homes are being specially built for pensioners. It is something additional to those being built under the McNess Housing Trust and additional to those being erected in country districts where the Lotteries Commission provides the moneys for the erection of premises for old people and then hands over the estate to the local authority, provided such local authority carries out certain responsibilities.

I wish to assure members that the Housing Commission is doing its utmost to encourage people to purchase homes under this supplementary agreement. All tenants have been furnished with a circular setting out in brief terms a general summary of the situation and inviting them, if they are interested, to forward a nominal amount of £2 2s. to pay for the cost of obtaining the services of the Taxation Department in the making of a valuation. Then, as soon as that valuation had been obtained, subject to adjustments the commission would make in accordance with the formula I outlined previously, a firm offer could be made to the tenant.

Here I might mention that the formula we have applied in this State of selling at current valuation, less 10 per cent., but not less than the cost of construction, is purely local. Under the agreement, it is left entirely to the States to work out whatever system they like for the sale of these homes so long as the Commonwealth receives the outstanding amount spread over a number of years to liquidate the loan moneys made available in respect of the houses.

Seeing that there has been such a measure of agreement on this Bill, I will omit a few references that might be termed party-political. But I would like to say, with reference to what the member for Vasse advanced—and I am not going to deal with water tanks—that in his own township—

Mr. Bovell: That has a bearing on the purchase value of the house, you know.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That may be; but perhaps we could discuss that privately. In respect of what one might call the capital of the Vasse electorate—namely, Busselton—since 1945 a total of 21 houses had been built in that town up to the time this Government came into office; and by the time it has exhausted

its three years' term, a further 22 houses will have been erected in Busselton, from which it can be seen that the claims of country districts have not been overlooked. I conclude by expressing the hope that many more people than have as yet given evidence of it will, in the course of the next few months, approach the State Housing Commission in a businesslike manner, seeking to acquire some stake in this State per medium of the purchase of a house under this agreement.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Sitting suspended from 3.44 to 4.8 p.m.

In Committee.

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

BILL—HONEY POOL.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 13th September.

MR. YATES (South Perth) [4.12]: The introduction of this Bill is a major step forward in the establishment of an industry important not only to Western Australia now, but eventually to the rest of the Commonwealth also. Western Australia is the first of the States to introduce a measure such as this. Going back through the years we find that in 1924 there appeared to be no stability in the honey industry in Western Australia. In that year a band of men—they were known as beekeepers—decided that because of the growth of the industry some steps should be taken to stabilise it, to give not only some measure of control to the industry but also to provide some co-ordination between the many beekeepers established through the State.

After many trials and tribulations, the Honey Pool as we know it today was established and later—not very much later, because I think it was the year after—the pool was established, and the beekeepers nominated various members to be directors, trustees and executive officers and they also appointed paid staff to conduct the pool. Westralian Farmers played a big part in the establishment of the pool and although the product is not handled directly by that firm it did a lot towards establishing the industry in this State. In fact Westralian Farmers has marketed the bulk of the product in this State, the Eastern States and overseas.

In 1932, one of the trustees mentioned in the Bill, Mr. Ronald Moyle, became associated with the Honey Pool by virtue of its activities as he is one of the employees of Westralian Farmers. Mr. Tom Powell, who was the manager of the pool, became closely associated with Mr. Moyle from that time on. Through the years, as a result of Mr. Powell being the manager of the pool and Mr. Moyle being a director of Westralian Farmers, these two gentlemen have built up an industry of which Western Australia can be proud. Mr. Powell has a great knowledge of the industry itself. He is well acquainted with the beekeepers and their problems and he knows the correct method of handling the product, and the type of containers used, which have been changed from time to time. Every container that is used now is of the highest possible standard.

Throughout past years close co-operation has existed between the Honey Pool and Westralian Farmers without the beekeepers having any fear of that company taking over the control of the pool because they know that it acted only in the role of guide and counsellor. In addition, Westralian Farmers guaranteed the Honey Pool finances to the extent of £35,000, which guarantee was needed for certain reasons, by the pool through the early years.

There are certain peculiarities attached to the borrowing of money not only by the Honey Pool, but also by similar organisations engaged in various industries. When the members of an industry form themselves into a pool or group without any statutory powers, it is often found that their finance is restricted because they are unable to obtain loans nor have they the right to approach any bank to borrow money. Therefore, Westralian Farmers guaranteed the Honey Pool to the extent of £35,000, as I have just mentioned, and that company has more or less backed the pool since its inception.

The Minister, when introducing the Bill the other evening, said that the purpose of the measure was to enable the Honey Pool to become a corporate body. If the Bill becomes law and the Honey Pool is incorporated, it will then have the power to borrow money, to erect buildings, to extend existing premises and to effect any general improvement in the industry in this State so that eventually it will not only become a great industry, but a great revenue earner for the State of Western Australia. In fact, the past few years have proved that thousands of pounds have been brought into this State by the export of honey to outside consumers.

Needless to say the industry is well established. Not only is it well established, but also, I venture to say, it is conducted better in this State than in any other part of the Commonwealth because we have a honey pool run by experienced men. They are experienced beekeepers and are expert in the production of honey. They know where to place their hives to obtain the best quality honey and they also know that when they place the product into the containers their worries are over because the pool then takes over and arranges for the honey to be graded, packed and shipped away to outside buyers.

There is another important feature which is different from that relating to the Wheat Pool. That is, immediately the honey is placed in the Honey Pool, 50 per cent. of the sale price of the honey is paid to the producers and the balance is paid later by arrangement. Therefore, the producers are certain of at least 50 per cent. of the sale price of their product when it is handled by the Honey Pool. They, of course, cannot get the full price immediately because a final determination is not made until later and as it is a seasonal product a final price cannot be arrived at until the end of the season when all the returns have been forwarded. The balance of the money due to the beekeepers is then allocated.

Members may consider that Clause 19 of the Bill needs some amendment. In that clause it is mentioned that not later than the 31st October of each year a balance sheet shall be taken out by the Honey Pool—making due allowance for depreciation, and so on—and that balance sheet will be forwarded, within two months, to the Minister for Agriculture so that it can be tabled in this House. Therefore, it can be easily realised that the balance sheet would not be ready for presentation until approximately the end of December when this House would be rising and therefore the document could not be tabled until the following session or August of the next year. The reason for the late presentation of the balance sheet is that the end of the honey season falls in October. The 31st October would see the close of the season when the accounts could then be finalised.

Furthermore, within a few days of that time the new season commences, so it has been the practice of the Honey Pool in this State to make up its books and accounts from the end of the honey season. It would take the pool at least until the 15th November or probably later to get all the accounts in and it would probably take another four weeks to finalise all matters before a report could be placed in the hands of the Minister. Therefore, the pool would not be able to present the Minister with a complete set of documents for tabling until the end of the year.

That is the reason why the 31st October is given as the date when all accounts must be submitted. As a result, when the accounts and balance sheet are sent to the Minister for Agriculture, they would be tabled in the following session of Parliament and that practice would continue year after year. When the Minister was introducing the Bill the Leader of the Opposition interjected by asking—

> Does Westralian Farmers Ltd. hold a monopoly of the production of honey?

I can assure members that that company does not hold a monopoly nor does it handle the honey. All the honey crop is handled by the Honey Pool and Mr. Powell is the general manager of that concern. Its premises are situated in Stuart-st., West Perth, and recently the Minister for Agriculture laid the foundation stone of its new building, which is situated approximately 100 yards west of the existing premises.

This morning I took the opportunity of going through these new premises which are not yet completed, but when they are I am sure they will be a credit not only to the Honey Pool, but to Western Australia as a whole, because I can see big developments arising from the construction of a better building, larger floor space, better packing arrangements and new and modern equipment. Therefore, the Honey Pool will be able to become a still greater producer of a better quality product which it can market to the advantage of the beekeepers.

Mr. Court: It has already established a good name abroad for its products.

Mr. YATES: It has, indeed. The reputation established by the beekeepers in Western Australia has become widely known so that, in future, the Honey Pool need have no fear regarding the sale of its product. Unfortunately, this honey season has been a bad one. Because of the heavy rains in February many hives were destroyed. Later in the season we had further heavy falls of rain in the North and in the great South-West which interfered with production. So this year there will be a falling off in honey production mainly because of adverse weather conditions.

Beekeepers in this State number approximately 600. That figure embraces all beekeepers, both large and small, because even if a man has only one hive he must be registered as a beekeeper. That is the reason for such a large number. There are approximately 140 commercial beekeepers; that is, those owning more than one or two hives. If a beekeeper has a number of hives he has to employ labour to assist him in the work and this, of course, adds to the cost of production. Therefore, if a beekeeper has to employ men, he must go into production in a bigger way so that he can pay for the cost of labour and obtain a return for his own efforts. The 140 commercial beekeepers are the type that have entered the industry to earn a living from it. They are engaged in honey production because they like the work and because they are out in the open. They visit various parts of the State. They are keen to improve the quality of their product and are also keen to place Western Australia on the map with the honey they produce. They are jealous of the reputation they have built up in past years because it has been proved that Western Australian honey is as good as, if not better than that produced in other parts of the world.

Mr. Nalder: Have not a number of these beekeepers come from the Eastern States to Western Australia?

Mr. YATES: I am glad of that interjection. During the year a number of Eastern States producers visited Western Australia; some on holidays and some on business. Without exception they inspected the premises of the Honey Pool in West Perth and they were amazed at the improvements that have been made in the industry in this State. They were amazed at the way beekeepers are protected if their hives should be destroyed and also at the way their product is marketed.

In this State we have a beekeepers' compensation fund. Should a beekeeper have any of his hives destroyed through no fault of his own—for example, through disease—this fund completely recoups him so that he is able to buy new hives and equipment. That was one thing that Parliament did for beekeepers a few years ago. The Honey Pool has done the rest since the inception of the industry. So the visiting beekeepers from the Eastern States have seen what has been done by the pool here and they have returned to their own States extremely jealous.

In fact, some of them have left their State and established themselves here, and they have not regretted it. I know that the rest of the Commonwealth is eagerly watching the introduction of this Bill in Western Australia, because I am quite certain that if it is passed a similar move will be made in other States of the Commonwealth where honey production is increasing under established conditions similar to those in this State.

Mr. Bovell: Do most of the 140 commercial beekeepers market their product through the Honey Pool?

Mr. YATES: At least 130 beekeepers, both commercial and otherwise, market their product through the Honey Pool. There is an important provision in the Bill which makes it compulsory for the pool to accept honey from any beekeeper. It is not compulsory for a beekeeper to be a member of the pool. Membership is quite voluntary, and so the pool is a voluntary one. If a beekeeper desires to market his honey through the pool, he can take it to the depot and it must be accepted by the pool. The beekeepers are quite happy with this method. There is complete freedom of movement, thought and action on the part of the activities of these producers. If a beekeeper desires to market the honey other than through the pool, he can do so.

The Honey Pool does not mind if beekeepers can find markets for themselves. That is the reason why the pool has worked so well through the years. While it is not compulsory for all beekeepers to join, so well has the pool functioned that approximately 70 per cent. of the producers have marketed their products through it. One or two of the bigger keepers have marketed their production through other sources for many years. There is no compulsion to market the honey through the pool; the only compulsion is for the pool to accept honey from beekeepers.

Mr. Nalder: Do beekeepers have to notify the pool of the amount of honey they are likely to produce?

Mr. YATES: There is no obligation on the beekeeper to notify how much he will send into the pool. I take it that through the years the controllers of the pool would have a very fair knowledge of the annual production of the various beekeepers. They would know how much to expect from each of them, large and small. This year the production was upset by abnormal conditions. In normal years they might inquire of beekeepers, before the season commences, how many hives they were likely to have and what would be their production, but I am not sure of that. The system adopted by them would indicate what they could expect in honey production.

Another improvement effected by the pool concerns containers. At one time honey was sent up from country districts in 4-gallon tins which cost 5s. each. Now the honey is handled in bulk and this is the only State in the Commonwealth where it is so handled. Beekeepers are provided with substantial drums having a capacity of approximately 44 gallons. They are hired out at a cost of £1. Under the previous method, the 4-gallon containers cost 5s. each but now a 44-gallon container costs £1. In other words, under the old system it cost £2 10s. for containers to market 44 gallons of honey, but under the new system it only costs £1. There is a big saving in handling costs and it is easier for the beekeepers.

Nowadays some of the smaller producers can handle their total production in one container, and others require two or three. In the old days when they had to fill the 4-gallon containers on the ground, handle them on to trucks and take them off at rail-heads, it was a back-breaking task. With the new method of handling, the honey is pumped into the 44-gallon containers and the beekeeper is saved a lot of hard work. The pool is right up to date with modern methods. Its marketing system is second to none. It has established markets overseas. Today the industry is well established.

Now the stage is reached where after all the years of experience it is desired to form a corporate body with nominated directors from the pool and from those engaged in the industry, together with a trustee from Westralian Farmers. They have a quaranteed £35,000 overdraft at the bank for their needs. With a voluntary tax on honey of ½d. per lb., which is not a great amount, in the years to come, slowly but surely, the honey pool will be able to pay back the money it borrows or intends to borrow

for the further extension of their premises, and for the further good of the beekeepers of this State.

I commend this Bill to members. I thank the Minister for Agriculture for introducing the Bill and for the interest he has shown in those engaged in this industry. It augurs well for the future when the Government members, and those on this side of the House, can see eye to eye respecting this type of legislation, which will be of benefit eventually to the whole community of Western Australia.

MR. OWEN (Darling Range) [4.36]: This Bill aims to give certain statutory powers to the Honey Pool which has been in existence for quite a few years. I raise no objection to it because everything seems to be straightforward. My sole regret is that the debate was resumed only two days after its introduction. I have not had sufficient time to discuss the Bill with certain beekeepers in my electorate. I understand there are several reasons why it is desired to pass the Bill through this House as soon as possible, and for this reason I have not asked for an adjournment.

As described by the Minister and the member for South Perth, the honey industry in this State has been on the up and up. My experience with bees and honey goes back many years, to the days when as boys we used to scour the bush looking for bee-hives in hollow trees and attempting to collect the honey. The methods we adopted were not any worse than those adopted by some commercial beekeepers in those days. We took the honeycomb together with any stray bees. We could not separate them and we used to put them into chaff bags and strain them into tins. As can be imagined, the quality was not very good and certainly not consistent. The commercial samples of honey in those days were just as inconsistent.

In later years when some organisation was arrived at and attempts were made to standardise the quality of Western Australian honey, the pool was formed, and it has done a very good job ever since. As an officer in the Department of Trade and Commerce, I had some experience of inspecting honey for export overseas. Although I knew very little about honey, the chief concern was that the containers complied with the regulations under the Federal Commerce (Trade Descriptions) Act. The honey had to be packed in tins and cases. We did the job to the best of our ability. Later on certain grades were introduced .

From what I can ascertain, Western Australia had difficulty in complying with the better export grades of honey. From quite a lot of our native flora, the honey produced was rather dark in colour. I remember discussing the position with a beekeeper in Collie who had saved several hundred gallons of honey that was about the consistency and colour of molasses. He could not dispose of it for human consumption and had to get rid of it as stock feed. Later on, when discussing this matter with the officer in charge of the section of the Federal Department of Trade and Commerce in Melbourne, which deals with honey, I was given an insight into the various export grades.

I was told that their first grade was light in colour, with a strong body. I understand that their best natural grade honey came from the yellow box. Some of our native flora produce a nectar which supplies a rather dark coloured honey. Some of the best honey flows are obtained from our eucalypts, including the red gum, and the best of the lot is from the native karri, which unfortunately does not produce a heavy crop every year. The honey from that is extremely high in quality and compares favourably with the much-renowned yellow box honey of Victoria and New South Wales.

The Honey Pool, by having large quantities of honey at its disposal, has, by judicious blending, been able to maintain a regular supply of consistent quality so that there is a demand for it overseas. One can understand quite readily that, if each beekeeper marketed his honey at various times during the year, he would have a few tins of this and a few tins of that, and there would be difficulty in producing a good consistent line of honey. This is where the pool has been able to do such a great amount of good. I believe that Western Australian honey is now well known both here and in certain overseas countries. I feel that the Bill will prove to be of immense benefit to the industry. I regret that I have not had an opportunity to discuss its provisions with some of my apiarist constituents, but in the absence of criticism from them, I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—COAL MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. L. F. Kelly—Merredin-Yilgarn) [4.48] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of the Bill is to correct any anomalous positions which would otherwise arise because of variations in the conditions of employment of mine workers at Collie, and to institute machinery amendments for the improvement of the working of the pensions Act.

Following the granting of long service leave to mine workers, it has become necessary to amend the provision in the

Act to allow for a mine worker to be lawfully absent from the industry during the period he is enjoying his long service leave. The Act as it stands would disqualify a mine worker in respect of periods of continuous employment as affecting his ultimate retiring pension benefits, and it becomes necessary, therefore, to provide for the recognition of his continuous employment through the long service leave period.

Likewise, the enactment of the National Service Act, 1951-53, by the Commonwealth has introduced an anomaly in the pensions Act. Where a mine worker is absent on war service, he is regarded as "lawfully absent" from the industry, and he is not required to contribute to the pension fund during that period. The coalmining unions have requested that the principle be applied also to the national service trainee, and an amendment for such purpose has been included in the Bill.

The question of earnings from the business or occupation, or from the personal employment of a pensioner has come under review. Provision was originally made in the Act that, where income was received from the sources mentioned, any amount in excess of £2 10s. per week earned by a pensioner, or his dependants for whom an additional payment was made out of the fund to the pensioner, would be deducted from the normal pension payment. It has been found that the provision in relation to a "business or occupation" is extremely difficult to police by the administration, and in no case to date has a pensioner been reduced on that account. It is recognised that a retired mine worker has every right to retire to his small property, built up in his spare time, and to reap any small reward accruing to him as a result of such occupation.

However, the question of earnings from private employment is of a different category. When the provision for control was inserted in the Act it was at the instigation of the unions. It was claimed that the avenue of private employment at Collie should not be filled by a retired pensioner at the expense of a person who did not enjoy pension benefits, and the rate of £2 10s. was fixed as the reasonable figure which could be earned without restriction. Any earnings over that amount should be curtailed as they would not only affect the field of available employment but would also cause the cancellation or reduction of a Commonwealth social service pension with the corresponding increase in payments out of the Coal Mine Workers' Pension Fund.

In view of the present circumstances, and by that I am referring to the reduction of hands by the owners of the coal companies, it is apparent that the principle of maintaining the field of employment at Collie for people other than pensioners should be carried on. It is recognised that the cost of living would warrant an increase in the amount fixed at present and it is proposed to increase the allowable earning figure to £5 per week.

By doing that, the Commonwealth pension would not be affected because the variation in allowable income under the Commonwealth means test last year will permit the increased figure for a married man; and there would be retained in the Act the provision for the curtailment of full-time work by a retired mine worker. The present proposed fixing of a weekly earning is different in the case of a blind pensioner. It is felt that such a person is deserving of sympathy because of his affliction, and, in line with the Commonwealth, it is proposed to place no limit on the amount such a person may be able to receive from any employment he may be in a position to undertake.

Other provisions listed are machinery only, and are designed to smooth the path of administration. The items concerned are the provision to write off irrecoverable arrears of contributions where the pensions tribunal is satisfied they cannot be collected and for the implementing of a standard practice where, for accounting reasons, the owner pays a contribution only where the mine worker pays his contribution. In the main, the provisions have been approved by the coalmining unions and those people connected with the industry at Collie. There is not a great deal in this small measure, which I commend to the House. I move—

> That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. May, debate adjourned.

BILL—JURY ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 13th September.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [4.56]: I must confess that I approach this measure with extremely mixed feelings. My views are that it is desirable to amend the law in relation to juries to allow women to sit on juries, provided they are willing to do so. I do not think that any attempt at compulsion, which seems to be the intention in this measure, should be contemplated by the Legislature.

The member for Mt. Lawley, when addressing himself to the Bill the other night, made, I thought, most effective use of the figures that had been supplied to him by the Minister for Justice, because he was able to show that of all the male

residents of the metropolitan area—approximately 150,000; perhaps more—there were only in the vicinity of 5,500 who were on the jury list, and therefore liable to be called up for jury service. Of course, the present jury law provides for a great number of exemptions, occupational and other, which I think have been amply justified over the years. They have, however, served very strongly indeed to ensure that only a small fraction of the male population is compellable to give jury service.

Yet, as I understand the terms of the Minister's Bill, practically every woman with, I think, some age limit—and it is a wonder that is in the measure in view of the Minister's views on other aspects—is compellable to give jury service. I must confess that I do not like it. I would be quite prepared, and I always have been, to agree to a Bill to allow a woman to be registered for jury service, and be compellable once registered, provided her registration was a voluntary act.

I have no desire whatever to exclude the womenfolk from service on a jury, but I am well aware that there is a great number—I would say proportionately greater in percentage than would be the case with males—who would be most unwilling to accept duty, particularly in certain types of criminal cases. When one realises the difference in temperament, in sentiment and in many other ways, between the two sexes, one can readily appreciate that what would be an easy job for a man, occasioning him only normal concern, would be mentally devastating—

The Premier: What is this temperamental business?

Hon A. F. WATTS: —to a woman of certain characteristics. I think the Premier knows as much about it as most of us do, and I do not propose to go into the details even for his benefit. If he does not know—I am quite certain he does—the different reaction of the average woman—as against that of a man—then I am most surprised, in relation to a similar set of circumstances. I say that it could be absolutely devastating to some women to be asked to sit as a member of the jury on certain types of criminal cases, or, worse still, perhaps in the rare cases where juries are still used in certain instances in coroner's inquiries.

If we are going to be reasonable in these matters and take into consideration what after all are approaching the fundamental characteristics, and if we allow, as I do, that the claim of certain women—a substantial number perhaps—to be allowed to sit on juries is a reasonable one, and agree that provision for it should be made, I do not think that justifies a measure of compulsion which could extend very easily to many womenfolk who would not desire to participate in such things and who, indeed, would be detrimentally affected in health by having to attend and take part in certain types of criminal cases.

So I suggest that we do be reasonable in this matter. Let us all agree, as I will heartily agree, that there ought to be a way found whereby a woman who wants to sit on juries may be allowed to do so, and that we should smooth the path for her as rapidly as we can. Just what system should be adopted is a difficult matter to decide. This Legislature appears to have tried several methods in the last few years without much success; one House agrees and the other does not, and vice versa.

I notice that the member for Mt. Lawley, apparently following on his analysis the other night of the numbers of men and women which, as far as he can estimate, would be eligible and required to serve under the existing legislation, is seeking to incorporate in the Bill some method of qualification which is based on enrolment as an elector of the Legislative Council. That, I suppose, is going to make available for the jury list about as many women in the metropolitan district as there are, according to the answer given by the Minister, men enrolled on the list at present, and rather than have a general compulsion on womenfolk—such as I have already discussed—applied, I would be prepared to support such a proposal provided, of course, that even the woman so qualified should not be required to sit if she had first registered an objection, because I think that is paramount to everything else.

There is no question whatever about it in my mind, that some women for temperamental and personal reasons, would be far worse off in health and would in some cases be done permanent injury if obliged, no matter whether they were qualified to vote at the Legislative Council elections or not, to sit upon a jury in certain circumstances, and I would never be a party to driving an unwilling horse to water of that kind. But I am prepared to accept any proposition which is going to enable those women who want to sit on juries to take part in such proceedings.

In my opinion the best course to pursue, if the Minister is willing to pursue it, is to provide that within a certain time after the Act is passed, if it is passed, women on the roll of the various districts should be enabled to inform him that they do not want to sit and immediately be struck off the list for all time. There should be adequate notice given in order that they might have full opportunity of becoming aware of the law and be able to have themselves struck off, and from that time forward they should not be required to be on the list at all.

As others became of age and were enrolled, within so many weeks or months of their becoming enrolled, they should be entitled also to inform the Minister that

they desired to be struck off the roll and from that time onwards no further interest should be taken in them by the sheriff or any other officer of the Crown Law Department, as far as making them sit on juries was concerned, because they would be for all time exempt. That seems to me, in general terms, the way to approach this matter. There may be improvements on that principle which could be put forward and I would be only too happy to accept them so long as they did follow the principle that no woman who did not want to take part in these proceedings should be compelled to do so.

That is my view of the matter. As to the general detail of the measure I am not very greatly concerned. The aspect I am concerned about is the principle and I have already expressed, as clearly as I can, my views on that subject. In the hope that some suitable amendment will be made after the second reading has been agreed to, I support the Bill and I trust that the Committee stage of the measure will produce something of a workable nature within the confines of my belief on this subject. If that does not happen, I will have my opportunity on the third reading.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [5.9]: I have made a few inquiries from women prominent in matters affecting their sex on the question of women sitting on juries and I think the consensus of opinion among those ladies is not that most women wish to serve on juries, but that they do wish to be treated as the equals of men. I feel that that is one point which the Bill does not meet any more fully than the proposition put up by the Leader of the Country Party.

If I judge correctly, the majority of women who are at all interested in this matter—and that is a very small number of women in our community—are concerned solely with the equality of rights, and if a man is to be compellable I feel sure that they would prefer the same provision for women. By saying that, I do not suggest that all women are of that opinion, but I fancy it is the opinion of those who are prominent in women's organisations, and they are the folk who are asking for this type of legislation not only in relation to juries but also in relation to a lot of other public matters.

We are all aware that because of family responsibilities in particular, it is necessary that women should be able to avoid jury service during the time they are tied up with those responsibilities; that is, while the children are young. Of course, that does not apply to single women or women who are responsible only for their husbands any more than it applies to men. A man with a family is not able to avoid jury service simply because he has a family. But I will agree that mothers with young families dependent upon them must be given a method of avoiding duties such as jury service during the time they are responsible for their families. We are all in agreement on that point and I feel sure that the women's organisations will be, too. But I disagree, and I fancy the women's organisations disagree also with the idea that women should be able to avoid responsibility for jury service simply because of a whim.

If it is fair that women should be able to avoid jury service because of the nature of the evidence, because they have a headache or for some other minor reason, the same provision must be made available for men also. If a woman is to be non-compellable in relation to jury service, then I think that we must, in all justice, make the same provision available to men because I find that men are not anxious to serve on juries. Inquiries from officials and others who have some connection with the formation of juries will inform any member that the first reaction of practically every person who is called for jury service is to find a way of avoiding it.

I am sure that the average female response to a call to serve on a jury will be the same as that of the average male —a desire to avoid it. If the suggestion that women can avoid jury service simply by writing a letter is agreed to, I think that we can be sure that 90 per cent. of women called for jury service at any future time will immediately write in and so avoid it.

Mr. Bovell: That is how it should be.

Mr. JOHNSON: If it is fair for women, it is fair for men, too.

Mr. Bovell: You want to force women to serve on juries.

Mr. JOHNSON: In response to that interjection I would say that if it is fair for women, it is fair for men also. If we do not want to force women to serve on juries we should not force men to serve either.

Mr. Bovell: Rubbish!

Mr. JOHNSON: If a man could avoid jury service by writing a letter on receipt of a summons, how many men does the hon. member think we would get for our juries? We would need a panel of 500 in order to get 12 good men and true.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: We would, too.

Mr. JOHNSON: In answer to the argument put forward by the member for Mt. Lawley that the provisions of this Bill would put 105,000 women on the jury list—

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I did not say that. I said that number would be eligible.

Mr. JOHNSON: Well, it would make 105,000 women eligible for the jury list, and yet there are only 5,000 men on the list. I would say, in answer to the hon. member's argument, that he has tried very

hard to misrepresent the situation because there must be over 100,000 people eligible to go on the jury list now. The reason why there are only 5,000 on the list at the moment is because that is the size of the list prepared. It is easy to expand it; everybody who is eligible is not on the list. There is a large number of exemptions for jury service at present, including all J's.P., civil servants and a number of other categories

This query arises in my mind: If a civil servant is not eligible to sit on a jury, does the wife of a civil servant get a similar exemption? It would appear to me to be equally logical. If a woman J.P. is eligible to sit on the Bench, why is she, at the moment, not eligible to sit on a jury? That in itself is an anomaly. If, as is the practice—I do not know whether it is actually law but it is certainly the custom —a bank officer is not eligible to be added to the jury list, does a bank officer's wife get priority over him? As I am, to some extent, an equalitarian and not purely a feminist, I fancy that if a husband is not suitable to go on the list, we should make provision to ensure that his wife is not considered suitable for the list otherwise it might lead to family trouble!

I support the Bill but, like most of those who have spoken, I am not 100 per cent. satisfied with it. I think that in Committee we might, between us all, work out something a little more practicable.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre—in reply) [5.18]: This Bill is well known to the various women's organisations and they support it. It will not make it compulsory for women to serve on juries because any woman enrolled can write in and ask for an exemption. It seems to me to be a most fair and equitable measure. Women say they want equality but, as the member for Leederville has just pointed out, it would be impossible to place them on the same basis as men for a number of reasons.

I do not think the number of women, mentioned by the member for Mt. Lawley, comes into the argument at all, because the male jury list, as pointed out by the member for Leederville, could be greatly increased. We know that. However, if a great number of women apply for exemption, as they will have the right to do under this measure, the female jury list might be much smaller than the male list.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Great numbers of women will apply for exemption.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Of course they will, and that is only proper. However, if we provide that a woman's name can only be added to the jury list if she makes application, very few will do so and probably we will get only a few curious women to serve as jurors, and they might be undesirable. I do not say that all of them would be undesirable. Probably we would get quite a few intelligent women who are public spirited.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Will they be able to write in immediately after the passing of the Bill, or will they have to wait until you proclaim an area?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: There is nothing to prevent them from writing in immediately. On the other hand, the member for Mt. Lawley has an amendment on the notice paper which provides for women to be enrolled as jurors on the same basis of qualification as those enrolled as voters for the Legislative Council. If that amendment is agreed to, we will deprive a number of intellectual and intelligent women from serving as jurors. There might be quite a few at the university and, of course, there are also women school-teachers who would not have that qualification.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: If the Bill passes, will it not mean that you will have a qualification for men and none for women?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: They will be eligible to serve as jurors if they are entitled to have their names on the Legislative Assembly roll.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: That is not a qualification.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: They will come under the Electoral Act as far as their characters are concerned.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: In regard to character?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, in regard to character.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The Electoral Act has nothing to do with character,

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I mean the Jury Act. Also, there are quite a number who are not eligible to have their name on the Assembly roll, such as those persons who have committed a crime, for example. I have given every consideration to the Bill, and it seems to me to be the fairest way to enrol everyone on the basis of their qualification to be enrolled on the Legislative Assembly roll. It would make them subject to the laws of the country and, if they are not desirous of sitting as a juror, they would have the right to apply for exemption for the time being. After two years, should they find that their family obligations have been lessened, they could make a fresh application to be enrolled as jurors.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Are you still going to retain the same qualification for men?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: This Bill is not dealing with men but with women. If the qualification for men is

to be altered, another Bill will have to be introduced. I hold that the Bill decrees no compulsion by any means because a woman can apply for exemption. If we pass the measure in such a form that they would be requested to apply to have their names placed on the jury list, I am sure that we would get very few women jurors. In England they are compelled to serve unless they obtain exemption for health reasons or some other good reason.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: In England do not both men and women have to be householders to qualify to serve as jurors?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not think so.

Mr. Johnson: You have to be a human being.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Where?

Mr. Johnson: In England.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: There is not much to reply to, and the House would be wise to accept the Bill as it is. There is no compulsion in it and a woman can apply for exemption if she so desires. If such exemption is granted and later she can see her way clear to serve, she can make a fresh application to have her name placed on the jury list after a period of two years.

Mr. McCulloch: Will one application exempt a woman for all time?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, but if she finds, after two years, she can serve, she can make a fresh application. However, if she does not re-apply, the exemption stands for all time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to:

Clause 4—Sections 5A and 5B added:

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I move an amendment—

> That all words after the word "by" in line 14, page 2, down to and including the word "residence" in line 32 be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—
>
> > repealing and re-enacting Section five as follows:—
> >
> > 5. (1) Every person (except as hereinafter excepted) between the ages of twenty-one years and sixty years who—
> >
> > (a) is enrolled on the roll of electors entitled to vote at the election of members of the Legislative Council; and
> >
> > (b) being a woman, resides in a proclaimed area, is qualified and liable to serve as a common juror in all civil and criminal proceedings in the proclaimed area within a radius of thirty-six miles from the residence of such person.

During my speech on the second reading I made my reason for this amendment quite clear. My desire is to have equity in the qualifications required for both male and female jurors. Some reasonable list of the names of members of the community has to be compiled, and in my view the only practical way to do this is to accept the roll that contains the names of responsible people who are widely spread. As the Minister has said, there may be many women who are highly qualified to sit on juries who will be ineligible if this amendment is agreed to. On the other hand, there would be a large number of men who are highly qualified to sit on juries but who are excluded from so doing at present for some reason or another.

The Minister for Justice: Men must have different qualifications.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes, I know, but I was desirous of wiping out that difference and putting everyone on the same basis so that there would be no anomalies. My own view is that only those who apply should be placed on the jury list. That was the proposal I submitted in an amending Bill which I introduced previously, but it was rejected in this Chamber. I accepted the fact that the principle was not acceptable to members and I submit this amendment as an alternative.

Later on, the Government may perhaps think fit to introduce a Bill bringing the whole Jury Act up to date. I think that is necessary. In that case they may come to the conclusion that even wider eligibility than I have suggested for men would be desirable. I would have no objection to that. It might be that only a man who is on the Legislative Assembly roll or a certain section of it should be selected by lot and should be eligible. It would be impossible from an administrative point of view to bring 300,000 people on to the jury list. It would also be quite unnecessary.

The Government might evolve a scheme whereby from year to year certain sections of the community could be selected from those on the Assembly roll. I was not in a position to frame my Bill in that manner. It would have had to be far more general and it would have involved the expenditure of public funds which would have made it out of order. I think this is a fair compromise and it could be worked satisfactorily for the time being.

The CHAIRMAN: I have given consideration to the hon. member's proposed amendment and I must rule it out of order on the ground that it is not strictly in accordance with the subject matter of the

Bill. I would draw the hon. members attention to Standing Order No. 281 which states—

> Any amendment may be made to a clause provided the same be relevant to the subject matter of the Bill, or pursuant to any instruction, and be otherwise in conformity with Rules and Orders of the House;

If the hon. member looks at Standing Order No 2, which deals with interpretations he will find that—

> "Subject matter of a Bill" means the provisions of the Bill as printed, read a second time, and referred to the Committee.

Clause 4 of the Bill deals only with the question of proposing to amend the Act by providing for women jurors; it makes no reference whatever to men. The Title of the Bill may appear to be general but nevertheless discussion of the clause of the Bill is definitely confined to its subject matter, and nowhere in the measure is reference made to men. The hon. member's amendment proposes to delete the new section and it would also alter the qualifications of men as provided in the Act. For those reasons I have no alternative but to rule the amendment out of order.

Dissent from Chairman's Ruling.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Then I must dissent from your ruling, Mr. Chairman.

[*The Speaker resumed the Chair.*]

The Chairman having stated the dissent,

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I submit that my amendment is within the subject matter of the Bill. It proposes to deal with those qualified to serve as jurors and the principal matter dealt with is the qualifications of those eligible to serve on juries. Section 5 of the Act deals with qualifications and in the marginal note it says "Qualifications and liability to serve on any juries." There is a further marginal note which states "women qualified to be jurors." So at least the Parliamentary Draftsman considered that he was dealing with those persons qualified to serve on juries. Section 5 deals with those who are qualified and so does Clause 4 of the Bill. It deals with persons qualified to sit on juries.

The Minister for Justice: Women only, not men.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: The question is the qualification of a juror. It is stated that they may be of the female as well as the male sex. This deals purely with qualifications. Women of 60 were mentioned but so might have women of 25 been mentioned. The whole essence of the Bill is the qualifications for jurors. I remember you, Mr. Speaker, giving a ruling previously and you said the following—

> I do not consider the particular section dealt with. I consider the subject matter of the Bill and what it proposes to deal with. If that subject matter deals with more than one section of the Act, in my opinion all sections relevant to the subject matter may be dealt with.

I say we are dealing with the qualifications of a juror and that I am entitled to deal with those qualifications. I submit that my amendment is in order.

Mr. J. Hegney: My reason for ruling the proposed amendment of the member for Mt. Lawley out of order was, as I have already mentioned, that it did not strictly conform to the subject matter of the Bill. I drew the hon. member's attention to Standing Order No. 281 which says—

> Any amendment may be made to a clause provided the same be relevant to the subject matter of the Bill, or pursuant to any instruction, and be otherwise in conformity with Rules and Orders of the House;

I also referred the hon. member to Standing Order No. 2 which deals with interpretations. The subject matter of a Bill means the provisions of the Bill as printed, read a second time and referred to the Committee. As far as I can see, the subject matter of the Bill referred to the Committee deals specifically and only with the addition of two provisions dealing with women jurors. Although there is a general Title to the Bill, nevertheless the subject matter is confined to the clauses. For those reasons, I ruled that the amendment of the member for Mt. Lawley was not strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Bill.

Hon. A. F. Watts: I am inclined to think that this is a borderline case in which you, Mr. Speaker, might be able to decide that the amendment could be discussed by the Committee. The statements of the member for Mt. Lawley should be taken into consideration because of the wording of Clauses 5 and 10. The Bill proposes to substitute for the word "man" the word "person". I submit that is all the member for Mt. Lawley seeks to do in the amendment before the Committee.

Mr. Speaker: I think this question was dealt with when the Bill was introduced last session. First of all, the member for Mt. Lawley is confusing the Act with the Bill. We are not dealing with the Act, but only with the Bill. As such, I find that under Standing Orders discussion or amendments must be restricted to the subject matter of the Bill, irrespective of which sections in the Act are dealt with. On a perusal of the Bill, I find that it deals solely and wholly with the qualifications of women jurors. If that needs to be done, a special Bill should be introduced.

The member for Mt. Lawley said that the Bill does not deal with the qualifications of men, but that it could have. That is the whole point. It could have, but it

does not, so I consider that we are restricted in the amendments to those dealing solely with the qualifications of women. As stated by the Leader of the Country Party, Clauses 5 and 10 are merely consequential amendments upon including qualifications of women in the Jury Act. That being the case, every subsequent reference to "man" in the Act must be amended so as to include women. The easiest way to do that is by altering the word "man" to "person". On consideration of the whole matter, I have not the slightest doubt that this is not a borderline case, and I must uphold the ruling of the Chairman of Committees.

Committee Resumed.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Subsection (2) of proposed new Section 5A provides that a woman qualified and liable to serve as a juror may cancel her liability to serve by service of written notice on the sheriff. On the reading of that, a woman can do so at any time.

The Minister for Justice: Up to the time she is sworn in.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not think Crown Law opinion is to that effect. I do not see why she cannot, because there is reference to a next time. Subsection (4) says that a woman may from time to time cancel her liability to serve.

The Minister for Justice: There is a clause dealing with that.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I know that a judge may excuse a woman at any time before a jury is sworn in, but the proposed new section does not provide that a woman, five minutes before being sworn in, cannot give notice.

The Minister for Justice: She can, until she is sworn in.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I am not sure whether she is unable to do that even then. If one were to read the two subsections together, the implication would be that in addition to notification to the sheriff, the judge could excuse a woman from service. There is nothing to say that after a woman has been empanelled she cannot walk out.

I understand the system of selecting juries to be as follows:—The summoning officer empanels the jury: by this, all he does is to select certain names from a jury list. The selection is the impanelling. He sends out notices, and he may, under the existing Act, excuse some people, in which event he strikes their names from the panel. After he has dealt with the matter, he hands in the list of the remaining names to the court or judge who issued the precept for the jury. After the list has been handed to the judge, I contend that a woman could decline to serve. The object of my amendment was to make it clear.

The Minister for Justice: That practically means the same as what is contained in this clause. Once a woman is empanelled, she is sworn in.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: She is not sworn in until days afterwards.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Section 20 repealed and re-enacted:

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move an amendment—

> That the word "district" in line 28, page 4, be struck out and the word "districts" inserted in lieu.

Later I shall move for the insertion of the word "and" between the words "Perth —Fremantle", and for the deletion of the reference to the Swan magisterial district which no longer exists.

Amendment put and passed.

On motions by the Minister for Justice, clause further amended by inserting the word "and" between the words "Perth-Fremantle" in lines 28 and 29, and by striking out the words "and Swan" in line 29, page 4.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 10, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 5.55 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 20th September, 1955.

CONTENTS.

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