

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 26th October, 1938.

	PAGE
Questions: Swan River improvements, removal of sheds	1622
Grasshoppers, Midland and northern agricultural areas	1622
Bitumen, importation from South America	1622
Firewood, transport by motor to Perth	1622
Softwood plantations, Western Property Pty., Ltd.	1623
Legal Practitioners Act Select Committee, report presented	1623
Bills: Workers' Homes Act Amendment, 1R.	1624
Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 3), 1R.	1624
Native Flora Protection Act Amendment, 1R.	1624
Marketing of Onions, 3R.	1631
Local Courts Act Amendment, Council's amendments	1631
Bureau of Industry and Economic Research, 3R.	1631
Sailors and Soldiers' Scholarship Fund, 3R.	1632
Land Tax and Income Tax, 3R.	1632
Basil Murray Co-operative Memorial Scholarship Fund, 3R.	1632
Auctioneers Act Amendment, 3R.	1632
Returned Sailors and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia, W.A. Branch, Incorporated (Anzac Club Control), 2R., Com. report	1632
Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 2), 2R.	1651
Motions: Loan Council, verbatim reports of meetings	1624
Light and Poison Lands. Royal Commissioner's recommendations	1644
Marketing legislation, as to unsaleable surpluses	1649

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

QUESTION—SWAN RIVER IMPROVEMENTS.

Removal of Sheds.

Mr. RAPHAEL asked the Minister for Works: 1, Does the Government intend immediately to remove the sheds on the north side of the river in conformity with its agreement with the Perth City Council? 2, Now that the lightering company has ceased operations will the Government remove the sheds on the south side? 3, Is it a fact that persons are using the sheds for storage purposes, despite the promise of the Government that no other tenants would occupy the premises when the lightering company vacated them?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, The agreement with the Perth City Council was to remove the buildings then existing in the section bounded by Mill street, Bazaar terrace, William street and the river, not immediately, but within five (5) years from date. 2, The Premier's Department is negotiating with the lightering company to have the buildings removed at an earlier date. 3, The premises have not yet been vacated.

QUESTION—GRASSHOPPERS.

Midland and Northern Agricultural Areas.

Mr. PATRICK asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Has he noticed statements in the Press describing the serious nature of the grasshopper plague in some of the Midland and northern agricultural areas? 2, Will he send an officer from the Department of Agriculture to study the infested areas, and formulate a policy for the future control of this pest?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Yes, and an officer of the Entomological Branch visited the infested areas. 2, Arrangements have been made for this officer to again visit the districts referred to and he will also attend a meeting convened by the local authorities on the 5th November.

QUESTION—BITUMEN.

Importation from South America.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH asked the Minister for Works: 1, What was the total cost of the 4,000 tons of bitumen imported by the Government this week from South America, inclusive of duty and exchange? 2, What amount was paid to the Commonwealth Government in Customs duty and primage on the shipment? 3, Approximately how many miles of road will be constructed with this 4,000 tons? 4, Who are the agents in Australia for the sale of this bitumen?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, The quantity is 3,052 tons, not 4,000 tons; cost £27,460. 2, Customs duty and primage rates are:—On bitumen—10 per cent. duty and 5 per cent. primage; on packages—10 per cent. duty and 10 per cent. primage. These charges were included in the tendered price: the amounts paid by the contractor are not known to the department. 3, 187 miles will be surfaced. 4, Shell Company of Australia, Limited.

QUESTION—FIREWOOD.

Transport by Motor to Perth.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH asked the Minister for Works: For what reason has Wandoo and Jarrah, Limited, the Berry Brow Sawmill, been deprived of the right to send firewood to the city by motor truck?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: Because the mill referred to is situated very conveniently to the Koojeda railway siding, which is 45 miles from Perth.

QUESTION—SOFTWOOD PLANTATIONS.

Western Property Pty., Ltd.

Mr. TONKIN asked the Premier: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the activities of the Western Property Pty., Ltd., a foreign company incorporated in Victoria and engaged in selling property interests in Western Australia? 2, Does the Forests Department endorse the company's statements as to the financial possibilities of growing softwoods on the Sylvia Park Estate? 3, If not, will he endeavour to protect the public from possible exploitation by this company?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, The Forests Department has not been consulted concerning the proposed pine planting activities of the company mentioned, and considers certain statements of the company in this connection very misleading. 3, The matter will be followed up with this object in view.

LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT SELECT COMMITTEE.

Report Presented.

Mr. Styants brought up the report of the select committee.

Report received and read.

As to Printing and Consideration.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [4.39]: I move—

That the report and evidence be printed, and consideration made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

MR. BOYLE (Avon) [4.40]: I desire to congratulate the Committee upon the fine work that it has done.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member can do that later, when the report has been printed.

Mr. BOYLE: When will it be brought forward again?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Next Wednesday.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. C. Willecock—Geraldton) [4.41]: I would like an expression of opinion from the members of the committee upon the advisability of having the evidence printed. I do not know how exhaustively the various matters investigated were gone into, nor how much evi-

dence was given. Except to say that it is concise, I express no opinion on the report itself, because it will be discussed later. Unless the committee is anxious to have the evidence printed, I hardly think the expense of doing so will be warranted. I would like to hear from some of the members of the committee before we vote on the motion.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [4.42]: In my opinion, the expense of printing a copy of the evidence for each member of the House will not be great. The evidence was printed from day to day after each sitting of the committee, and I take it the type is still set up. If it has not been distributed, then the cost involved for paper and labour will be small. Since I have been a member of this House, I think evidence taken by select committees has always been printed. Speaking for myself, and not on behalf of the other members of the committee, I think the evidence should be printed, so that those who are interested in the ramifications of the Legal Practitioners Act may study it closely. It is that evidence which guided the members of the committee in making their report and recommendations to Parliament.

The Premier: How many pages of evidence are there?

Mr. STYANTS: About 30 or 35 pages.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM (York) [4.44]: I was inclined to agree with the suggestion made by the Premier; but, as the type is already set up, the expense involved in printing the evidence will not be great. We have always been careful to avoid unnecessary expenditure in printing evidence. I personally find that evidence is not so much sought after as is the report. Reports, of course, are generally widely distributed. As a matter of fact, the report of the Light Lands Commission is now out of print. The type has been distributed; and, although members have had continual applications for copies of the report, unfortunately the expense in setting up the type again would hardly be justified.

MR. LAMBERT (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [4.45]: Six hundred copies of the report of the Royal Commission on Youth Employment cost £849.

The Premier: Many copies of that report have been sold at a reasonable price.

Mr. LAMBERT: I have yet to learn that the Government will receive £800 for a report of this description. After all, it is merely a repetition of reports already existing in the Eastern States that are available to everyone. The report cost close on £1,000, whereas, if we had had a digest of the evidence—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is distinctly out of order in discussing that report.

Mr. LAMBERT: I was merely drawing a comparison.

Question put and passed.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

1, Workers' Homes Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Premier.

2, Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 3).

Introduced by the Minister for Works.

3, Native Flora Protection Act Amendment.

Introduced by Mr. Sampson.

MOTION—LOAN COUNCIL.

Verbatim Reports of Meetings.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [4.48]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House proceedings at Loan Council meetings should be reported verbatim and such reports should be made available to the various Houses of Parliament; and that the Western Australian representative on the Loan Council should vigorously endeavour to have such proceedings reported and submitted as stated, for to treat such matters as are discussed at Loan Council meetings as confidential is a direct negation of democratic principles.

Of recent date in particular, many members have commented upon the fact that the authority and powers of Parliament are gradually slipping out of our hands. While that is true, I respectfully suggest that, although we have forfeited or surrendered powers to various boards and commissions, such powers are infinitesimal compared with the powers granted to the Loan Council. The Loan Council deals with matters that are actually vital to the welfare, the standard of living, and the social and economic system of this and the other States of the Common-

wealth. Gradually, but surely, we are ceasing to represent the people absolutely and entirely. I was astounded by the reply of the Premier to a question I asked on this subject. He said that discussions at Loan Council meetings were treated as confidential. No power exists in the Financial Agreement as ratified by this Parliament that can bind members to secrecy. I well remember when the Financial Agreement was ratified and a referendum was taken as to whether a Loan Council should be created. The member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) who was then the Premier and Treasurer of this State gave as a reason why Parliament should ratify the Agreement, the fact that to hand over our debt to the Commonwealth Government in return for the undertaking by that Government of certain obligations and liabilities to the State, would be more economical, safer and in every way more desirable than was the existing system. That was what influenced Parliament to agree to the creation of a Loan Council and complete the agreement. Members will support me when I declare that that was the principal ground upon which the Financial Agreement was ratified, and—as a result of the referendum—became part of the Federal Constitution.

The Premier interjected.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am saying that we agreed to it.

The Premier: Under duress.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is true. This State was coerced—I do not know about the other States—in the matter of the 25s. per capita payments. The principle that had been in existence for many years relating to the per capita payments to this State was then altered.

The Premier: To all the States.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not know about the other States, but I do know what happened here. The most remarkable fact is that Mr. S. M. Bruce, who was then Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, submitted as his chief argument for the alteration in the per capita payments to the State that it was illogical for the Commonwealth to collect money by way of taxation and hand it back to the States. As a matter of fact, I think that practice has been aggravated since the Loan Council came into existence. The Commonwealth is continually collecting money by way of taxation and returning it through various tribunals, such as the Disabilities Commission and other boards that have

been created by the Federal Government for the purpose. But that is by the way. The fact remains that although that was the basis upon which this Chamber was influenced to agree to the ratification of the Financial Agreement, there is apparently some greater influence at work because now we are not to know what actually is discussed at the Loan Council meetings. The people's representatives of this allegedly democratic country—

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes, it is allegedly democratic.

Mr. MARSHALL: —are not to know of a single utterance made at the Loan Council meetings.

The Premier: Does the Leader of the Opposition reckon he is a democrat?

Mr. MARSHALL: The contribution of the Leader of the Opposition to the debate on the Qualification of Electors Bill last night did not establish him as a democrat.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I am sorry.

Mr. MARSHALL: His contribution did not do him justice at all. In passing, I will pay him this tribute, that I believe he spoke with his tongue in his cheek. At heart he believes in the liberalisation of the franchise, but he cannot support it because of the platform of his party.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Murchison must not reflect on another member of the House.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not reflecting on him; at least, I hope not.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: To say that a member has his tongue in his cheek is to reflect on him.

Mr. MARSHALL: Well, it is in his mouth, and that is part of his cheek. However, I will withdraw the remark if it is unparliamentary, but I do consider that the Leader of the Opposition really does believe in the liberalisation of the franchise.

Mr. Watts: You think that he is a democrat?

Mr. MARSHALL: At heart he is, and he would give evidences of it if it were not for party coercion. That, however, is by the way. It has nothing to do with the subject matter of the motion. The point I desire to make is that though we are the people's representatives we have no information before us as to what matters are discussed at the Loan Council meetings, and what attitude is adopted by our own representatives and by the repre-

sentatives of the other States and of the Commonwealth. As the people's representatives we are entitled to have a full report of those discussions because the loan money provided for this State and every other State by the Loan Council is the very lifeblood of the economic structure of the States. Conditions in 1933 proved just how difficult the situation can be in a State without loan funds. We had an example of what happened when the Commonwealth Bank or the combined banks withdrew credits from public use. Immediately that occurs all industry becomes stagnant. Certainly a total cessation of activities is not occasioned over a short period, but if such conditions were to prevail for a lengthy period it is doubtful exactly how long the State would exist. These important matters are discussed at Loan Council meetings, yet the people's representatives have not a scintilla of information as to what transpires at those meetings. Through the motion, therefore, I suggest to our representatives that they should do their utmost to have a verbatim report of all the proceedings of the Loan Council meetings taken and submitted to both Houses of Parliament.

From time to time in this Chamber we hear, and particularly from the Leader of the Opposition, complaints about the expenditure of money by Governments—and that applies to the Government to which the Leader of the Opposition belonged for some years—before Parliament has had an opportunity of discussing the Estimates. Important as the ordinary Annual Estimates of receipts and expenditure of the State may be, they are a mere nothing compared with the loan moneys that are provided and that mean so much to the economic life of the country. Yet while we complain about the expenditure of money before we have received the Estimates, little or nothing is said in regard to the secrecy that is observed in the discussions of the more vital matters dealing with the financing of the State from loan moneys. As one who is struggling to retain what little semblance of democracy we have left I am submitting this motion in the hope that something will be done to give back to the people the right to rule themselves. I do not know whether the Treasurer has realised—he should have done so—that at the Loan

Council, meetings where discussions take place regarding the amounts of money to be made available to the various States, those present debate the most vital question affecting the well-being of the community. Therefore, why should not the people know all about it. I am of the opinion that the secrecy which evidently has to be maintained with regard to the discussions is the outcome of banking influence. If the banks are going to rule the States, let them take the responsibility for so doing. Our representatives should not be coerced into the position of assuming responsibility for having to put into operation the policy that is not ours, but that of the banks. So I suggest to the Treasurer that in the future, secrecy should be avoided in the discussions that take place at Loan Council meetings. I know that the credit controllers of the Commonwealth, or of the world, for that matter, wish to keep as low as possible, the finances of every State of the Commonwealth. That is the real mission behind the agreement that brought the Loan Council into being. I am prepared to make this forecast, that any representative from Western Australia who attends future Loan Council meetings will not be able to get the money that the State will require to enable it to put its policy into operation. He will find that each year the amount allocated to the State will gradually but surely be reduced. What is happening is that those who control the credit issues fear the awful debt structure that has gradually but surely grown up, and has now reached such proportions that the people are scarcely able to carry it because of its weight. Let us take the reports of the Auditor General of our own State and the Banking Commission. Therein we find expressed in various chapters, subtly expressed too, a warning to Governments to exercise the utmost possible care in regard first to the borrowing of money and then the expenditure of it. We find every treasurer, and the Commonwealth Treasurer as well, at their very wit's end to know by what means they can raise further taxation for the purpose of servicing the national debt.

Mr. North: A tyranny of figures.

Mr. MARSHALL: We have all kinds of disguises, such as for instance the sinking fund which it is suggested will stabilise the national debt; but the unfortunate part is that the national debt is increasing far too rapidly, even with all the restrictions. The Auditor General of our own State in his

recently-issued report has this to say in regard to the matter—

Interest, sinking fund, and exchange absorb £4,226,550 of the amount of £10,819,042 credited to the Revenue Fund for the year, equivalent to approximately 39.1 per cent.

On the next page we find that over the last six years the total amount collected by way of taxation in this State, plus all the charges made for services rendered to the public has absorbed, over the last six years, no less than 42.5 per cent. of the total revenue of the State—approximately half. As the years go by we know that by means of conversion loans the figure is materially reduced. But just imagine the position into which we are getting, and we, as representatives of the people should have a say with regard to any transaction that is dealt with by the Loan Council. I am told by the Treasurer that matters dealt with at Loan Council meetings are treated as confidential. So questions relating to the strangling of the nation are to be dealt with as confidential, and this, too, in a democratic country! The people are not to rule themselves; they are not even to be informed of the existing position of affairs, and yet we tell the world at large that this is a country where the people have the right to rule themselves. I enter an emphatic protest, firstly against information concerning any important subject being withheld from the representatives of the people, and secondly against its being withheld from the people themselves. I do not know whether the Treasurer has checked up on the banking Commission's report. No one would call the personnel of that Commission unorthodox. They are all sticklers for the system of banking. I may be permitted to read a paragraph from page 196 of that Commission's report and the Premier will thus learn what the members of that body had to say with regard to the Commonwealth and its capacity to deal with loan money—

Because of this power, the Commonwealth Bank is able to increase the cash of the trading banks in the ways we have pointed out above. Because of this power, too, the Commonwealth Bank can increase the cash reserves of the trading banks; for example, it can buy securities of other property, it can lend to the Governments or to others in a variety of ways, and it can even make money available to Governments or to others free of any charge.

To-day we find that one-half of what we collect, mostly by direct taxation, goes out in

the payment of interest because we have borrowed for public purposes and we have given a guarantee to repay in cash.

Mr. North: We no longer have sovereign powers.

Mr. MARSHALL: No, we have not. We can, however, try to get them back though we have long since lost them. Money power has ruled this universe for a considerable time; no Government has ruled it. It is true that the Constitution of the Commonwealth provided for the States retaining sovereign rights, but in spite of that provision the States have lost those sovereign rights.

Mr. North: We have votes.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is true, but unfortunately the people do not always avail themselves of the adult franchise granted to them to the extent that is expected of them. That is the trouble. The statement has been made that the Commonwealth Bank was inaugurated for the purpose of establishing a national asset. It has done nothing of the kind. If I were a representative of the State at a Loan Council meeting, I would want to know why it was necessary to borrow from private individuals, and then keep the matter confidential. Why should we have to go cap in hand to the Loan Council to get the credit that really belongs to the people? I would ask the Loan Council whether it was right that a national institution like the Commonwealth Bank should not finance us in a national way. I would not go so far as to say that it should finance private individuals, although even they might be entitled to assistance, because they play an active part and are entitled to the credits under which funds are expended in the public interest and not for individual profit. There should be no such thing as borrowing from private individuals, especially as the Banking Commission considers that the Commonwealth Bank can do the job.

The Premier: It expresses that opinion?

Mr. MARSHALL: Undoubtedly, and goes even further; it says that the Commonwealth Bank can do it. It says that it can even make money available to Governments or to others free of any charge.

The Minister for Justice: There is nothing free; someone has to pay.

Mr. MARSHALL: The unfortunate part of it is that the people have to produce something and then use that product for the purpose of paying what they owe. The Minister would not like to be under

the obligation, first to produce the commodity or formulate the basis of its production, then to borrow from someone else, and pay interest on the money. What right has any private individual to issue credits based on the capacity of the country to produce and consume goods, and then ask for a guarantee of repayment and interest, while in the meantime taxation is stabilising the debt?

The Minister for Justice: You want to read Cassell on that subject.

Mr. MARSHALL: He backs up this statement. Professors A. Kitson, A. N. Field, Soddy, Hawtrey, and Reginald McKenna, have all admitted that banks create credit out of nothing.

The Premier: They cannot go on and on doing it.

Mr. MARSHALL: But they have been doing it.

The Premier: They have a basis to work on.

Mr. MARSHALL: It is a mythical one. The only real basis is the capacity of the people to produce goods and to consume them. If the Premier wants any proof of that, let him imagine that Western Australia has ceased to produce anything. How much would he get from the banks?

The Premier: I am afraid we would not get much.

Mr. MARSHALL: The basis of credits is the production of goods and their consumption.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member will connect his remarks with the motion.

Mr. MARSHALL: These are matters that are discussed by the Loan Council.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I cannot see that they are connected with the motion.

Mr. MARSHALL: Those who attend Loan Council meetings discuss the borrowing of credits, how much money shall be borrowed, what interest shall be paid, and what guarantee shall be given for the return of the capital. All this has to do with public credit. I protest against any secrecy being observed in matters of this kind. The discussions at these meetings are of vital importance to the welfare of the country. They should be made known to the public. Through the representatives of the people, we should know what is being done, and how it is being done, particularly when the

discussions vitally affect the welfare of the country.

The Minister for Justice: Perhaps the borrower does not want to let the lender know what he is doing.

Mr. MARSHALL: The borrower has no conception of what is being done; neither have the representatives of the people any idea of what is being done.

The Minister for Justice: The representatives of the people know.

Mr. MARSHALL: What does the Minister know about the discussions at Loan Council meetings; has he been let into the secret?

The Minister for Justice: We do not want the lenders to know everything.

Mr. MARSHALL: This is too important a question to be treated in a trivial manner. I hope the day is not far distant when the discussions at Loan Council meetings will be published. The people will demand it.

The Minister for Works: There are some garrulous men on the Loan Council. If they were let loose a lot of publicity might be gained, but they are there to do business.

Mr. MARSHALL: To do business on behalf of the people, and then deny the people the right to know what has been done.

The Minister for Works: The representatives of the people report back to them.

Mr. MARSHALL: The representative usually states he did not get what he expected, that his programme was such and such, but that after discussion he was out-voted and had to be satisfied with much less. I believe that members of the Loan Council arrange a programme amongst themselves, but in the final analysis the Bank decides what they shall get.

The Premier: That is admitted.

Mr. MARSHALL: We want to know why the Loan Council is in the hands of the Bank, and we want a full report of the discussions. How much longer are we to go on in this way when thousands of people are out of work, are hungry, ill-fed and ill-housed, although the country can produce all that is necessary to provide them with a decent standard of living? We are finding four millions of money annually to pay interest to bondholders, when the borrowing in the first place merely involves the issuing of credit by a private monopoly.

The Minister for Works: At one Loan Council meeting members were very doubtful about raising a particular sum, and that fact was published. The money was not raised.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister has a remarkable conception of the position. What right has anyone to say that the Commonwealth Bank alone shall ensure the prosperity of the country? According to the report of the Royal Commission, there was talk about taking over the liabilities of private institutions. What right have we to borrow credit? If we received the actual cash, something material, probably the lenders would be entitled to ask for a repayment and interest on the money. Actually, we do not get notes to any particular value when we go on the market, but we get credit. Why have we to go on the market when the Commonwealth Bank can finance us? At last the public are beginning to awaken to the trickery and robbery that have been going on for so long, and I am pleased that some people are making a vigorous effort still further to enlighten the community.

The Minister for Works: I do not think any member of the Loan Council can be bluffed easily.

Mr. MARSHALL: No doubt they are wonderful men. When Mr. Davidson was asked what amount of profits had been put into secret reserve by his bank, he said he would have to refer to London for the answer.

Mr. Cross: He did not want that to leak out.

Mr. MARSHALL: He was not pressed for an answer. If the Commonwealth Bank is going to rule this country and control the standard of living, it should come out in the open.

Mr. Cross: It will do it without that.

Mr. MARSHALL: Instead of coming out in the open, the bank initiates and formulates policies for others but stays behind the screen itself. It must not be allowed to rule the country by secret conferences known as Loan Council meetings. I hope the time is not far distant when, instead of the Loan Council discussing how much can be borrowed, and how much can be collected from the pockets of the taxpayers, the Taxation Department will be paying dividends because of the capacity of the country to produce and consume commodities. The real

basis of all credit is the ability of the country to produce and consume.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [5.28]: I support the motion. It is essential that the Government should answer the hon. member's charge. I am not prepared to say whether matters discussed at Loan Council meetings should be published, not until we receive a definite answer to the question why they should not be published. I have dealt on several occasions with these matters, acting on behalf of those who have studied them. I was instrumental in arousing interest resulting in the appointment of the Royal Commission to which the hon. member referred. Having studied the report of that Commission, I realise that the blame, if there be any blame, in finance has been transferred from financial institutions to the Governments of the day. That is the general effect of the report of the Royal Commission. I have for many years been struck by the fact that, according to experts, the financial system could be very much improved. If the reports of discussions at Loan Council meetings were published, they would show whether or not juggling was going on. A deeper study of the subject and further experience lead me to realise, after reading the report of the Royal Commission and the evidence, that the question is not that of reluctant financiers or the bankers trying to crush the people, but the fear of the unknown. True, a system is operating after a fashion, but many people say it does not sufficiently reflect the enormous productive powers of science to satisfy them. When we demand that the Commonwealth Bank shall alter its technique and adopt some forward policy we are demanding something that no Government has yet dared to demand. The question of a banking policy does come within the scope of Federal and State Governments. Never yet has it been true that there is no money because the financial system cannot make it available. That is not the answer to the problem. According to the Royal Commission no money is available because the existing financial system cannot provide more without so straining itself that inflation will occur, prices will rise, and general ruin will follow.

Mr. Lambert: Why fiddle to the moon?

Mr. NORTH: I leave that to the hon. member. He will need no assistance from

me. No Government has so far dared within its constitutional powers to suggest any change in the system.

Mr. Needham: Yes, the New Zealand Government.

Mr. NORTH: That system is thoroughly orthodox. The Government of New Zealand has taken over a big part of the banking system there, and the people of that Dominion may yet receive some interest from the Reserve Bank to enable them to pay their debts. Whatever the future may hold, it is definitely agreed that in respect of reforms New Zealand so far is utterly orthodox. However, if the Reserve Bank has been taken over in that Dominion, and the people may benefit as the result of any profits there may be, the effects will be found in reduced interest rates and increased revenue. I note, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you are looking at me with rebuke in your eyes, and I realise your conviction that I am departing too far from the terms of the motion. I agree with the intention of the mover, and think effort should be given to the motion unless the Government can advance sufficiently strong reasons why secrecy should be maintained. The people are becoming restive. So much propaganda has been indulged in, for which I am partly to blame because I acted on behalf of certain interests in my electorate and elsewhere, that the people look askance at the great disparity between the power to produce and the volume of distribution of wealth, which has caused so much discontent. In their minds has been created the impression that there is something wrong. They know that the position should be rectified, but no democratic Government with the essential constitutional power to do so has, to my knowledge, dared to make any effort to rectify it. I may be twitted with a reminder that some such attempt was made in Alberta, but the action taken there was irregular because the authorities did not possess the necessary constitutional power to give effect to their proposals. I am convinced that all Governments that have the power will pursue a course similar to that adopted in New Zealand, for that, after all, is merely human nature. The natural trend of all such institutions is to maintain themselves and defy public opinion. We cannot disregard the words of Gibbon, the historian, who said that "monopolists were narrow and oppressive, above fear of rivals and beneath confession

of error." That aptly describes monopolists. Bodies like the Loan Council are naturally oppressive and opposed to change. They do not want to change, so who must force the issue? The State Parliament and the Federal Parliament must essay the task.

Mr. Lambert: They are doing so.

Mr. NORTH: To present what I regard as an exact analogy, we cannot go to the Commonwealth Commissioner of Railways and tell him we want him to provide a better service on the East-West line, with the use of Diesel engines.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I think the hon. member is getting a long way from the motion when he proceeds to discuss the Commonwealth Commissioner of Railways.

Mr. NORTH: I wish to keep strictly to the motion and its intention. At Loan Council meetings discussions on problems are indulged in, and the desire is that those discussions shall be made public. Such a process, apart from matters that would be accepted as secret, creates the impression in the public mind that something is going on that should not take place. By way of illustration, I would point out that if we could get behind the scenes we would probably learn that Ministers would say, "We are confronted with distress. Can you not provide us with more loan funds?" I can imagine the bankers replying, "If you are provided with more loan funds, you will raise prices, cause inflation and bring about ruin. Surely you do not want that!" Similarly, as I was dealing with the position regarding the Commonwealth Commissioner of Railways, that officer, when the request for improved railway services was made to him, might reply, "You tell me how it is to be done. If you tell me to order some Diesel engines, I will do so, but I am dead against it, because I prefer steam." That is exactly the position with regard to the bankers. They prefer the existing system and are afraid of any change. They should der the problem back on to us, and that is clearly shown in the report of the Royal Commission. The effect of what the bankers say is, "If you wish to make this change and monkey with our system, which we say is a good one, you must be responsible." In effect, those are the words that are embodied in the Royal Commission's report. Where there is a difference of

opinion between the Federal Government and the bankers, then at the Loan Council meeting, the proceedings of which, it is now claimed, are secret, the Government must order the bankers to effect the desired change.

Mr. Marshall: And the bankers aim at directing Government policy.

Mr. NORTH: Nevertheless, the Governments must accept full responsibility for results. My investigations convince me that no Government possessing the essential constitutional powers has ever attempted to make the change. If the New Zealand Government has done so, I shall be most interested in following the course of events in that Dominion.

Mr. Marshall: The Government there is much too orthodox for that.

Mr. NORTH: In my opinion, the Government is not game to do what is necessary. With the full backing of the people there, the position should be satisfactory. If the State Government feels that it has at its disposal a true report of the position, and public opinion is insistent that secrecy be not maintained on such matters, then it is all the more essential that the Premier should inform the House why the information sought should not be made public. I trust what I have said regarding Governments being responsible for changes in policy, as outlined in the report of the Banking Commission, is fully accepted by the House as quite correct.

Mr. Lambert: You have made it quite evident that you are a very good-intentioned boy!

Mr. NORTH: Perhaps it would be better if the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) forgot about his "moon" for the moment. This Chamber must realise that public criticism regarding the existing anomalous position has grown steadily, and if secrecy regarding Loan Council meetings is regarded as imperative, members should be told exactly why that is so. Out of that secrecy there arises another consideration. Money cannot be made available for this or that object some of the time, but now we find that millions can be provided for the asking. The people see that £20,000,000 can be suggested for a battleship at a time when they are told funds cannot be provided for educational and other require-

ments such as subways. That phase of the problem is trenchantly discussed by the people, and the opinion has been expressed that reports of meetings of the Loan Council should be published, or at least a précis issued. If that were done, much of the suspicion and discontent would be allayed. I feel, taking all the circumstances into consideration, that no longer can I shelter myself, as I did in the past, when I explained that subways and other local requirements in the Claremont electorate could not be provided as the Government had not the requisite funds at its disposal. In view of the secrecy that has shrouded the proceedings of the Loan Council and the impression that the practice has created, I cannot pursue that course, for, as the position stands to-day, my impression is that members are not game in view of the economic risks, to force this Chamber and the Government to change their policy and deal with the financial situation on quite a different basis. I support the motion. Parliament and the people should know whether or not secrecy is essential in regard to Loan Council meetings.

On motion by Mr. Cross, debate adjourned.

BILL—MARKETING OF ONIONS.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—LOCAL COURTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council with amendments.

BILL—BUREAU OF INDUSTRY AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH.

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT

(Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [5.37]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [5.38]: I wish to clarify a point that cropped up during the second reading debate, in the course of which I stated that the Commonwealth Government had charged the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research with the duty of investigating secondary industries along lines similar to those followed regarding primary industries. To my surprise, the

Minister in charge of the Bill contradicted my statement. I made inquiries among people who are interested in the subject, and found they were of the same opinion as I was. I decided to clear the point up, and I communicated with Sir David Rivett, from whom I received the following reply:—

National standards laboratory and aeronautical research laboratory have been approved, and plans are being prepared. Understand Commonwealth Government proposes steadily to develop general secondary industrial research, but progress promises to be slow.

My only reason for speaking is to correct the impression gained both inside and outside Parliament that the C.S.I.R. had been charged with this duty. On further inquiry, I have been led to the conclusion that the activities of the proposed Bureau of Industry and Economic Research will in no way run contrary to those of the C.S.I.R., but will be supplementary to them.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT

(Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—in reply) [5.41]: The telegram from Sir David Rivett is couched in well-guarded terms and, although Dr. Rivett "understands" that it is the intention of the Commonwealth Government to do certain things, he indicates that progress in that direction is likely to be slow. I think that progress will certainly be very slow. I had the very best authority for making the statement I did in the House, although I am not in a position to make public the source from which that information was obtained.

Mr. Seward: You said you got it from Sir David Rivett.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:

I do not think I made that statement. I have not been encouraged to think that the secondary industries of Western Australia will be benefited in the way we desire as the result of any policy that the Commonwealth Government may develop very slowly. We desire to do something that will advantage our own industries in particular. Whatever the policy of the Commonwealth Government may be, that policy will not benefit the industries of Western Australia except, perhaps, equally with those of the other States. That is only a possibility. The probable result of any policy the Commonwealth Government may develop will be that the secondary industries of the Eastern States will be advant-

aged as against those of Western Australia. Members may regard as certain that, whatever the Commonwealth may possibly do, will not provide our secondary industries with the assistance that is so essential if more progress is to be made in the future than has been possible in the past. I shall be safe in saying that the lack of progress by our secondary industries has been partly due, at any rate, to Commonwealth policy or to lack of Commonwealth policy. Therefore the only safe and progressive path for us to follow is that of doing everything possible to advantage our own secondary industries and bring about their greater development by our own action.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (4)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Sailors and Soldiers' Scholarship Fund.
 - 2, Land Tax and Income Tax.
 - 3, Basil Murray Co-operative Memorial Scholarship Fund.
 - 4, Auctioneers' Act Amendment.
- Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—RETURNED SAILORS AND SOLDIERS' IMPERIAL LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA, W.A. BRANCH, INCORPORATED (ANZAC CLUB CONTROL).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 19th October.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. F. C. L. Smith)—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe [5.48]: I regret to say that after having given this Bill very earnest consideration I cannot grant it my blessing. I ask members to consider seriously the provisions of the measure, and not to be actuated in their decision entirely by sentimental regard that they might entertain for the Returned Soldiers' League as an organisation. I ask them to be guided by their reason and to consider the possible repercussions that would arise from granting the privileges that this Bill proposes to extend to the returned soldiers' organisation in connection with the conduct of a club in the metropolitan area. We all have a high regard for the Returned

Soldiers' League and its objective. This is a body of men banded together as a result of common experience and associated with their organisation in common interest. At the same time, no matter what we might be able to say to their advantage, it would be very undesirable to extend to them the privileges sought under this Bill.

The measure is the outcome of a desire on the part of the executive of the league to acquire complete control of Anzac Club, and to be freed from certain obligations under the Licensing Act in respect to the distribution of profits arising out of the conduct of the club, and also obligations arising out of other matters specified in the Licensing Act. The Act contains many provisions governing clubs. Clubs are registered under the Act and a certificate of registration is granted to them; they are not licensed in the ordinary sense. The registration of club premises does not constitute such premises licensed premises. The effect of the issue of a certificate of registration is that members of the club may be supplied with their own liquor, whether the club is incorporated or otherwise. That is to say, the liquor supplied to members of the club is purchased co-operatively and sold to the individual members for any money consideration paid or agreed to be paid by them. Under the Act the club must be a bona-fide association of not less than 30 members, and must be banded together for some definite and legitimate object or lawful purpose.

Mr. Wilson: The league has over 5,000 members.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I am speaking of the provisions of the Act governing clubs of every description registered under the Act. Amongst other things, a club must be established for the purpose of providing accommodation for the members and their guests upon premises of which they are the bona-fide occupiers. The club must not be established for the purpose of making a profit that is divisible amongst members or any of them, or in support of any other object than the accommodation of members or members and their guests. The accommodation must be provided and maintained from the joint funds, and no person is permitted to derive benefits not shared equally by every other member. Notwithstanding these somewhat rigid conditions governing clubs registered under the Licensing Act, there is a provision stipulating that

a club shall not be prevented from continuing to be registered by reason of paying out of the funds for the burial of a deceased member, or for the relief of sick or aged or necessitous members, or on behalf of persons who were dependent or partly dependent upon a deceased member, or of the fact that the rules do not allow the benefit or advantage of such provision to be shared equally by all the members. Thus some latitude is granted to clubs and the management and members to extend, in certain circumstances, some charity from the funds derived from the profits accruing to the club from the conduct of the business.

Another provision in the Act is that the business of the club shall be under a committee of management. This committee has to be elected for not less than 12 months by the general body of members. The whole of the members of the club must elect the general committee of management.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is, the members of the club desiring to vote.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Of course. I am not suggesting a system of compulsory voting, but every member of the club has the right to vote for the appointment of the committee of management. The Act also provides that there must be a defined subscription of not less than £1 per annum, that all the members of the club shall be elected by the general body of members or the committee on a day to be notified, and that a record shall be kept by the secretary of the members present and the voting.

This Bill proposes in the first instance to dissipate the established rights of members of the Anzac Club. We have to remember that the club as a body is quite distinct and apart from the Returned Soldiers' League. It is an entirely different entity.

Hon. C. G. Latham: An offspring of the league.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Maybe the club is the child of the league and was fathered and fostered by the league. I am not disputing that, but whatever influence the league may have exercised, the fact remains that a person may be a member of Anzac Club without being a member of the Returned Soldiers' League. And so we have the position that the club members may or may not be members of the Returned Soldiers' League, while the property and assets of the club are the property and assets

of the members of the club and not the property and assets of the Returned Soldiers' League.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is, so far as the property and assets are free.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The question whether they are free or not does not enter into this. If they are so far from being free that somebody has a mortgage over them and is in a position so to use the mortgage as to make the members of the club disgorge their assets, I am not aware of it. I am stating the position as I assume it to be, that the property and assets of the club are the property and assets of the members of the club, and not the property and assets of the Returned Soldiers' League. I am not talking about the building itself, which the club probably rents from the league, as it is quite entitled to do, because in the circumstances it becomes the bona fide occupier of that portion of Anzac House. I am trying to show members the distinction between the Anzac Club and the Returned Soldiers' League. Hon. members of this Chamber who are members of the Returned Soldiers' League know that in various Australian States there are clubs whose membership is open only to those who are at least eligible to join the Returned Soldiers' League. As clubs, however, they are quite distinct from the Returned Soldiers' League.

Mr. Warner: In this State you must be a returned soldier to join the club.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: There is a great distinction. One has to be eligible to become a member of the Returned Soldiers' League in order to join the club, but one has not to be a member of the Returned Soldiers' League in order to join the club. Many men eligible to join the R.S.L. are not members of it, but still are eligible to become members of the club. As the R.S.L. is said to have fostered this child, it seems curious that the rules of the club provide that one is eligible to become a member of it if one is eligible to become a member of the R.S.L., instead of providing that one must be a member of the R.S.L. before becoming a member of the club. The Bill proposes to give to the R.S.L. rights over the property and assets of the club, many members of which are not members of the R.S.L.

Mr. Wilson: I do not think so.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I know for a fact that that is the position. I know

for a fact, too, that that is one of the reasons why the Bill has been introduced.

Mr. Wilson: Would you have them seab on the league?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Under the Bill the R.S.L. not only wants to manage, conduct and control the property and assets of the club, but also desires that the property and assets of the club should become and remain the property of the R.S.L.

Mr. Cross: What is wrong with that?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: If the hon. member does not know what is wrong with that, I would say he is so far wrong that I would not like to start to put him right. The House will want to be assured, and should be assured, that the members of the club have agreed to the reversion of their rights—not only that the managing committee of the club has so agreed, but that a substantial majority of the club's membership, if not the whole membership, has agreed. I submit that the point is not how anxious the R.S.L. is to control the club, but how anxious the club is to be controlled by the R.S.L.

The Bill provides that the net income from all sources arising out of the club shall be used not only for the club but for any purposes in accordance with the rules of the league. Those rules give wide powers to the league's executive. Under the rules the executive is entitled to use the funds of the R.S.L. in many directions. There is no compulsion to use them merely for charitable purposes.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But the purposes are all very commendable, are they not?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The R.S.L. executive is entitled to invest money in land and buildings.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is common to all associations.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I merely wish to point out that that there are not many directions in which the executive is unable to use the league's funds. I say nothing against that, but if the profits of the club become the property of the league it does not necessarily follow that those profits will be used in connection with the charitable objectives of the league. They may be used for any purpose for which the executive is entitled, under the rules, to use them. The Licensing Act directs that all the income of a club must be spent on providing accommodation, and in such a direction that no advantage will accrue to any member that is

not shared equally by all members. I have no doubt that some foreign capital occasionally finds its way into the bank account of a club through guests, visitors, and honorary members; but in the main the income is the result of the expenditure of members themselves. Profits arise because the members co-operatively buy wholesale and yet individually buy retail. In the conduct of a club, obviously, some profit must be made, and some profit is made, by that means; since profit arises from the control of a club which, as I have said, is established for some primary objective in the first place, but is associated with the objective of the supply of liquor to members. Moreover, such a club requires some services which cannot be provided without cost. And the same remark applies to the management of the club. Consequently the affairs of the club have to be conducted as regards purchase and sale of liquor so that there will be some profit to meet the expenses of management and of services generally.

Apart from those expenses, the members of a club, whether the Anzac or any other, know that any profit in excess of cost of management and services will, under the provisions of the Licensing Act and under the conditions subject to which clubs hold their certificates of registration, be devoted to something which contributes to the general convenience of the members and to the improvement of the accommodation provided for them. The Bill proposes a departure from that principle. I consider also that the question of management is important, because under the Bill the executive of the league would manage the club.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Not necessarily. The members can appoint a committee of management at their annual meeting.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: They are all members of the club if the Bill is enacted.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They have not had an annual meeting.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The members of the R.S.L. are scattered all over the State.

Mr. Seward: They can vote by proxy.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Under the Bill the R.S.L. will manage the club. When would the committee of management be appointed unless at the annual congress? That is the only practicable proposition presenting itself. It does not conform en-

tirely to the provisions of the Licensing Act.

Several members interjected.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I know we are attempting to alter that, but those provisions are not contained in the Licensing Act for nothing. Every member of a club is entitled to the same privileges as any other member. One member cannot be denied what other members have, by the introduction of some machinery which denies it through the medium of a committee of management. Under the Bill the committee of management either would be elected by representatives of the metropolitan area to manage a club of which all the members of the R.S.L. throughout the State would be members, or else would be elected by some representatives of all sections throughout the State.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They can all attend.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I know how much they can attend! Usually a person is a member of a club because he has opportunities for taking advantage of the accommodation and conveniences which the club affords.

Mr. Seward: And how many of those club members would attend an annual meeting?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It would not matter how many. They would all have the right to attend and the opportunity. They must not be under any disadvantage through their residential situation.

Mr. Thorn: What about country members of a metropolitan club?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Country members join, as such, merely in order to minister to their convenience and advantage while they are in the city.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The Bill proposes that every member of the league, upon payment of a subscription of 10s. per annum, shall automatically become entitled to club membership. At the same time, provision is made for a person not a member of the league to become a member of the club under and in accordance with its rules. Members should know more about this particular provision of the Bill. The member who introduced the Bill should ex-

plain whether the rules are to govern the type of person who is eligible for membership of the club, but who has not joined the R.S.L., and whether the subscription will be that provided by the Licensing Act. The Bill is ambiguous.

Mr. Warner: A person would not be likely to pay a subscription of one guinea if he could get the same benefits for a subscription of 10s.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Under the rules of the club, as I have pointed out, a person is not required to be a member of the R.S.L. in order to be eligible to join the club. The Bill proposes to perpetuate that condition. The Bill will do away with subscriptions to the club altogether so far as league members are concerned. Such members, upon payment of a subscription of 10s. per annum, will be entitled to all the advantages that accrue from membership of the club. This Bill, however, proposes to give such members an additional advantage; they shall automatically become members of the club. Members of the league, however, are scattered throughout the State, from east to west and north to south. In almost every settled portion of the State there are members of the league. Although their league subscription would entitle them to club rights, country members will not be able to avail themselves of the advantages that the club offers. Those advantages will be confined mainly to members who reside in the metropolitan area. That is an aspect that I wish to point out to members.

Mr. Warner: Is that very different from any other club?

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is not different from the existing club.

Mr. Patrick: Other clubs have country members.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: But they join of their own volition.

Mr. Patrick: At a very low subscription.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The giving of rights through a subscription to members of a body of which only a section can take advantage will immediately lead to demands elsewhere for the privileges enjoyed by that section. That is the natural outcome of a proposition of this kind. Why should not the Kalgoorlie, Boulder and Wiluna members of the R.S.L. have a club on the same terms? They are paying the same subscription for a privilege which they can seldom or never enjoy. As I say, inevitably demands for similar privileges will be

made by sub-branches throughout the State.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That has not been the result in South Australia, where a club has been in existence for some time.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I am not aware of the position in South Australia, but it would be remarkable if that were not the result there. I know something similar was done in South Australia, but the proposal in that State was not so wide as the one outlined in this Bill. I understand that a hotel, known as the Prince of Wales Hotel, in William-street, Adelaide—

Mr. Patrick: King William-street.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. I understand that hotel was either given or bequeathed to the Returned Soldiers' League of South Australia. That league desired to convert the hotel, to which was attached a publican's general license, into a residential club and apply the profits for league purposes.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The league proposed to use the building as its headquarters, too.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: At all events, no club had previously existed in South Australia, and no rights had been established. The South Australian position is different from ours. An amendment Act was passed in South Australia which indicates that the R.S.L. purchased the Prince of Wales Hotel, although I understood it had either been given or bequeathed to the R.S.L. Further, the Act in question was an amendment of the Licensing Act. I doubt very much whether a measure of this kind is in order. It seeks to override the provisions of the Licensing Act. I am not sure on the point.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I do not think so.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: An amendment of the Licensing Act was brought down in South Australia to deal with this particular case.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Provision is also contained in that Act under which, if the club ceases to exist the license shall not be forfeited.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: A further complication arose because there was provision for a local option poll in the district where the hotel is situated, and that postulated that there should not be any increase of licenses in the district. The Act in South Australia indicates that the R.S.L. in that State purchased the hotel, with the object of converting it into a resi-

dential club house. Provision was made that the R.S.L. could so convert the hotel that it could be registered as a club, notwithstanding that it was not complying with the provisions of paragraphs (c) and (d) of the Licensing Act. These paragraphs are as follows:—

(c) The club must be established for the purpose of providing accommodation for members thereof, or for such members and their guests, upon premises of which such association, body or company are bona fide occupiers.

(d) The accommodation must be provided and maintained from the joint funds of the club, and no person must be entitled under its rules or articles to derive any profit, benefit or advantage from the club which is not shared equally by every member thereof.

The Licensing Act, or that portion of it governing clubs in South Australia, is similar to our Licensing Act; but no reference has been made to the question of how the club should be managed in South Australia. In that State there is a defined subscription for membership of a club. The amount is 12s. per year. I do not know how the R.S.L. in South Australia got over that difficulty, because I understand the annual subscription to the league is only 10s. a year; otherwise, however, the club is being conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Licensing Act of South Australia.

The Minister for Mines: I suppose the position was overcome in South Australia in the same way as we shall overcome it here.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is so, but in South Australia the provisions of the Licensing Act are not being complied with. As I have already said, I realise the R.S.L. is doing much good work in the way of assisting its members and others eligible for membership who have seen active service and fallen on evil days. The league engages in many charitable activities and, if it had more funds, would do a great deal more.

I question the wisdom of attempting to augment the funds of the Returned Soldiers' League by the proposed method. There is another aspect of the matter, which might be considered to be a somewhat narrow-minded point of view, and that is that if the Bill is passed every member of the Returned Soldiers' League, in becoming a member of that league with a view to supporting its objectives, will automatically be linked up

with a club that sells liquor. Members know me well enough to realise that I have no objection to people associating themselves with clubs that sell liquor, or with public houses that sell liquor, or with any kind of association that sells liquor.

Mr. Warner: Neither would a big majority of the returned soldiers have any objection.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not suppose they would. But there may be some members of the league who are conscientious objectors in that regard. I would not be surprised if a number of members of the Returned Soldiers' League were also members of temperance organisations throughout the State. If this Bill is passed, all those members, who are just as much entitled to their opinions on the liquor question as I am entitled to mine, or any other member of this House is entitled to his, will be linked up with a club that sells liquor. The effect of the Bill will be that every man who becomes associated with the Returned Soldiers' League in the future will become a member of a club that sells liquor, whether he likes it or not. It is very desirable that those men, who have had a common experience should be able to fraternise together, talk over experiences they have shared, and belong to an association like the Returned Soldiers' League, which has such laudable objects, but I doubt whether some of the members of the league themselves will think it so desirable if the necessity is imposed upon them automatically to become members of a club that sells liquor in order to gain the other advantages associated with membership of the League. The Bill proposes a far-reaching departure from the provisions of the Licensing Act which govern clubs. I submit that this is a very dangerous precedent. There is no more reason why this privilege should be extended to the Returned Soldiers' League than to the masonic fraternity, which also runs clubs in this State, or to the National Football League, or the Commercial Travellers' Association, or the Australian Natives' Association, all of which organisations have clubs, and all of which are associations of people of high repute and associations that have very desirable objectives. Desirable objectives are not solely associated with the Returned Soldiers' League.

The Minister for Mines: Who has suggested that they are?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The member for Mt. Marshall sneered at my suggestion that these people should be considered under a proposition of this kind.

Mr. Warner: I never said they should not be considered. That was your own suggestion.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The probability is that the passing of this Bill would lead to a similar demand from associations of this description. Other bodies will seek the same privileges for their clubs as will be extended to the Returned Soldiers' League. The Australian Natives' Association in this State has a club, and the members of that association are scattered throughout the State. Possibly that association would desire that all its members, on payment of their lodge subscriptions, should become members of the A.N.A. Rowing Club, which is conducted under the auspices of the Australian Natives' Association. It may be, too, that the National Football League will urge that members of the league by virtue of their membership should automatically become members of the club. I foresee dangers in that direction. But the most important danger I foresee—and this fear is well justified—is that only a section of the Returned Soldiers' League will be able to take advantage of and enjoy the privileges associated with this club, although all pay the same subscription. I suggest to members that if this proposition is agreed to, members of the Returned Soldiers' League in Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Wiluna, Collic and other big towns in the State where there are sub-branches of the league having a membership big enough to justify the formation of a club—and I know they have a membership big enough for that purpose in the towns I have mentioned—will make similar demands. I go further and suggest that they will be entitled to similar privileges though at present they are not registered. I have no doubt that many of them would desire registration if this Bill were passed. I perceive the possibility of those members that are scattered throughout the State saying, "You have extended privileges under this Bill to the members of the Returned Soldiers' League. All of them are entitled to those privileges, but only those in the metropolitan area can enjoy them. We consider that those same

privileges should be extended to the other big centres throughout the State."

Mr. Seward: What are the privileges?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I trust members will not be carried away by sentiment, that they will not treat the Bill in an ill-considered manner, and that they will have some realisation of its possible far-reaching effects if it be agreed to.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [7.55]: As a trustee and executive officer of the Returned Soldiers' League I take this opportunity of thanking the Minister for Justice for the kindly way in which he has dealt with the Bill. Being responsible for the administration of the Licensing Act, no doubt he felt that it was essential for him to explain intelligently and efficiently the provisions of that Act, and he did that very well. At the same time, he has not used very much argument against the passing of the measure, and for that I thank him.

The Minister has particularly stressed the fact that the granting of membership of the club to the whole of the members of the Returned Soldiers' League will practically confine the privileges to the members in the metropolitan area, and that those members living at Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Wiluna, and other places will not receive the benefits of the club. I suggest to the Minister that if he were as closely associated with the organisation as I have been, he would probably appreciate the fact that the amelioration work of the organisation, although carried out in the metropolitan area by three trustees who live in the metropolitan area—I being one of them—is performed on behalf of any returned soldier needing assistance, irrespective of whether he is a member of the organisation or not, and irrespective of what part of Western Australia he might be residing in. If a man can obtain that assistance irrespective of where he may live, so can the benefits of membership of the proposed club be obtained by him. The Minister is inclined to think—in fact, he has stated as much—that this is a request from the league executive. As a matter of fact, it is a request from the Returned Soldiers' League. The league holds a conference every year and that conference decides the policy of the league. The conference is comprised of representatives drawn from the sub-branches throughout the State, just as—

and the Minister knows this for himself—the organisation to which he and I have the honour to belong meets in conference once in every three years, that conference defining the policy to be pursued by the Minister, myself, and others associated with the party. It is not a question of the executive's having requested this measure, but of the executive's carrying out the wishes of the conference.

We need to go farther back than the club. We need to ask ourselves just what this organisation is and what it represents. The Returned Soldiers' League is altogether different from the organisations mentioned by the Minister. The league is unique, because only a certain section of the community can join it or its club, and that section can only do so because its members went overseas to serve in a war. The Minister mentioned the Football League. I am a member of the Football League Club, not because I am a footballer, nor because I am very much interested in football, though I am president of a league club. There is not even necessity for me to go to a football match. Provided I can pay £2 18s. a year I may join the club. So it is with the Commercial Travellers' Association. Once a man becomes a commercial traveller I presume he is eligible to join the club. Similarly if one joined the Freemasons Lodge he could become a member of the Freemasons' Club.

Mr. Withers: By paying the subscription.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is not necessary to belong to any particular section of the community to become a member, but with regard to the organisation under discussion one must be able to produce his credentials as a returned soldier, and consequently there is something unique in such an organisation. The Minister for Justice asked members not to be led away by sentiment. I, too, hope they will not be led away by sentiment. We ask members simply to look at the facts. The organisation is not built up on sentiment. At the 1919 conference of the Returned Soldiers' League, discussing the question of the organisation, I expressed the belief then, and honestly held the belief, that if we were going to be built up on sentiment we would not live very long. It was not long, however, before we realised that sentiment was

playing only a small part; what was playing a big part was self-preservation and the necessity to protect those who had come back from the war suffering from disabilities. That is what the organisation lives for and that is what we are desirous of bringing about. We want the privilege we are asking the House to give us, and we do admit it is a privilege that we are seeking. Having occupied the position of trustee for a considerable period, I can say that the amount of money expended on the amelioration of those who have suffered through the war is really a considerable sum. Prior to the establishment of the Lotteries Commission we were privileged to conduct a consultation which brought us in £2,000 or £3,000 each year. Since then we have received considerable sums from the Lotteries Commission. I also point out that the trustees met no fewer than 64 times last year to deal with all the cases that came along, irrespective of whether they were members of the league or not. Whether they were A.I.F. men or ex-Imperial men their cases had to be dealt with, and year by year as the men get older and their disabilities become greater, so there will be an increase in the necessity for assistance. It was appreciated long ago that as the returned soldiers became older they were going to suffer greater disabilities. Then we established a fund called the Aged Sailors and Soldiers' Relief Fund, and this was not to be operated on for ten years. In the interval we were to endeavour to put away as much as we possibly could for the purpose of creating a substantial fund to assist those men who might be receiving the old age pension or what is now known as the service pension, and in that way help them along a little further. That is what the organisation stands for, and so long as there are any of us left able to carry on, we must carry on the work for which the league stands. After many long years, perhaps longer than we had a right to wait, we built Anzac House, and in doing that we accepted the responsibility of having to pay for it. The only objective was to provide a home for returned soldiers, and when the building was about completed it was decided to establish a club. Being unsophisticated as returned soldiers, we found that the Licensing Act stood in the way. We had to conform to the provisions of the

Act, and we did so. That meant that it was necessary to appoint a separate committee from the organisation and responsible to the R.S.L., just as the executive was responsible for the completion and payment of Anzac House. The separate committee had to be formed to conform to the conditions of the Licensing Act. It was not necessary to join the club to be a member of the Returned Soldiers' League. So long as one was a returned soldier he could be a member of the club. There was always the possibility of this happening: that members outside the league, for various reasons of their own, and probably having not much interest in the league except when they wanted assistance, could have banded together a sufficient number to assume control of the club in our own building, not only of the club but of the finances of the club.

Mr. Withers: The Bill will not overcome that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, it will. The executive of the R.S.L. will have control of the Club. Representatives of the league from various parts of the State will always be responsible for seeing who are members of the club committee. The responsibility will be that of the league. The Minister for Justice rightly pointed to some of the moral aspects. I am a member of the Anzac Club, and I suppose I frequent the club less than any other member of the executive. I am not a club man, but being a member of the executive I naturally joined the club, and having become a member of the executive, and being a trustee of the league, I want to be particularly careful about the good name of the league. Whilst the club could be carried on by someone outside, it is quite possible that the league would be brought into disrepute by reason of the club being improperly conducted. That in my opinion is of greater importance than any conscientious objection that a person may have to becoming a member of the league and also of the club.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Teetotallers have joined other clubs.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am a member of the Football League Club and I have never yet been in the bar of that club. Returned soldiers become members of the Anzac Club from a sentimental point of view, but I am only concerned as an

executive officer and trustee of the league, and of the good name of the league and of the good name of the club, to maintain which the responsibility is vested in those people that conferences decide to elect. Briefly that is the position in which we of the League find ourselves. The profits derivable from the club, as I have already said, will be used for the purpose of amelioration. I said a little while ago that we receive a considerable sum from the Lotteries Commission. We also receive money from the sale of poppies, and some of that money goes to the Sailors and Soldiers' Fund, while certain of the profits also are devoted towards assisting the Sailors and Soldiers' Fund. We believe, and we have taken up the same attitude since 1918, that we have done our best to look after ourselves. Our job as returned soldiers is to look after those people who are least able to look after themselves and we have carried out that job. We believe it is our occupation and those of us who are able to do it are anxious to do it, and having the organisation we see no reason why the building should not be the home of the returned soldiers and a home into which any returned soldier will be willing to go. We want to be able to say to these men "If you have 10s. and have become a member of the League you have the right to enter any part of the building. This is your home and it is the home of all the members." I see no possible objection to that. A great deal has been said about the precedent that will be set up. Almost every Act of Parliament that is put through this House creates a precedent of some sort. I am one of those who never worries about precedents. If we set up a precedent then let us deal with it on its merits. I trust members will not look at the matter from a sentimental point of view but from the point of view of a body of men entitled to receive the benefits that are being given to them. We believe we are doing a good job; if we were not doing it ourselves some other body or Government would have to carry it out. We have taken it out of the hands of the Government. The Club will derive profits and those profits will be used, as I have already said, for amelioration purposes. I have the rules of the club and I might be permitted to quote No. 54 which says—

In the event of a dissolution being carried into effect, the assets of the club shall be realised and any balance remaining shall be handed

over to the Returned Sailors and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia, W.A. Branch (Inc.). That is very good provided it stops there. It would be possible under our present constitution for someone to get control of the club and delete that rule. The only thing to do would be to sell the lease and ask them to shift their club somewhere else. That is one of the dangers that exists. I trust the House will look kindly upon the Bill, seeing that we are not asking for anything that is not strictly fair.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [8.16]: I support the Bill and hope the House will agree to the second reading. There is no need to fear sentiment in connection with the Bill. Occasions arise when sentiment may provide a very bad reason, and other occasions when the reason may be a good one. I do not care what the reason is, in this case the Bill deserves the support of the House.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: There was plenty of sentiment in 1914.

Mr. McDONALD: If that which caused men to go to the war in 1914 can be described as sentiment no one can say it was a bad reason for going. For all reasons that may be advanced the Bill is entitled to the support of the House. I am not afraid of the suggestion that the measure may amount to an exception in the case of our licensing laws. Parliament would be very limited in its powers if it were not able to make exceptions from time to time when the circumstances warranted such a step. The reasons for the Bill have been explained to the House by those who have a more intimate acquaintance with the affairs of the R.S.I.L. than I possess. I rise merely to state that I support the Bill.

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [8.18]: I approach this question with a certain amount of diffidence. With all due deference to members who have spoken I maintain that sentiment will play the biggest part in the handling of the Bill. I can imagine the outcry from the Leader of the Opposition if legislation similar to this were brought down by any member on this side in connection with any matter behind which did not exist the sentiment associated with this particular Bill.

Mr. Thorn: That is imagination.

Mr. WITHERS: Members opposite have not hesitated to raise their voices when we

have brought down certain legislation.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I have supported legislation along these lines for other purposes.

Mr. WITHERS: The Leader of the Opposition has always been a stickler for precedent.

Mr. Hegney: He is very conservative in his outlook.

Mr. WITHERS: This is certainly not an occasion for heat. All have the greatest respect for returned soldiers. The Leader of the Opposition said there was nothing ambiguous about the Bill. I disagree with that view. In the first place the Bill seems to conflict with the Licensing Act. Before we go into Committee I hope the sponsor of the measure will make full inquiries to ascertain whether it does indeed conflict with that Act. I wish to say a word or two concerning the subscriptions due in the case of membership of Anzac Club. The Bill suggests that a returned soldier may become a member of the club whether or not he is a member of the league.

The Minister for Mines: No.

Hon. C. G. Latham: He must first be a member of the league.

Mr. WITHERS: The Bill says:—

Nothing in this paragraph shall prevent or be deemed to prevent any person who is not a subscribing member of the league from being or becoming a member, whether subscribing or honorary, of the club under and in accordance with the rules of the club.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Those outside can join the league and automatically become members of the club. This is provided so that membership of the club will not close with the passing of this legislation.

Mr. WITHERS: If this had been done in the case of the Australian Workers' Union it would have been looked upon as compulsory unionism and preference to unionists.

The Minister for Mines: No man is forced to join the R.S.L.

Mr. Thorn: The club is already there if they do join.

Mr. WITHERS: The drafting of the Bill is not clear. Apparently a man may become a member of the club on joining the league. Another part of the Bill states,

Any subscribing member of the league whose subscription to the league is in arrear to the extent that under the rules of the league he is unfinancial shall not be permitted to enjoy any of the members' privileges of the club

while he continues to be an unfinancial member of the league.

A man may join the league and the club, and become unfinancial in the league. He then cannot enjoy the benefits of the club. The Bill does not do credit to the draftsman and should be re-drafted before it is taken into Committee.

Mr. Thorn: Perhaps you do not understand the drafting.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We had the best available draftsman.

Mr. WITHERS: The Minister for Mines told us that when the application was made for a club license a separate committee was formed.

The Minister for Mines: The club committee.

Mr. WITHERS: Will another club committee be formed if the Bill is passed or will such rights be taken from the club?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Members of the Club will appoint their own committee of management.

Mr. WITHERS: Will that conflict with the Licensing Act?

Hon. C. G. Latham: No.

Mr. WITHERS: The club was given a license under certain conditions. Will this Bill interfere with those conditions?

Hon. C. G. Latham: No.

Mr. WITHERS: Further on in the Bill I find the following—

The premises of the club shall not be removed from the headquarters building of the League and the business and transactions of the club shall not be carried on elsewhere than in the said headquarters building of the League except by the authority of a resolution duly carried by three-fifths majority of the delegates present and voting at an annual congress of the League or at a special congress of the League duly convened for the purpose and held under and in accordance with the rules of the League.

By a three-fifths majority representing country soldiers at some congress of the league a resolution may be carried demanding the removal of the club to some other place. I have been told by soldiers in the metropolitan area who know their way about that it is possible to obtain a drink at Anzac House on Anzac Day.

The Minister for Mines: You are wrong. The club is never opened on Anzac Day.

Mr. WITHERS: I was told this by a returned soldier in the country.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You must not listen to everything you are told.

Mr. WITHERS: When soldiers find their tongues parched after marching on Anzac Day they like to forget their convivially and have a drink. Some soldiers in the country have said that those in Perth could get a drink at Anzac Club on the day in question. I hope that is not true.

The Minister for Mines: It is not true.

Mr. WITHERS: If any club should adhere rigidly to the rule of observance on Anzac Day it is the Anzac Club. At the club in Bunbury to which I belong, no one can get a drink on Anzac Day. In his second reading speech the Leader of the Opposition said—

It is a departure from existing practice to ask for such a privilege for any section of the community. I point out that in other States of Australia as well as in Western Australia some preference has always been given to some returned soldier organisations.

An opportunity will be given to test that principle. An amendment may be moved to the Qualification of Electors (Legislative Council) Bill providing for a vote for returned soldiers.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Do not mix this Bill up with politics.

Mr. WITHERS: That is only sentiment again. It does not matter about returned soldiers having a voice in the affairs of the country, but we give a vote to a man who pays a rental of only a few shillings a week. A man is given the right to join a club of this kind because he is a returned soldier. Why not be consistent? I quite agree that returned soldiers should have everything to which they are entitled.

Mr. Cross: Then you will support the Bill?

Mr. WITHERS: I shall please myself how I vote. I have a right to express my opinion, even if I do not vote accordingly. The Bill will have my support up to the second-reading stage, so that it may be discussed in Committee. That is unlike the manner in which Bills are treated in another place, for there measures are thrown out of the window before they reach the Committee stage. I want to see that this Bill is of benefit to returned soldiers, and that it will not conflict with the licensing laws. It would be unwise to pass the Bill now if, later on, an amending measure to render lawful some illegal act had to be brought down.

Mr. Lambert: What about the Naval and Military Club?

Mr. WITHERS: I do not like the idea of extending, by means of subscriptions, certain privileges to this organisation. But for

sentiment such a proposal would never have been brought down. The A.N.A. and other organisations possess associate orders, good fellowships, and so on, and some of them have clubs connected with them. But if a member wants to join a club, he must pay a separate subscription. Furthermore members may be eligible for membership to one part of an order and not to another. If I allowed this Bill to pass through without expressing my opinion, I do not think I would be fulfilling my duty as a member of the House. Before the Bill reaches the Committee stage, I trust that steps will be taken to make sure the difficulty I foresee does not exist.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [8.30]: I have been surprised at the opposition to the Bill. The member for Bunbury (Mr. Withers) has supported it half-heartedly, apparently in the hope of despatching it in Committee. Prior to the tea adjournment, the Minister for Justice made statements that were not true.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not reflect upon the Minister in those terms.

Mr. CROSS: I want to reflect upon something he said.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member's statement was unparliamentary.

Mr. CROSS: I object to the Minister's statement.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member may object, but he must not use such language.

Mr. CROSS: I made a note of the Minister's statement and he said that the Bill sought to dissipate the rights of members of the Anzac Club. That statement was not true.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CROSS: The Bill has a more noble objective than that. It aims to provide comfort and benefit for the less fortunate members of the League, which does not run the club for the benefit of a few but for the membership generally. Probably a majority of the returned soldiers reside in country districts, and when they visit the city they should have the privileges of a club where they can rest and meet their war-time comrades. Why should anyone object to that? Why should not the diggers have some enjoyment when they come to town? The House should not forget

that the ranks of the returned soldiers are slowly becoming depleted. Many are getting old and weary. Why should they not enjoy the privileges that the Bill proposes? Why should not they be accorded some special concession? The Bill does not propose anything that will alter the application of the Licensing Act in any direction. I appeal to members to support the laudable object of the Bill and thus render some assistance to their less fortunate mates. Returned men do not receive many concessions to-day and some that were granted freely shortly after the war necessitate a hard fight for their retention to-day. Recently I read comments in the Press regarding railway passes made available to returned soldiers. I know some who are crippled but have to fight hard for their passes. One man did not want to travel in a second-class compartment because he was suffering from back injuries and found the second-class compartments uncomfortable.

The **DEPUTY SPEAKER**: What has that to do with the Bill?

Mr. **CROSS**: Perhaps it has nothing to do with the Bill, except that in each instance concessions are sought for men who are incapacitated through war injuries. I hope members will adopt a generous viewpoint in considering the Bill in the interests of a band of men whose numbers are gradually dwindling. It will enable men from the country to enjoy equal benefits with their fellow diggers who reside in the city. Surely members would not regard it as necessary for the men who are down from the country for a few days to pay an extra fee for club membership. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York—in reply) [8.35]: I thank members for the manner in which they have received the Bill. True, it represents special legislation for a section of the community, and, in the circumstances, members have accorded the measure a cordial reception. The Minister for Mines, who is one of the trustees of the Returned Soldiers' League, has explained fully the provisions of the Bill and its objective. The measure is framed in simple language, and was not drafted hurriedly. It was referred to one of the best lawyers in the city and was subsequently endorsed by the Crown Solicitor. More than that could not be ex-

pected. When the Bill is in Committee, one or two small alterations may be found necessary in order that it may more correctly interpret the intentions of the league. The Licensing Act provides that the business and affairs of a club must be under the control of a committee elected annually, and so forth. All the conditions of the law will be complied with, and a committee of management, who may be the executive of the league or a committee appointed specially by the members, will be elected at the annual meeting of the league. With the exception of the two provisions to which special attention has been drawn, I assure the House that the Licensing Act will be observed to the very letter. While I agree to a certain extent with the views expressed by the Minister for Justice, in that this privilege might be sought on behalf of other sections of the community, I remind him that those other sections, as well as the league, will have to run the gauntlet. They will have to apply for a license. Members will admit that the Bill does not give the R.S.L. the right to a license, without the necessity to lodge an application under the provisions of the Licensing Act. There must be a hundred members before registration can be applied for. That is necessary with regard to all clubs, and that requirement will have to be met. If some other section of the community should seek a similar privilege in the future, no doubt the House will give consideration to the matter when it arises.

Mr. **Styants**: Favourable consideration?

Hon. C. G. **LATHAM**: Naturally I cannot answer for the House at some future date, but I claim that all legislation receives consideration at the hands of members. Fortunately, or unfortunately, whichever way one views the position, the Anac Club will have a limited life. In fact, I hope it will be limited, because I do not want any more returned soldiers, for we know what creates such a section of the community. As for the other organisations mentioned, I dare say that if we were to return to this mortal sphere in a thousand years' time, we would still be able to see East Fremantle playing against Claremont, and such institutions as the A.N.A. still in existence. On the other hand, there may be some members of this House that will live to see the league membership as low as 30, and, of course, by then the club will have had to go out of exist-

ence. The Minister for Mines pointed out that the club was formed only because of the league, and should the club go out of existence, the assets will revert to the league, thus indicating close relationship between the two organisations. There are many returned soldiers who are not members of the league, and any suggestion that the Bill will debar such men from joining is far from correct. It is specially provided that anyone who is not a member of the league, but desires to join up in future, will be able to do so under conditions similar to those that enabled past members to join up, and automatically they will then become club members. As the Minister for Mines declared, we desire the club to be open to all members of the league. Many might like to be members of the league and of the club as well, but cannot afford to do so because that would involve the payment of 30s. a year. By paying 10s. a year, a man will be able to enjoy the privileges of both. I am a member of the league but, although I hate to admit it, I have never been inside the club premises. I have had no necessity to go there. I know strict teetotallers who are members of clubs and yet pass the bar every day. Although they dislike drink, they can belong to a club that holds a license. As for the position of returned soldiers in the country, clubs cannot be provided in every small country town, and the Licensing Court would have something to say about that.

Mr. Withers: That is the trouble. The men in the country are debarred from these privileges.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But we are not taking away from them anything they possess now. Rather are we extending privileges to them. As for the payment of £1, which is required by the Licensing Act, it should be realised that that money does not go into Consolidated Revenue but into the funds of the club. I hope the second reading will be agreed to and, if any further explanations are required in Committee, I am sure the most inquisitive member will have his thirst for information quenched. We desire to get control of the club as quickly as possible so as not to upset the managerial arrangements.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

MOTION—LIGHT AND POISON LANDS.

Royal Commission's Recommendations.

Debate resumed from the 19th October on the following motion by Mr. Nulsen (Kanowna):—

That in the opinion of this House, the recommendations of the honorary Royal Commission on light and poison-infested lands should receive the earnest consideration of the Government.

MR. HILL (Albany) [8.48]: I support the motion. I consider that not only should the report receive the consideration of the Government, but that the Royal Commission is deserving of the thanks of the Government and of Parliament. One thing that strikes people on travelling around Western Australia is the variety of conditions that exist. Not only have we various climatic conditions, but in each district are found different types of soil. I often think that those people who have taken up land in Western Australia resemble the boy with a plum pudding; they have sat down and picked out the plums first. Some 12 months ago I had the privilege of being present at a field day at Wongan Hills. That was a great day for me. There, in a 9-inch rainfall and on land very little better than light sand, crops were being grown yielding up to 15 bushels to the acre. That was a very interesting experience for me, because I had seen little of our wheat country. I admit that as I walked around the farm I could not refrain from comparing the conditions there with those in my own district. My wife pointed out a sheep and said, "Look at that poor beggar of a sheep trying to get a little shelter under the gate." A few minutes later I went to the pasture experimental block and spoke to Dr. Sutton. I said, "We do beat you with pastures." The doctor smiled, and, pointing to a paddock, said, "What would your son think if he was told to put sheep into a paddock like that?"

We all regret that the prospects of the wheat areas are not too bright. Obviously we must look to those parts of the State having an assured rainfall for future settlement. In the southern portion of the State there is room for a large population. A lot

of the land there would scarcely be classed as light land; it is really land that people have not understood how to work. The Royal Commission, I consider, has done a very good job in travelling throughout the agricultural areas and preparing this report. The first part of the report deals with the land in the Esperance district. I was very pleased to see so favourable a report upon that land. I have only once visited the Esperance district, and that was something like 40 years ago, but my experience then gave me a hunch that the land was capable of profitable production. Looking back over 40 years, we must regret that the railway from Esperance to Coolgardie was not constructed in the early days of the goldfields. I am convinced that if the railway had been constructed then, not only would Esperance be a prosperous port to-day, but the land in the vicinity of Esperance would be producing profitably. If that railway had been constructed at the time, the development of the Esperance land would have grown with the port.

To provide export facilities for producers in that part of the State, however, is going to be a difficult matter. The proposal of the Light Lands Commission to construct a road from Esperance to Albany has been criticised. I say that those who criticise the proposal should have had some experience such as I have had of transporting products requiring refrigerated space. To get ships to take such products is a difficult problem, and I am afraid many years will elapse before ships can be induced to call at Esperance. Until that day arrives, I feel that the best means of providing export facilities for Esperance will be a road service to Albany. The Government should not only construct the road but should subsidise a transport service and do everything possible to encourage production there. With the growth of production, the time will come when ships will call at Esperance to pick up the lambs raised in the district.

The second part of the Royal Commission's report deals with my own district. I can claim to know a little about the Albany district. Looking back over the years I can say I am the owner of one of the blocks first taken up for development there. In another 15 months I intend to hold a little party to celebrate the centenary of the taking up of my block. In the Albany district the best of the land has been selected. Many mistakes have been made. One mistake

was made by the Government about 27 years ago. There was then a prospect of a shortage of potatoes throughout the State, and Mr. Clitty Baker, of the Department of Agriculture, was sent to Albany to encourage producers to grow potatoes. In conversation with me, Mr. Baker made a remark which might well have been adopted as the policy of the Government in the Albany district, and, in fact, in a fair portion of Western Australia. He said, "In farming you want to send as much stock to market as possible on four legs." Had that been the agricultural policy of the southern end of the State, our experience would have been vastly different.

About 20 years ago a conference was held at Albany, which decided to appoint a land committee to ascertain what could be done to bring some of the unoccupied land under cultivation. I was a member of the committee and, as a result of its work, arrangements were made with the Government to experiment with what is known as the bottle-brush land around Albany. What encouraged the then Premier, Sir James Mitchell, to make money available for the experiments was the success achieved on a block of ten acres now owned by my brother. I knew that land 40 years ago, and it was typical bottle-brush land. Originally it was a Chinaman's garden, and Sir James Mitchell referred to it as carrying more stock than any other ten acres in Western Australia. The report refers to the farm of Mr. A. C. Vaughan, of Albany. When the experiments were started, Mr. Vaughan was fruit inspector of the district, but he was taken away from the fruit department and placed in charge of the experiments on the bottle-brush land. Sir James Mitchell made the mistake of trying to get things done too hurriedly. The bottle-brush has a big root system, and the only way to get the roots out is by deep ploughing. The land was ploughed, but some time must be allowed for the land to sweeten before pastures can be successfully grown. The block now held by Mr. Vaughan was one of those upon which the experiments were made, and one has only to visit it in the summertime to appreciate the luxuriance of the feed that can be grown there. Other experiments were carried out on hilly country, but there again deep ploughing was done, with the result that the sour soil was turned up

and some time elapsed before good results could be obtained. I congratulate the Commission upon its report on the Albany district, and if its general recommendations are carried out, I am confident that much good will result to the State.

There are one or two comments I should like to make. One is about the extensive areas of mixed timber country west of the Great Southern railway from Kendenup and Mt. Barker. I can safely say that in that part of the State there is room for the settlement of thousands of farmers. Some two years ago I accompanied the member for Irwin-Moore (Hon. P. D. Ferguson) on a visit to his electorate. We attended a conference at Milng. There was a lot of motor cars drawn up, and poor old things they were. The hon. member remarked, "These fellows have cars, but I do not know where they will get new ones." Three weeks later I attended a fruitgrowers' conference at Mt. Barker, consisting of growers from Bridgetown and other fruitgrowing areas, and I could not help noticing the contrast, for many of the delegates arrived at the conference in new sedan cars. Mt. Barker is one of the most solid towns in Australia to-day, and there is room for more settlements like Mt. Barker at the southern end of the State.

Reference is made in the report to the growing of clover. I do not think the members of the Commission need worry about having too much clover. Our experience is that if we grow the clover first, the blade grasses will follow. The Commission also makes reference to the need for erecting super works at Albany, and to the saving on railage that would result. I use a good deal of super, and if works were established at Albany I would save about 9s. per ton in freight. I can safely say that the Railway Department is losing 30s. on every ton of super carried to Albany, and would gain if super works were erected there. I am not familiar with the Great Southern and eastern districts, but I understand that other speakers better acquainted with them will have something to say about that part of the State.

The Commission, in its general recommendations, proposes the appointment of a district light lands board. That recommendation is one which might well be adopted. The reason that the land settlement scheme at Albany is one of the most successful in

the State is doubtless largely due to the fact that there was a board to select the settlers. The personal element is an important factor in dealing with the poorer lands of our State.

Regarding the land at our end of the State, an incident which occurred last week shows why settlement of that land should be encouraged. One of my constituents was having a little misunderstanding with the Lands Department, and I took the matter up with the official. The next day, having gone through the file, the official said, "This fellow has £500 worth of improvement on the land. Surely that is not second or third-class land!" I replied, "It may be second or third-class land, but it is a first-class climate." I do not think there is anything else for me to comment upon now. I do hope that the Government will not only give serious consideration to the report, but also carry out its recommendations.

Mr. WATTS: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [9.3]: I should have liked some members of the Country Party to speak on the motion before I, as a member of the Royal Commission, addressed myself to it. It is not desired that this debate should hang over too long, though I understand the Minister for Lands wants to have something to say on it when he returns. I do appreciate the fact that there are members sufficiently interested in a report of this nature to give consideration to it. The member for Kanowna (Mr. Nulsen) is to be commended on having moved the motion, which has afforded opportunity to discuss the report. Although I had previously visited most of the districts through which I travelled as a member of the Royal Commission, I never before had anything like the same opportunities to gain information. Mention has been made of the various localities visited. Wherever we went, from Esperance to Northam, through the Midland and Wongan Hills districts, or down the Great Southern, wonderful interest in the Commission's investigation was shown not only by members of the farming community, but also by tradespeople and residents of the towns. This proves that many persons are at least interested in the light and poison lands situated within 25 miles of railway and other facilities.

As one who has had considerable experience in the South-West I have said, and shall continue to say, that the slogan of any Government to-day should be the development of that portion of the State where there is an assured rainfall. As the member for Albany (Mr. Hill) has pointed out, possibilities there are wonderful. In fact, they are wonderful right through to Esperance. The principal reason for this is the assured rainfall. Over a period of years science has shown us how to put fertiliser into the ground, but science cannot yet create rain. With rainfall and fertiliser we are to-day utilising land situated within easy distance of established facilities, that we would not have utilised a few years ago. It has been asserted that the Lands Department knew beforehand all that the Commission would find out. However, I am convinced by the evidence which we took from administrative officers of the Lands Department, not only in the metropolitan area but in every district we visited, that during our investigation we made discoveries from certain practical farmers which gave us a viewpoint that was not conveyed to us even by the district officers, although they very kindly gave us all the assistance in their power. Remarkable interest was taken in the work of the Commission, and those who came forward to give evidence did so confidently. A remark to be made about Western Australia's land settlement policy is that we have concentrated on one method of farming over a number of years. I have now reached the stage of believing that the more we can produce on the hoof to garner its own fodder, instead of our cropping and garnering fodder by the old method and then transporting the product to market by the old method, the better for our farmers. The export of fat lambs produced in a particular area is one matter; but we have, or should have, a local market. In the Esperance district there are great possibilities for producing not only fat lambs and sheep but dairy cattle and beef cattle as well. At Norseman and Kalgoorlie definite markets should be found to which to rail cattle and sheep produced in the Esperance areas. Those markets exist to-day; but because sheep and cattle cannot be supplied continuously from local sources, Kalgoorlie and Norseman have concentrated on other supplies which are available all the year round. The time has come for the Esperance area to extend its

activities to supplying the requirements of the Eastern Goldfields. As time goes on, with scientific methods and knowledge of what can be done in the growth of pastures we shall be able to supply the whole of that goldfields area without any importation from Eastern States.

Western Australia has other lands which far surpass Esperance areas in point of quality, but those other lands lack the Esperance rainfall. Super can be conveyed to those lands, but rain cannot be made to fall on them. Therefore let us concentrate on areas within reach of established facilities and having a reliable rainfall. If the people of Western Australia take heed of the Commission's concise report and carry out the recommendations therein contained, I am convinced that in future our land settlement policy will prove more sure than has been the case.

Since the Commission functioned the "West Australian" has published many articles on what can be done with light and poison lands. In the columns of that paper there has been an interesting exchange of views, for example, between Mr. Hugh McNeill and Mr. H. R. Rendavy. Probably that correspondence would never have taken place had not the Commission functioned and produced its report. In passing let me say how sorry I am that I have been compelled to lock up my copy of the report ever since I received it. Copies have developed a habit of disappearing from the benches of the House.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: That is a reflection on members.

Mr. WITHERS: Copies of the report have been so much in demand that one has to cherish them. It is satisfactory to note at least a demand for the Royal Commission's report. The fact goes to show that people are interested in the light land position, and wish to obtain as much knowledge as they possibly can about it. It is not my intention to traverse the whole subject, as the member for Kanowna (Mr. Nulsen) made an excellent job of that, visualising the entire position from Esperance to Northampton and back. Wherever we went we found a different type of light land, and discovered that farmers in the various areas had got to understand their particular types of light land. Many farmers declare that they prefer light land to heavy. Other farmers have

become heavy land farmers, and express a different point of view.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: This is a light land season.

Mr. WITHERS: Yes, that may be the explanation. A recommendation of the Royal Commission that is especially worthy of consideration is that, wherever possible, a settler should be given part heavy land and part light land. In the course of our investigations at various centres I was interested to learn what happened during the four-year resting period, after cultivation for one year. It appears that the rainfall in those areas is not sufficient to justify top dressing which will keep pastures going on the land awaiting further ploughing and cultivation. As the report points out, however, in many of those light land areas the scrub and brush grows quickly, and in a very little time the land is back to nature. There is a job for science. That land is responding to something. It may be mallee, it may be some other shrub or scrub. That land must be good enough to give strength to the scrub or shrub to grow. The Bureau of Scientific and Industrial Research and the Department of Agriculture have discovered what was lacking in other districts with short rainfall. I feel sure that with the progress of time science will play its part and find a substitute for the scrub and shrub that grow prolifically on such lands. If we can get something of food value to take the place of the scrub and shrub, many of our difficulties in connection with the pasturing of those areas will be solved. Only a few years ago the problem of pasture in the South-West called for a great deal of attention. Now one picks up a paper and reads about a field day at Narrogin. That shows the extent of the benefit derived from experiments. I understand the member for Beverley (Mr. Mann) will support the motion, and speak of what has taken place west of Beverley. That is the kind of thing we have to concentrate on. If we can do without growing wheat by feeding pastures to stock, we shall do better than we have done in the past by concentrating on wheat growing. We have ample wheat lands at Geraldton, in the north and in the Avon districts, but I consider we should concentrate on herbage and stock. A member has mentioned Wongan Hills. The Wongan Hills and Salmon Gums

research stations are an eye-opener. Some time ago a comparison was made of experimental crops with crops on virgin bush and the progress noted was astounding. We should be grateful to the science staff of the Agricultural Department, which has done such wonderful work in this particular field. It is unnecessary for me to labour the matter. I thought, however, that as I was a member of the commission, I would be justified in supporting the motion. I desire to say how much the members of the commission appreciated the leadership of the Chairman, Mr. Latham. We ourselves, of course, were excellent commissioners, but the leader of the Opposition was a capable and excellent chairman. In my opinion, and I think it is shared by the other members of the commission, Mr. Latham conducted our proceedings in a thoroughly competent manner. The commission was by no means an extravagant one: the members acted in an honorary capacity and the expenses were kept down to a minimum. Members will see from the Auditor General's report that the cost of the commission did not amount to a large sum, considering the extent of its labours. The evidence has been tabulated and is available to members. The appointment of the commission has, in my opinion, been fully justified. The officials of our Lands Department, despite all their years of experience, will learn much as the result of the commission's investigations. The report will no doubt be a guide for the Lands Department in its future land settlement policy.

MR. MANN (Beverley) [9.19]: I desire to congratulate the Light Lands Commission on its excellent work. Its report will be of great value to the Lands Department in the future when dealing with our light lands. I intend to refer to an area of country west of Beverley in my own electorate. We have there a large area of land extending to Albany. For many years past, it has been looked upon with much misgiving. I remember that when I joined Elder, Smith and Co., 30 odd years ago, that class of land carried very few sheep to the acre. The sheep were mostly of the merino and what might be termed the typical blue wool types. To-day, however, with the planting of subterranean clover, a vast difference has taken place. Here I would pay a tribute to the officers of

the Department of Agriculture for the help they have given our farmers in the use of culture seed. Probably members do not realise how important is the use of bacteria with clover and legumes. The treatment is new. The Minister for Agriculture spoke about it some time ago and we are now beginning to realise its vast importance. Land that was poor and deficient in fertility has been broken up and laid down with clover. The clover has responded remarkably well and is bringing the State a big production. Many thousands of acres of this class of land can be brought into production. Possibly our land policy hitherto has been wrong, because we developed our areas in the Eastern districts, where there is the heavy type of land. The poorer land was neglected entirely: but, thanks to science, it is now being put to good use and is coming into its own. I should be sorry indeed if the Eastern districts were abandoned because of the dry seasons that we have experienced. My desire is that the Eastern districts shall continue to be developed.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is mostly heavy land.

Mr. MANN: If water can be procured there, we can develop the land by top-dressing and planting pastures. The land would then be eminently suitable for grazing purposes. With increased adjoining holdings we can produce an excellent type of sheep. The land that has been lying idle for so long will be brought into use for the production of fat lambs, wool, and pigs. I refer now to the areas in the Great Southern District. Along the Midland line we have the typical lupin country. We are experimenting with lupins on sandy land and are meeting with great success. We shall have a large area available for lamb raising in that district. At Esperance we also have large areas that can be utilised for fat lamb raising. We shall be able to secure our quota of the fat lamb trade, because we produce the right type of lamb for the overseas market. The country I have referred to will be brought under production slowly, but surely. Another possibility that must not be lost sight of is that much of the light type of country is suitable for pig raising and producing pork and bacon. There is a tremendous future for that trade. Mr. Baron-Hay has recently returned from a council meeting in the Eastern States. In an interview with the "West Australian" he said there was an almost unlimited market

for our products, provided we fed our crops to sheep and cattle. I am glad the commission was appointed, because its valuable report will be useful for all time when dealing with our land settlement. As a Western Australian born, I have sufficient faith in my country to know that we have a great future before us by bringing light land into production. Some 10 or 15 years ago it was regarded as hopeless, but such is not the case to-day. I again congratulate the Commission upon the excellent work done by it.

On motion by Mr. Boyle, debate adjourned.

MOTION—MARKETING LEGISLATION.

As to Unsaleable Surpluses.

Debate resumed from the 12th October on the following motion by Mr. North (Claremont):—

That in the opinion of this House marketing legislation should be amended to provide power for the various boards to organise the distribution of their unsaleable surpluses.

MR. BOYLE (Avon) [9.25]: I support the motion, but do so with certain reservations. As the mover pointed out, it does seem a travesty, shall we say, of economic justice that milk in his district remaining unsold, by law, has to be thrown down a drain or destroyed.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is not so.

Mr. BOYLE: I hope it is not so.

Mr. North: But I have told you it is.

Mr. BOYLE: I am afraid the member for Claremont (Mr. North) is outvoted, because the Minister has said it is not so. I accept the Minister's word and I am sure the hon. member has been misinformed. The fact remains, however, that the destruction of foodstuffs is a recognised practice and the customary way of dealing with surplus products, thus taking them off the market. We have to face the reservations to which I have referred. The most important question is: if the member's motion is carried and the Acts relating to marketing boards are amended, who is going to stand the brunt of the cost of producing these articles for distribution in the manner suggested by the motion? Apparently the producer again is to be the victim. In reading the cables that appeared in to-day's paper, I was struck with the American attitude on this matter. The Americans do not intend to force the producers to bear the brunt of the loss from

surplus products, but are buying and distributing those products through certain channels. If that could be done here, and I think it could, I would be pleased to see the motion carried. But I cannot with any degree of equanimity see the producers again victimised to the extent of providing cheap products for the inhabitants of the metropolitan area. The growers should at least be assured of the cost of production. Then the measure would be more laudable. Production is so easy to-day. Recently I have had conversations with producers around the metropolitan area. I have not been unduly interesting myself in something that does not concern me from an electoral point of view, but I have been drawn into several conferences, and I have discovered that the great trouble experienced by the producers of commodities in the metropolitan area is that normally they cannot obtain a payable price, so that the return received by them, and particularly by those growing vegetables, never rises above the cost of production.

Mr. North: There are no boards for them, and they are needed.

Mr. BOYLE: Certainly we need boards. My opinion is that there could be a marketing board in charge of every section of primary production.

Mr. North: That is the basis of this motion.

Mr. BOYLE: I do not know that the motion will assist in the formation of boards.

Mr. North: The motion cannot be effective without a board.

Mr. BOYLE: Perhaps if the motion is carried the Government will perceive the advisability of appointing a board to give effect to it.

The Minister for Mines: What, another board!

Mr. BOYLE: Why not? There is an onion board now as well as other boards, and I am sure our friends in another place will receive the suggestion very kindly.

The Minister for Agriculture: Your leader is against delegating authority to boards.

Mr. BOYLE: I am not concerned with the opinions of my leader in that connection, but I know that the policy of the Country Party is the establishment of marketing boards. That is plank No. 19 of the party's platform, if the Minister wants the information. I am guilty of no heresy

from a political party point of view in advocating the establishment of marketing boards, and as the member for Claremont has pointed out, this motion can only be given effect by the establishment of a board.

Mr. North: That is the idea.

Mr. BOYLE: So the Minister's path is clear.

The Minister for Agriculture: It will be my first duty next session!

Mr. BOYLE: Yes, the Minister from this side of the House can assist the new Government in giving effect to this motion. Reference has been made by the hon. member to export prices for these products. He suggested that the people of the metropolitan area should have the advantage of paying only export prices for these goods.

Mr. North: Only a small section, of course.

Mr. BOYLE: I think the hon. member particularly mentioned butter.

Mr. North: My remarks applied to those below the basic wage.

Mr. BOYLE: That raises another difficulty. I am afraid that the standard or code of honour in the metropolitan area is not so high that these cheap goods will be obtained only by those below the basic wage.

The Minister for Works: This motion will have to be clarified in Committee.

Mr. BOYLE: I do not wish to support the motion and then damn it with faint praise. I am in earnest in supporting it. I think it is a laudable motion. The member for Claremont has seen the trouble, though he was misinformed over the milk business. He nearly let me into a tragedy from which I was saved by the vigilance of several members. I hope the motion will be carried, and that the producers will not be further victimised by having to distribute below the cost of production goods the growing of which provides their livelihood. They must obtain the cost of production plus a reasonable profit. That is the standard we support: that is the flag we follow. We consider that as the worker is entitled to his cost of living plus a reasonable standard of comfort, so we hope that one day all producers will receive the cost of production plus a reasonable profit.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [9.34]: At first thought the motion may be considered Utopian, if not impracticable, but the more one

considers it the more one realises that the mover has but anticipated a world-wide movement. That is indicated by the cable in this morning's "West Australian" which relates what is being done in a portion of the United States. That is certainly a very important move, and it shows that the thought of the hon. member simply preceded the thought of residents of a bigger centre. A great advantage would accrue from a solution of the problem by means of a distribution of unsaleable surpluses. How can that be done? We realise from the report in the "West Australian" that in the United States the proposition is to purchase direct from the producers. No doubt that is an easy way of solving the difficulty when money is available. There is another method by which distribution can be brought about. In this community are many people unable to obtain the necessities required by them to keep them in full health. A distribution of goods at less than market rates would result in a general reduction in prices, and that would be suicidal for the producers. One solution of the problem would be to supply unsaleable surpluses only to approved charitable institutions, and such individuals as those to whom I have just referred. The commodities could be supplied at prices that are less than normal. The problem then is how can this result be scientifically brought about without creating other difficulties? To-day the inmates of various institutions are in need of a greater supply of commodities than it is possible to give them. That could probably be said in respect of every charitable institution, and applies also to numbers of individuals. People who are living on rations cannot secure a sufficient volume of food of the right quality on an income value of only 7s. per week. A higher standard of nutrition is essential if the right type of citizen is to be developed. Numbers of women and children also receive assistance through charitable organisations. It has always been a serious problem and a very sad commentary on the position that whilst so much is produced, so many people have insufficient food. The motion makes a practical advance towards a solution of the problem. Could anyone claim that sufficient food is received by the persons to whom I have referred to ensure for them healthful living? No such claim could be

supported. I am not reflecting upon the Government because all Governments have the same problem to face. Then there are the recipients of old age and invalid pensions, and numerous others to whom better conditions of health would be welcome. No objection could be raised to the distribution of unsaleable surpluses in the instances I have quoted. Only to such persons and such institutions would the unsaleable surpluses be made available. Vigilance would be necessary to ensure that only those who fell within this category took advantage of the lower rates. That should be the basic principle in connection with the whole matter. The motion is worthy of careful thought and ultimately, I believe, will be accepted. From the standpoint I have outlined it is economically sound. It provides an opportunity for giving humanitarian consideration to those who otherwise would be unable to obtain those supplies that are essential to good health. I support the motion.

On motion by Mr. McLarty, debate adjourned.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 12th October.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [9.43]: The member for Katanning (Mr. Watts) brought down a Bill to amend the Fisheries Act. He has now brought down a measure to amend the Road Districts Act, and as these are complementary, he has made two Bills grow where only one grew before. This Bill is not as innocent as it looks. I must oppose it as a matter of policy, and also because I think it would be unworkable. The Bill seeks to amend Section 204 of the Road Districts Act, empowering local authorities and road boards to make regulations. Already there are 59 such provisions in the Act, and this Bill would bring the total to 60 matters concerning which road boards or local authorities can make regulations. The difficulty, moreover, is that although these Bills have a State-wide application, their object is simply to authorise the Gnowangerup Road Board, in which are vested certain recreation and camping reserves at Wellstead Estuary and Beaufort Inlet, to control and license fishermen operating in

those waters. It will be recalled that the achieving of this object was first sought by the introduction of a composite Bill. I am advised by the Crown Law Department, however, that the correct procedure is now being followed in the bringing forward of two Bills, which will be effective if both are enacted. Further, I am advised by the Crown Law Department that an amendment to the Road Districts Act is necessary if the local authority is to be enabled to implement the powers it will possess if the other measure becomes law. The present Bill involves a number of considerations. Leaving aside for the moment the question of policy, I would emphasise that there is some doubt whether the vesting of the waters of an estuary in a road board is legally possible. While it is sometimes convenient for local governing bodies controlling a reserve to have control of adjacent waters, it is questionable whether the inclusion of waters in a reserve under the Land Act is not, in certain cases, *ultra vires* the Act. In this connection I propose to quote advice received from the Crown Law Department—

Section 16 (3) of the Land Act deals with the vesting of land in the Crown between the boundaries of lands fronting the ocean or any sound, bay or creek and the high water mark, so that of necessity lands to seaward of high water mark are not vested in the Crown by the Land Act although they might belong to the Crown at common law. However, such lands to seaward are certainly not Crown lands within the meaning of the Land Act, and accordingly they could not be vested under that Act by proclamation of the Governor in Council.

The only possible way in which seaward lands could be vested in any body or local authority is by special Act of Parliament. That this is a desirable state of affairs must be obvious and it follows the English law which has always reserved, since *Magna Charta*, at any rate, the right to the public to fish and navigate, in all tidal waters subject only to legislation.

The Crown Solicitor continues—

There is another objection also to the form of the present Bills to amend the Fisheries Act and the Road Districts Act in that neither prescribes which set of regulations is to be paramount. There is nothing in either Bill which purports to amend regulations which may already be in existence and which have been made by the Fisheries Department with respect to the Wellstead Estuary in common with other tidal waters of the State. Accordingly, if the Bills are passed in their present form, I do not think regulations made by a road board would override regulations already made by the Fisheries Department. The Bills should either provide that regulations made thereunder would

override prior regulations or, alternatively, it should be specified that such regulations already made should be declared as having no application to the Wellstead Estuary.

Another and no less important objection to this Bill and its companion measure is that they seek to empower a road board to deal with highly technical matters not usually associated with the functions of a local governing body. To achieve this end it is proposed to transfer control from a responsible Minister and his departmental experts into the hands of a body of laymen, such as would constitute a road board. Neither the Gnowangerup Road Board, nor any other road board for that matter, can be expected to have in its employ officers capable of determining whether restrictions on fishing should be imposed or not. In the Fisheries Department we have men possessed of sufficient scientific knowledge and practical experience to understand what is necessary for the protection and preservation of fish, and to ensure that proper breeding conditions are maintained. For many years the technique of fisheries control has been developed along scientific lines, and to-day it is recognised that the only people competent to form an accurate opinion as to what methods are necessary for the conservation of fish-life are the experts who have had the requisite training and experience in this particular branch of science. The position is that departmental officers decided, after investigations, that Wellstead Estuary and Beaufort Inlet should be closed to net fishermen, because netting was having a deleterious effect on the fish-life in those waters. The fact that professional fishermen have been poaching in waters closed to net fishing does not of itself justify this House in granting power to a road board to issue licenses to all and sundry. If nets are found to be harmful, both amateur and professional must refrain from employing them; otherwise the purpose of the prohibition is defeated. I discussed this very phase with the Chief Inspector of Fisheries. I pointed out that the allegation made against the department was that no departmental inspector was available, and that although honorary inspectors had been appointed to control net fishing at Nornalup among other localities, there had been no inspection at the two inlets concerned.

Mr. Watts: An inspector 150 miles away is employed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Unless the department can devise some ways and means of control, the local authority has a grievance. The Chief Inspector states that he will endeavour to secure the services of suitable persons to act as honorary inspectors and, further, that he himself will inspect the two inlets with a view to determining whether the continuance of the existing prohibition against net fishing is necessary. That represents the departmental case. My own objections are that, in respect to policy, we have to remember that, should the Bill be agreed to, other local authorities in other districts will be entitled to claim similar rights. I asked the Fisheries Department to supply me with a list of inlets that would be considered similar to the two affected by the Bill. The list sets out the following inlets and the road boards in whose districts they are located—

Inlets.	Road Districts.
Nornalup and Walpole ..	Manjimup
Wilson	Denmark
Torbay	Albany
Peel	Murray
Hardys	Augusta-Margaret
Wonnerup	Sussex
Leschenault	Bunbury

All the estuaries mentioned are within the areas of the local authorities named and I should say that, in the event of the Bill becoming law, those boards would apply to have the control of the respective inlets vested in them. Then again, if the local authorities had the right to issue regulations with regard to net fishing in the estuaries mentioned, those regulations would conflict with the Fisheries Department regulations governing fishing on the coast. The conflict would arise as to which regulation should be enforced and which should take precedence. To my mind, the departmental regulations would, without doubt, have to be observed.

Mr. Watts: We could overcome that difficulty.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The existence of the Fisheries Department is necessary. I regret that in the past the activities of the Department have not been extended in directions that I regard as essential in order that the interest of an important industry might be better conserved. Most Governments have regretted that the

fishing industry has not developed to a greater extent. Instead of breaking down the control that exists and hampering the activities of the department by splitting up the supervision among half a dozen controlling authorities, other steps should be taken. From the standpoint of policy, I cannot conceive that this House at the present juncture would agree to anything tending to break down the existing control. True, better control should be exercised and we have it on the authority of the Chief Inspector that an attempt will be made to achieve that objective. I should say that could be accomplished, as in the past, by the appointment of honorary inspectors to supervise inlets where net fishing takes place during winter months. I can quite appreciate that the local authorities in areas where fishing reserves are located, desire proper protection in their waters. This could be done by the appointment of local honorary inspectors where it was found impossible to supervise the inlets from the central office. Nevertheless the local authorities could assist in that respect. From the standpoint of policy, I cannot agree to a Bill that would delegate the powers outlined to one road board merely because for the time being it happened to have a recreation ground that included within its boundaries waters where fishing was indulged in. In view of all the circumstances, I should say it would be most inadvisable to break down the necessary central control that now exists. Presumably the Bill would not have been introduced had there not been grounds for the contention that there has been neglect on the part of the Fisheries Department. I cannot blame the department on that score because, with the limited funds available, the officials cannot police our fishing waters as they desire. If we were to grant the control and the powers sought by the Gnowangerup Road Board to enable it to issue regulations governing fishing in the two inlets affected, then other authorities would have an equal right to seek similar powers regarding inlets within their respective areas. In the circumstances, there would be untold confusion and an end to uniformity. Instead of the Fisheries Department controlling the industry along the coast, half a dozen conflicting authorities would be created, and instead of straightening out the matter, we would have confusion worse confounded. There would be no uniformity, and, in effect, no general policy governing

fishing in Western Australian waters. I certainly must oppose the second reading of the Bill. The legal objections raised by the Crown Law Department appear to be well founded. We are doubtful about the authority we, as a State, have over the coastal waters and if powers are delegated that are ultra vires, the local authorities will not be able to exercise the control that they desire.

Although it is not permissible at this stage to discuss the other Act, the amendment of which the hon. member desires to effect, it can be stated that here again powers are sought for the local authorities merely in respect of regulations. If that were agreed to, it would mean that the control of fishing in the inlets would depend on regulations issued by the local authority. I do not know that I have ever taken as strong exception to legislation by regulation as some other members have, but if it is undesirable in respect of Governments, surely it is more undesirable to delegate to local authorities the power to make regulations, which, so far, has been vested only in the Crown. More particularly is that so when we consider the competitive aspects. Most decidedly the Fisheries Department will not cease to function and with the local authorities operating at the same time, there will be endless confusion, duplication, and uncertainty, than which nothing could be worse as affecting the control of fishing along our coast line. For those reasons I oppose the second reading, because the Bill would have the effect of giving the road board power to make regulations which at present are made under the Fisheries Act, and are controlled by a Government department with expert officers. In the circumstances, it would be unwise to take away from the Fisheries Department the control that it now has and confer it upon the local authority, even though the control has not been entirely satisfactory in the past. The way out of the difficulty is for the department to exercise better control. Even if sufficient funds are not available for an increase in the staff of the Fisheries Department, the work could be done better by the Fisheries Department with the aid of honorary inspectors. I hope that will overcome the difficulty which has prompted the introduction of the Bill. The method is certainly better than that proposed by the Bill.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.7 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 27th October, 1938.

	PAGE
Motion: Workers' Compensation Act, to disallow regulation	1654
Bills: Supply (No. 2), £1,200,000, 3R., passed	1655
Mines Regulation Act Amendment, 2R.	1657
Workers' Compensation Act Amendment, 2R.	1657
Land Tax and Income Tax, 2R.	1662
Sailors and Soldiers' Scholarship Fund, 2R., Com. report	1663
Basil Murray Co-operative Memorial Scholarship Fund, 2R., Com. report	1663
Auctioneers Act Amendment, 2R., Com. report	1664

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

MOTION—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

To Disallow Regulation.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.34]: I move—

That Regulation No. 19, made under the Workers' Compensation Act, 1912-1934, as published in the "Government Gazette" on the 30th September, 1938, and laid on the Table of the House on the 12th October, 1938, be and is hereby disallowed.

This regulation is one of a series that was tabled on the 12th October. As a matter of fact, there were 20 regulations, but the others were quite in order. The regulation to which exception is taken, however, imposes upon the employers a heavy burden that they should not be asked to bear. The trend of legislation and regulations of this description is towards the overburdening of the employers.

Paragraph (b) of Regulation 19 provides that upon the prosecution of an employer, it shall be no defence to the charge that the employer relied upon the insurer to make the payment. Paragraph (c) of the regulation provides that the weekly payments may be withheld where a progress certificate from a medical practitioner has expired, until such time as a further progress certificate is obtained. The new regulation will probably operate in an extremely harsh manner against employers. For example, even where an employer or an insurance company bona fide disputed his or its liability to pay weekly compensation, the employer would apparently be liable to prosecution under the regulation if it were ultimately held that the payment should have been made.