

remarked upon the ridiculous situation that occurs at times, and I hope the authorities will devise some means of rectifying that state of affairs. I support the measure.

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

House adjourned at 10.5 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 31st October, 1939.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

Metropolitan Milk Act Amendment.

Toodyay Cemeteries.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Introduced by the Minister for Works and read a first time.

BILLS (2)—REPORT.

1, Dairy Industry Act Amendment.

2, Dentists.

Adopted.

BILL—DRIED FRUITS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [4.36] in moving the second reading said: The Dried Fruits Act was introduced in 1926 as a result of the urgent and repeated requests of the growers of dried fruits, and more particularly of those fruits that were affected by export conditions. The Act made provision for a board to be appointed until 1930. Since then amendments have from time to time been submitted to Parliament with a view to continuing the operations of the Act, and the Bill provides for the Act to remain in force until March, 1940. The legislation is believed to have given considerable benefit to the industry, and although it has not meant an increase in the maximum price paid by consumers, a considerable levelling of the prices received by the producers has resulted. In the days before control was exercised some producers did very well but others did not do well at all. The operation of the Act has led to an improvement in the quality of the product both for home consumption and for export. Every grower obtains practically the same price for his fruit and is required to fix a percentage of his tonnage to share equally in losses incurred in overseas trade.

Mr. Thorn: They receive the same price according to grade.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: According to grade, and as to whether the fruit is for export or local consumption. The beneficial results of the legislation make its continuance desirable. Hon. members will observe that the proposal is to continue the Act for a period of three years.

The increase in production of the various classes of dried fruit since the inception of the Act is worthy of note. In 1927 the total tonnage of dried fruits produced was 1,576 tons. That output has increased year by year until in 1939 the figure was 3,908 tons. The total production of currants, most of which were for export, increased by over 2,000 tons. I made an inquiry to-

day as to the values of dried fruits consumed locally and exported. The figures given by the Government Statistician show that in 1927-28 the price of currants for export was 5.4d. per lb., compared with 4.2d. per lb. to-day. The price of raisins, sultanas and lexias was 5.4d. in 1927-28 and 4.4d. in 1938-39.

Mr. Thorn: That is, f.o.b.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. The retail price of currants in 1927-28 was 8d. per lb., and in 1938-39 it was 8¾d.; while for raisins, the price was 8d. in the former year and 9d. in the latter. The prices suggest that the measure has been satisfactory and of benefit to the growers. Generally speaking, the Act has justified itself. Similar legislation is in existence in all the other States of Australia. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2.)

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 26th October.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [4.42]: This Bill proposes to amend the Traffic Act to provide that motor traffic fees that at present are being distributed amongst metropolitan local governing bodies shall be taken into general revenue. According to the arrangement outlined by the Minister for Works, the Main Roads Act will be amended to enable him to make grants to the local authorities concerned from the Main Roads Trust Account equivalent in the aggregate to the proportion of motor license fees they would have received under the Traffic Act as it now stands, subject to the production of certificates that they had expended at least that amount on the construction, reconstruction, maintenance, or repair of roads in their districts during the year. In introducing the Bill the Minister indicated it is not intended to deprive local authorities of the aggregate distribution they

have hitherto enjoyed, and that, when they understood the position purporting to be conveyed by the measure, any misapprehension on their part would disappear. In other words, when they understood the Bill they would offer no opposition to it.

Whilst that may be so, the Minister must know that there has been a hurricane of opposition from most if not all the local authorities affected concerning the results that are likely to accrue if this legislation is passed. I have had telephone messages, interviews, letters, circulars, etc., from various bodies setting out their viewpoints, all of which suggest there is no justification for the measure, and that it is their considered opinion that very serious repercussions will occur to affect their ordinary activities.

The Premier interjected.

Mr. SHEARN: No doubt the Premier as well as the Minister for Works knows of the intensive campaign in opposition to this amendment of the Act. The local authorities maintain after carefully studying the Bill that, despite the statement of the Minister that there was nothing for them to fear as to the aggregate amount they would receive from the traffic fees, there is not sufficient evidence within the Bill itself to justify their acceptance of that bare statement. I know and no doubt other members know, that there is afoot a considerable amount of opposition from local governing bodies, supported, I understand, to some extent by others in the outer metropolitan area, who visualise that in future there may be some extension of the legislation to their own particular districts. Having, prior to the injunction of the Minister, read the report of the Grants Commission, particularly that portion having relation to the claimant States in general and Western Australia in particular, I concede that attention is drawn to this State and its position with respect to the traffic fees.

Whilst that is so I wonder whether the Grants Commission has been actuated more by the necessity for calling attention to the general principles of balancing the budget than of taking into account all the features that would possibly be associated with that attempt in relation to the activities of the Government concerning local governing bodies. For that reason it appears, as pointed out by the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan), that a case comparable

with the Eastern States can hardly be made out. As the hon. member said, so far as we can learn, most of the roads in the other States have been constructed, whereas in this State a great deal of local work by the municipalities and road boards, whether inside or outside the metropolitan area, yet remains to be done. It is questionable whether the Grants Commission can justify a comparison of the road conditions between Western Australia and the other States. This is one of the disadvantages from which Western Australia suffers. Whilst some adjustment is necessary, it is doubtful and problematical whether it is through this avenue that a start should be made at this juncture to adjust the financial position of Western Australia to a basis comparable with the other States. The proposal almost savours of an attempt to augment Government finance at the expense of the metropolitan local governing bodies and, perhaps at a later stage, of the whole of the local authorities of the State. For the moment I know, Mr. Speaker, you will direct my attention to the fact that we are dealing only with the matters outlined in the Bill. Other speakers have already drawn attention to the possibilities of the situation, and I have no doubt that those phases have had a material bearing on the opposition to the Bill. Unless the Minister is prepared, during the course of his reply to the debate, to deal to a much greater extent with various aspects of the measure, I do not think the local authorities can be blamed if they view the Bill with a great deal of suspicion. Nor yet can blame attach to them if they, as no doubt they do, foresee in its effects serious inroads, not only upon their accepted functions, but also upon their financial position. While I think—in fact, I consider it must be admitted—that the Government is charged, as the Minister indicated, with grave responsibilities of finance in respect of a number of important works in order to provide employment for some thousands who lack any permanent occupation, I must point out—and I consider it must be borne in mind—that the local authorities, too, have their responsibilities in that direction. The Minister will readily appreciate that in most instances, if indeed not in all, the local authorities have, as the Government does in its wider sphere of politics, embarked upon various works for a similar purpose. In doing so,

they necessarily have taken into account all sources of revenue available to them, and traffic fees represent one of those sources. To them, therefore, it is very important that there shall be no attempt at this stage seriously to hamper or restrict their resources in the form of the money they receive from this particular distribution. I believe that, although the Minister has pointed out that provision is to be made to recoup the local authorities to the extent of the aggregate amount, which will be taken out of the petrol tax, there is a measure of justification for the doubt that has been expressed as to whether, in view of the war in which the Commonwealth in common with other portions of the British Empire is now engaged, present day conditions will not have a material bearing on the immediate future. As a result of hostilities, it may well be that the petrol tax will, if not eliminated altogether, at least become a seriously diminishing item. In those circumstances, the Government would find the utmost difficulty in disbursing the aggregate amount to the local authorities that is now available to them from the distribution of the traffic fees.

The Minister for Works: If that should happen there will be no traffic fees.

Mr. SHEARN: That may be so, but the local authorities know what their position is in relation to those fees, whereas the situation regarding the petrol tax is a rather doubtful quantity. The local authorities do not appreciate how, in the light of the explanation furnished by the Minister, it is proposed to change the present conditions and yet provide the equivalent of that which is now distributed. If that is the position, they cannot see what good purpose is to be served in making the suggested change at this stage. The local authorities also point out that if a reduction were to follow, their financial position might be seriously prejudiced. Their purchases of material for the construction of various works would be hampered, and by that means the activities of the local governing authorities would be considerably limited. In turn, the effect would be to reduce the number of employees engaged on local governmental works. As I say, most, if not all, the local government authorities, are making a genuine attempt to maintain as many employees in constant work as they possibly

can. Some have gone so far as to endeavour to co-operate to the utmost with the Minister in the carrying out of certain works so that the unemployment problem may be as light as possible. Should that position be unfavourably affected, one unsatisfactory result will probably be the augmenting of the list of those dependent on the Government for sustenance and other forms of employment. Besides all this, in the final analysis, such a sequel could only have the outcome of forcing the various local governing authorities to review their rating position. I should say that in the metropolitan area—this is a contention advanced by the local authorities themselves—it would become necessary to increase the rates. While that would be made general in the districts concerned, it would, incidentally, cast another financial burden upon those who are already contributing to the cost of road construction in the various parts of the metropolitan area by way of traffic fees. That would become a form of sectional taxation forced upon local governing authorities in order to achieve some semblance of solvency in their revenue and expenditure. For my part, I wish it thoroughly to be understood that I realise the difficult task confronting the Premier in his capacity as Treasurer and that facing the Minister who is in control of a department covering so many differing functions and viewpoints. As a member of a local governing body, I realise that the Minister has in the past, and is still carrying out excellent work in helping the various local authorities in the works they undertake. The fact remains that the local authorities have to view the position not as they find it to-day, but in the light of future needs. The local authorities are not prepared to accept the mere statement of the Minister, and leave to a very uncertain future the question whether they will receive, as a result of the proposed altered arrangement, an amount equivalent to that which they now enjoy. If the Premier and the Minister are not already aware of the fact, I can tell them—other members may also inform them at a later stage—that the local government bodies' association and others interested in the metropolitan area, and perhaps further afield, will endeavour to interview them within the next 24 hours or so, with the idea of eliciting far more in-

formation than has been conveyed so far by the Minister, and of securing an explanation, with a greater degree of clarification than was indicated by the Minister in his second reading speech. Unless they can be satisfied on many points they intend to raise, their intention is not to agree to the Bill. They will do all in their power, realising their responsibilities to the community in the metropolitan area, and also their duty to see that the commitments the various local governing authorities have already undertaken are duly met, to place the various points clearly before the Minister and the Premier.

Without going into a lot of detail, which by the way I have with me, I suggest quite respectfully that, as I have indicated on previous occasions, members sitting on these cross benches and on the Opposition benches are ready and willing to support the Government in all legitimate attempts to carry on in these difficult times; but we feel we have an equal responsibility to the community and therefore the Minister might be well advised to allow this debate to be further adjourned, so that he may have before him the points raised at the conference before a vote is taken on the second reading. We members, as I say, are earnest in our desire to be of assistance to the Government; we are not obstructionists, but we have, I repeat, responsibilities to our respective electorates. If the Minister, in his reply, can furnish additional information showing that there is nothing in the contentions raised by the various metropolitan local governing bodies, then I and other members will readily support the second reading; but in the absence of that information, I at all events have no alternative but to oppose the second reading.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [5.2]: I find it necessary to speak to the second reading, because the local governing bodies desire someone to put their case forward. We represent ratepayers as well as taxpayers and it appears to me that the position of local governing bodies should be made plain. I have received a communication from the Peppermint Grove Road Board which I think well worth reading to the House, as it gives the views of an orthodox, conservative body. There is no body in this State more conservative than is the Peppermint Grove Road Board; and when that board decides to notify

the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin), and myself that its views are in direct conflict with the Bill, I think it time to place those views before the Chamber. I cannot help saying, in passing, that a very piquant situation has been raised by the Bill, because the Premier and his Ministers are trying to carry through a policy to reduce the gap between expenditure and income. In this they have behind them a great number of people; but those people definitely oppose this measure and take the side of the local authorities. This is the communication I have received from the Peppermint Grove Road Board:—

The board regards the proposal as most unjust, and its disadvantages, not only to local authorities, are no doubt manifest to you. For instance, under it, the amount spent on roads in the State as a whole will be reduced by approximately £130,000 a year. This sum spent on roads would directly and indirectly provide work for not less than 500 men. Are these to join the unemployed? Further, should the Federal Road Grant be discontinued, metropolitan local authorities will be saddled in effect with the impossible task of financing interest and sinking fund on loans of nearly 3¼ millions, which it is claimed the Government spent on roads and bridges somewhere at sometime.

In his speech, the Minister stated, "It was never intended that traffic fees should go to relieve ordinary loan rates." This implies that traffic fees are used to discharge loan commitments. This, to the best of our belief, has never been done in road districts, as the Road Districts Act specifically rules that loan rates, sufficient to cover interest and repayment on all loans, must be levied annually for the term of the loans. A few minutes' study of the latest recorded statistical returns show that loan commitments are discharged from loan rates. Another construction which can be placed upon the Minister's statement, is that in place of receiving traffic fees, metropolitan authorities should carry out their work with loans, leaving their repayment to a grateful posterity. The State Government is in a desperate financial position to-day because of this policy, which was carried out by past Governments without regard to the ability of posterity to pay. In any case, it is considered the Minister should clarify his statement.

That confirms the remark by the member for Maylands (Mr. Shearn), that the local governing bodies require further particulars in order to make sure that they will not lose money. No doubt the situation is a very mixed one, because this is the voice of orthodoxy speaking. As I said, there is no other body more orthodox than is the Pep-

permint Grove Road Board. If that board opposes a Government measure of this kind, which of course is designed to increase State revenue, it is the beginning of a dangerous time ahead.

The Minister for Mines: It would not matter if the Peppermint Grove Road Board were closed down, if one takes into account its actions.

Mr. NORTH: I am not speaking of its actions, but of its ideas and views. I know the members of the board are a select centre of the commercial world. They are behind all sound propositions. I am feeling a little exercised in my mind at this board's opposition to the Bill, because it shows that the friends of orthodoxy are beginning to fall out.

On motion by Hon. W. D. Johnson, debate adjourned.

BILL—MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 24th October.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [5.7]: As I view this Bill, it calls for only the briefest comment. It is a logical sequel, as members will understand, to the Traffic Act Amendment Bill which is now before the House. For obvious reasons, it therefore follows that one finds it rather difficult to define one's attitude to the Bill until such time as members know precisely where they stand with reference to the preceding Bill. If the Traffic Bill passes, obviously this Bill should pass also; but if the Traffic Bill should fall by the wayside, then this one might just as well be allowed to lapse, because—except in the very small direction where it refers to financing matters of transport—it will not be required. In my opinion, therefore, consideration of this Bill should be postponed until its predecessor has been disposed of. The purpose of this Bill is to establish machinery—

The Minister for Mines: What do you mean by "disposed of"? Buried?

Mr. DONEY: That is not a particularly sensible interjection. A Bill may be disposed of in this Chamber by either one of two ways. We can either pass it as it stands or send it in unaltered or in a mutilated form, to another place; or we can throw it out here. I was saying that the purpose

of this Bill is to establish machinery whereby the Main Roads Board may be enabled from its funds—which of course will be secured from the Federal Aid Roads Grant and be put into the Main Roads Trust Account—to meet the expenditure previously met in the metropolitan area from traffic fees. I quite agree that some such machinery is necessary in the event of the other Bill passing. Personally, I do not think it will. Ample evidence has been put forward during the debate to show that those particularly concerned—I refer to the local governing bodies in the metropolitan area—certainly do not want the measure. I believe that not a single local governing body either in or outside the metropolitan area is anxious for this Bill to pass. On the weight of evidence that has been plainly established. If the Bill does pass it will be contrary to expressed public opinion.

The Minister for Mines: Are you suggesting that the road boards represent public opinion?

Mr. DONEY: Members of road boards are elected for a certain purpose and naturally represent the views of those who elect them. If, therefore, road board members vote in a particular direction, that must be regarded as the viewpoint of ratepayers generally. As I have said, there is no point in further debating the Bill, because at this stage it seems to me to be wholly immaterial whether or not we agree to the second reading.

On motion by Mr. J. Hegney, debate adjourned.

BILL—LOTTERIES (CONTROL) ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

BILL—RIGHTS IN WATER AND IRRIGATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council with amendments.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 26th October.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [5.14]: I do not propose to discuss this Bill at length. Everybody appreciates the importance of

the Land Act and these amendments have been found to be necessary by the Minister and his officers. The Bill is one that clearly should be dealt with in Committee. I have given careful consideration to the amendments and am satisfied that in all probability they will make for the smoother working of the Act. There is nothing in the amendments which I can see that will do injury to those already holding land under the Act or to those who may desire to make application for land in the future.

I regret that the Minister has not thought fit to take some power to sell freehold land in the North. From time to time applications have been made for Crown land in somewhat large areas; I mean not land set aside for town or suburban areas but land which might be used for development purposes. Such land cannot be sold without parliamentary authority, but we should be able to dispose of it, as we can in the south-western portion of the State, under conditional purchase conditions or for cash. I would have liked the Minister to take some power along those lines. If at any time there is justification for Parliament's delegating its powers to the Minister to sell such land, he must bring down a special measure. From time to time we are approached by people who believe that a considerable amount of money is available in the Old Country for the development of the north-western and northern parts of the State. The House will remember a recent proposition to establish a settlement of Jewish refugees in the North, and that could not be undertaken unless those people were given some title to the land. So far, of course, we have not the power to give any title, but such power might well have been included in this measure, leaving it to the Minister to decide whether he was justified in disposing of the land on a freehold basis.

The Minister for Lands: Have there been many such instances?

HON. C. G. LATHAM: I can remember quite a number of proposals. There was a proposal to ask for 2,000,000 acres to be developed by money brought from overseas. I admit that as regards the mineral rights, the freehold is not required. If a freehold title was granted, the holder would have the right to only 200 ft. of the earth and all minerals below that would be reserved to the Crown, for which titles would have to be issued

under another Act of Parliament. I am anxious to see whether there is any possibility of developing our North. Year after year the population declines. I admit that just before the last election the population of the North-West increased, a rather remarkable fact. Probably the heavy storms experienced there were largely responsible, because quite a number of men had to be sent there to do repair work.

The Minister for Lands: Mining was responsible for most of it.

Hon. C. G. LATHEAM: No. Mining in the North-West has been fairly stationary during the last three or four years, and in the North there is very little development, although I believe there is a great future before the North. I have taken the trouble to ascertain the facts about mining development in that part of the State. I was hoping that some industry apart from mining could be undertaken in the North. I know that many people believe we can produce anything along the coast of Western Australia, but I am afraid that belief is not justified. The rainfall on the western coast of the continent is totally different from that on the eastern coast. It is more general on the eastern coast than on the western coast; here it falls only during a few months of the year. At any rate, if people are anxious to secure land and can justify their proposals to the Minister, there should be no difficulty in the way of disposing of the land so that we may see what can be done.

The urgent need of the North is population. I know the Government realises that fact just as well as I do. Pearlring, which was a prosperous industry, is suffering from marketing difficulties, and apart from cattle production, there is very little development in the North. I am firmly of opinion that many of the pastoral leases running cattle could be producing a large quantity of wool. The development that has taken place amongst the flocks has been important. Not only has the number of sheep increased, but the production of wool per head has improved considerably. Therefore we should give encouragement to people to go on the land.

The amendments embodied in the Bill are somewhat difficult to follow. On this occasion the departmental officials appear to have gone to no end of trouble to deal with every aspect relating to the granting of pastoral leases in the North. I do not propose to

offer any objection to the Bill. I hope that other members have read the amendments and understand what they mean. To me the Bill is probably more simple than to other members because of the time I spent in the department. I agree with the Minister that some of the amendments are to restore provisions that were previously removed from the Act, but they were removed on the advice of the departmental officers. Evidently their removal proved to be a mistake and it is now necessary to restore them. I always found that the great difficulty was to reconcile the views of the Lands Department with those of the Titles Office, and some attempt is now being made to clarify the positions of the two departments. I hope this will lead to smoother working between them. With the Titles Office under the Minister for Justice and the Lands Department under the Minister for Lands, it is not so easy to work them as if they were under one Minister. I know that a special effort is being made under this Bill to clarify the position, and on those grounds I propose to support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Amendment of Section 53:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: My attention has been directed to the word "beneficial" in paragraph (i) of the proposed new Subsection (2). This was inserted in the draft because it was thought by the Solicitor General to be all-embracing, but the inclusion of the word might defeat the object of the provision, which is to prevent dummying. One person might take up land in another person's name and, if the word "beneficial" is retained, the transaction might be considered legitimate. I move an amendment—

That in line 5 of paragraph (i) of the proposed new Subsection (2) the word "beneficial" be struck out.

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

Clauses 8 to 14—agreed to.

Clause 15—New sections:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: By the proposed new Section 109A (4), where it is proposed to resume and withdraw any land from a pastoral lease, a description shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament at least 30 days before such resumption and withdrawal are effected. If application was made just after Parliament went into recess, the Minister could take no action until after the Address-in-reply had been disposed of in the following session, a delay of probably nine months. I hope the Minister has considered that point. A person might be anxious to use the land and nine months would be a long time for him to wait.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The provisions of Section 109A refer to resumptions by the Crown. The proposed new Section 109B deals with applications from persons for the resumption of an area from a pastoral lease, and in that case the wording is different.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I still think it is too long.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 16 to 20, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 26th October.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [5.31]: I do not know whether I fully understand some of the proposals of the Bill.

Mr. Marshall: I will tell you if you don't.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WATTS: If I do not, in all probability the Minister will, when replying, be good enough to explain them. I notice that when the hon. gentleman brought down a similar measure in 1937 he said it was necessary to delete, among others, hairdressers from the Fourth Schedule to the Act, because the provisions of Sections 107 and 109 applied to hairdressers, and that was quite sufficient. At a distance of rather less than two years we find he now wants to put hairdressers back under a different portion of the Act.

The Minister for Labour: But not into the Fourth Schedule.

Mr. WATTS: The Minister gives as a reason that as the Act stands it is permissible for hairdressers to sell goods at times when for tobacconists it would be illegal to do so. I have explored the Factories and Shops Act thoroughly in this direction, and have found little if any justification for that observation, except in regard to public holidays, on which hairdressers may remain open until 11 a.m. and tobacconists' shops have to be closed. Otherwise there is considerable resemblance between the times at which tobacconists and hairdressing establishments may be open. Tobacconists, I notice, are allowed to keep open on ordinary days of the week until 8 p.m., whereas hairdressers have to close at 6 p.m. Except for the fact that on certain public holidays hairdressers may keep open till 11 a.m., I fail to see the necessity for amending the Act on lines somewhat similar to the position obtaining formerly. It seems to me that though the different closing times on holidays are in the Minister's mind, it is unnecessary to bother about them. If a shop is permitted to be open for hairdressing purposes when other shops are closed, there should be no reasonable objection to customers' requirements being met during the limited hours hairdressers' shops may be open on holidays. I also consider it somewhat unnecessary to go back practically to where we were.

As regards other portions of the Bill, there is a provision that any time worked in excess of $8\frac{3}{4}$ hours in any one day shall be deemed overtime and shall be paid for at the rate of time and a half for the first two hours and thereafter at double time. Generally I do not think there will be objection to the proposal appearing in the Bill, but it has been represented to me that it may have some considerable effect on shopkeepers in those places where shops are permitted to remain open on one evening in the week—as for example Friday evening. I take the example of country stores, which open at 20 minutes to nine in the morning and close at six o'clock in the evening on every day except Friday. Thus eight hours and 20 minutes are worked between 20 minutes to 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. and therefore there is only 20 minutes additional time that must be worked on the late shopping night in circumstances which are perfectly legal in the places I have in view.

The Minister for Labour: The provision deals only with factory employees.

Mr. WATTS: Is that so?

The Minister for Labour: Yes.

Mr. WATTS: Then of course the argument falls down, I admit. It was suggested to me that the provision was to apply to shops, as to which I am not at all clear, having been given to understand that it would have some considerable effect on those commercial houses. The provision to alter the holiday system I regard as reasonable. The Minister's arguments in that regard are, to my thinking, entirely satisfactory; and I personally am glad that he has seen fit to make provision of this nature so that holidays may be taken on days other than the prescribed dates in cases where factories are concerned in industries which have to be carried on, it might be said, at all times of the year.

The next item I wish to refer to is that which prescribes payment of the basic wage in regard to all factories and shops. At present—and I take for example Katanning—I understand that the minimum wage for an adult male is £3 15s. under the agreement that appears to be operating there. I have that information from Richardson & Co., Ltd.—I name the firm because it has been good enough to write to me on the subject—and I am assured that the minimum wage, as far as the company is concerned, is £2 15s. That is, of course, lower than the basic wage for the South-Western Land Division excluding the metropolitan area, and is considerably lower than the minimum wage in the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Labour: The old vineyard and orchard award is being used in those districts.

Mr. WATTS: I am obliged, in the circumstances, to put the matter up to the Minister as it has been put up to me, so that the hon. gentleman may rectify the position or clear it up, as he can. If the position is as suggested, this strikes me as an inopportune time to impose on the employers a demand for some higher amount. Our greatest difficulty at the moment is that employers are about to be faced with increased costs in respect of a great number of articles. If the costs are not to be kept down, I fail to see the advantage of passing legislation for the restriction of profiteering, because we are taking away with one hand what we are prepared to give with the other. If the Minister can answer the objection I have raised, I shall offer no

opposition to the clause in question. Otherwise I shall be obliged to say that I do not like it.

I am at a loss to know why Section 61 of the Act is to be amended in the way proposed. At present, it appears, the Chief Inspector can stipulate in respect of each particular place of business the lighting that he considers is required for the premises. In those circumstances he can have regard to the particular position or condition of the premises he inspects, and within reason make quite certain that efficient lighting and suitable conditions are provided for the workers. The proposal of the Bill is to make regulations, which, I presume, as regulations generally must be, will be on a flat rate. That is to say, the same regulation will apply to all premises, whether they be substantial ones of brick, or poor ones occupied by some small business. Such regulations will naturally have to come before Parliament; but I do think it would be much better if the power were left as it is at present, in the Chief Inspector's hands, to deal with each individual case. No one, I think—least of all myself—wishes to see the worker obliged to work in premises that are thoroughly unsatisfactory; but surely we must acknowledge that there are employers and manufacturers who are unable to supply premises as convenient and as suitable as others supply, without considerably restricting their opportunities financially of carrying on their operations. I consider that the existing provisions of Section 61 regarding this aspect are quite satisfactory. I fail to see why any amendment prescribing regulations to be gazetted for the purpose is required to alter a position which is highly satisfactory if the inspectors carry out their duties in a reasonable manner, as naturally I presume they will. So far as the proposed amendment is concerned, I intend when the Bill is in Committee to oppose it. Other than that, and while seeking the information I have requested from the Minister I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 4:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (b) be struck out.

I see that the Minister wishes to say something.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Paragraph (b) proposes to extend the definition of "Shop" to include any place or business in which the business of a hairdresser is carried on. But the clause contains more than the aspect to which the member for Kataning made reference. It is necessary that hairdressing saloons be brought within the definition of "Shop" as to trading hours, as to what may be sold from the saloon. It also needs bringing within that definition for the purpose of the minimum rates which the Act provides.

Mr. Watts: I thought so, but you did not tell us so.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: In a second-reading speech one does not go fully into every clause. If one did that, such speeches would become altogether too long. There is another important reason why hairdressing saloons should come within the definition of "shop." That reason is clear, and will be recognised by the Committee. I hope the mover will see fit to withdraw the amendment.

Hon. N. KEENAN: In many instances it would be impossible to carry on a hairdressing saloon except in a small shop, being the front part of premises, and unless the hairdresser himself, between shaves and haircuts, attends to customers, or some member of his family does so. The clause will mean the shutting down of those shops. It is correct to say that those premises effect sales when the larger shops are closed. Is it wise to put everything in the hands of those whom we might call the big people, or are we to allow some measure of latitude to the small people? I do not know how the country places will be affected, but I am certain that in a suburb like Nedlands which has a substantial population, it will not be possible to carry on unless the small shop is attached to the premises. The Bill will mean their death warrant. I hope the Minister will give the matter further consideration. Perhaps the difficulty could be overcome by an amendment that would exempt the class of shop to which I have referred, the small suburban shop which exists by reason of the combined efforts of the hairdressing saloon and the shop itself.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I am not quite able to see the point the hon. member raised. The hours at which hairdressers' shops shall open and close are already set out in the Act.

Hon. N. Keenan: That is so, for the hairdressing part of the shop.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The clause will not affect the existing position in any shape or form.

Hon. N. Keenan: But it will affect the shop.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The position will be no different after the Bill has passed. All that the amendment provides for is that the definition of the workshop shall include any building in which the business of a hairdresser is carried on; that is because at the present time the definition of "shop" in the Act does not bring the hairdressing saloon within the term. The amendment will include in a legal sense the hairdressing saloon, and shops will be places where that business is carried on.

Mr. WATTS: I do not propose to withdraw the amendment. The member for Nedlands has given us a reason why hairdressing shops should not be interfered with, and I have already reminded the Committee that less than two years ago the Minister himself proposed that they should be taken out of the Fourth Schedule of the Act. It is provided that the tobacconists' shops should close at 8 o'clock and the hairdressing saloons at 6 o'clock. It would be much more satisfactory if we regulated them all on the same basis. The only difference of any importance in the hours of closing is, as I have already said, that on a public holiday a hairdressing saloon may remain open for a time in the morning. Why is it necessary to link with hairdressing establishments? What has arisen to make it necessary to bring saloons within the definition of shop? Is it the Minister's desire to bring them under the basic wage provisions?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: We took the hairdressing saloons out of the Fourth Schedule in 1937, and placed them outside the definition of the term "shop." The amendment in the Bill proposes to bring the saloons back within the definition of shop, so that legally they may be regarded as being shops for the purposes of the Factories and Shops Act. Members will agree that hairdressing saloons should be brought within the definition of "shop."

We would be setting up a dangerous situation if we allowed the present position to continue when saloons are not legally within the definition of "shop." The object of the amendment is to bring the saloons inside the definition, so that they may be controlled by the appropriate provisions in the Act. If the saloons are not included within the definition, the position might develop that those who occupy the particular premises will take up the stand that they are not occupying "shops," and that the provisions of the Factories and Shops Act do not apply to them. Thus a position would develop that would be undesirable and might have unfortunate consequences in many directions.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The Minister made it clear that the object of the amendment in the Bill was to bring the small shops within the hours of the shops licensed to sell tobacco. What particular advantage has the amendment? As I have already said, a number of small shops could not exist but for the trading in what might be termed almost the closed hours. It is that little trade that keeps them going. There has been no complaint about the small shops; at any rate, I have not heard of any, and I doubt whether any other member has. The clause will mean the crowding of everything into the big shops and the big hands.

Mr. SEWARD: I intend to support the amendment moved by the member for Kattanning. In country towns particularly, it is quite a frequent sight to see farmers on a holiday patronising the hairdressing premises, and while there, purchasing their requirements. If the clause is carried as it stands, it will mean that they will have to transfer their purchases from the tobacco shop to the nearest hotel.

The Minister for Labour: The trading hours will be the same as they are now.

Mr. SEWARD: A farmer coming in to a town to attend a holiday sports meeting will probably have his hair cut and purchase what he needs in the way of tobacco or cigarettes. The clause will merely drive the trade from one place to another.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The acceptance of this amendment to the Act will not in any way affect the existing trading hours of hairdressing saloons. If the member for Pingelly will read Section 108 of the Act he will see there the hours during which hairdressing saloons are per-

mitted to remain open. All that is proposed is legally to bring hairdressing saloons within the definition of the term "shop."

Mr. WATTS: The information given by the Minister is not that which was given by him when he made his second reading speech. He prefaced his observations by telling us that hairdressers were entitled to sell goods during hours illegal for tobacconists and that was the reason for the introduction of the measure. Now he says it will not make any difference to the trading hours. If that is so, it appears to me that the saloons will still be permitted to do those things that the member for Nedlands and the member for Pingelly say they will not be able to do. I find myself completely mystified as to the intention of the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I am not surprised at the member for Kattanning being completely mystified and I sympathise with him in having mystified himself with regard to something that is absolutely clear. As I said when dealing with this particular clause during my second reading speech, the intention is to prevent hairdressing saloons from selling goods during hours when those goods should not be sold in such saloons. If a saloon does not come within the definition of the term "shop" there is, legally speaking, no limit to the trading hours. Consequently, it is necessary to bring saloons within the definition of the term "shop" in order to limit them to the trading hours now established in the Act.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 39:

Mr. WATTS: I know that the provisions of Subclause (2) are already in the principal Act, but I should be obliged if the Minister would tell us in what circumstances it becomes impracticable for a person employed in a factory to work on any day as the result of the provisions of any industrial award agreement.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I can see that the member for Kattanning has now set himself out to ask awkward questions. The reply to this question is that certain groups of employees in factories or workshops may be covered by an award or

industrial agreement—engineers, fitters and vital tradesmen of that description—under the terms of which they would be entitled to receive a holiday. If that holiday were granted on that day, it might be impossible for the machinery in the factory to be kept at work. Consequently it would become impracticable for the factory occupier or owner to work the other employees. Those other employees are accordingly to be granted a holiday.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Amendment of Section 61.

Mr. WATTS: Paragraph (d) of Sub-section (1) of this section provides that "a factory or any portion thereof shall contain such amount of window or light area for each work room as an inspector shall in each case determine: Provided that such window or light area shall not be less in proportion than one-tenth of the floor area." Although regulations are subject to disallowance if they are unsatisfactory, it would be better that an inspector should be left to deal with the requirements of each factory.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Under the existing legislation every factory has to be provided with a natural light area of not less than one-tenth of the floor area. That has not always been found practicable. Modern developments have made that provision to be quite unnecessary in the later types of factory. To compel owners or occupiers of modern factories to supply natural lighting in accordance with the present Act is to call upon them to do something unnecessary. Lighting in modern factories gives much more light than is really required. The amendment was introduced to provide that each factory could be treated on its merits.

Mr. WATTS: I do not object to the existing law being amended. I know there are factories that work all night, and the quantity of window or light area stipulated would be useless; but I am afraid the Minister has misunderstood my objection, which was that the requirement as to lighting should be determined not by regulation but by the inspector. The Minister has said enough to support my contention, inasmuch as he pointed out that different

factories would require a different lighting area. I find it hard to imagine a regulation that could deal with varied types of factories and the varied methods of work that are to be found in a city such as this. If the Minister were prepared to alter the clause to leave the decision in the hands of the inspector, my difficulty would be solved.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 7 and 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Amendment of Section 138:

Mr. WATTS: Will the Minister deal with the point I raised on the second reading in regard to the payment of an amount less than the prescribed basic wage for the South-West land division under an agreement which I understand is in existence in that district? If so, my objection to this proposal can in all probability be withdrawn. In the meantime, I suggest that the present is not an opportune time forcibly to impose increased expenditure on employers. The Act at present provides that the minimum rate prescribed by an award or agreement must be paid.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The member for Katanning said he had been informed by a storekeeper at Katanning that an industrial agreement was operating in that centre whereby a minimum wage of £3 15s. a week was paid to adult male shop assistants. I am practically certain no such agreement is operating in the district. Some 18 months ago I inquired of the State secretary of the Shop Assistants' Union concerning the lowest minimum wage that any of his agreements provided for in the case of adult male shop assistants. At that time the only agreement the union had which provided less than the basic wage for adult male shop assistants was operating at Harvey. The union took action shortly afterwards and had that agreement cancelled. I think the hon. member will find that no industrial agreement operates at Katanning between the shopkeepers and the shop assistants. He will find that shop assistants are paid £3 15s. a week because of the fact that there is an agreement legally existing, providing for a minimum wage of £3 14s. 8d. per week for adult males. That is the agreement I mentioned in my second-reading speech. When

it operated it covered workers in vineyards and orchards within a certain radius of the General Post Office. Although that agreement no longer operates in fact, it still exists in a legal sense, with the result that any shopkeeper or factory owner or occupier anywhere in the State, where no agreement or award is operating, is entitled to pay his adult male workers as low a wage as £3 14s. 8d. I feel certain the shopkeeper concerned at Katanning is paying his adult male shop assistants £3 15s. a week under the provisions of that agreement, which really has no relationship to shop assistants and never applied to them when the agreement was operating with regard to orchard and vineyard workers. It is because that particular agreement is being used by a comparatively small number of shopkeepers and factory occupiers and owners that this clause has been introduced. The clause will set it beyond doubt that the lowest minimum wage to be paid to any adult worker coming under the provisions of the Factories and Shops Act shall be at least the basic wage as declared for adult males from time to time by the Arbitration Court. Even if there be an industrial agreement binding shopkeepers and shop assistants in the Katanning district, providing for a weekly wage of only £3 15s. for adult males, that is no reason why the position should not be rectified. We are not asking Parliament too much when we request it to declare that no adult shop assistant or factory worker, shall be paid less than the basic wage. Whilst I am not able to declare beyond any possible doubt that there is no such agreement as mentioned by the hon. member, I am practically sure that no such agreement is operating. Shopkeepers in Katanning are paying to adult male shop assistants £3 15s. a week because there is in existence legally an industrial agreement providing for a minimum wage for adult males of £3 14s. 8d.

Mr. WATTS: The letter I have says that under the present Act the minimum wage for adult males in Katanning is £3 15s. a week. I know that the Act provides that the minimum wage shall be the lowest minimum wage payable under any industrial award or agreement. I regret that the letter did not arrive until 4 o'clock today. Although I endeavoured to communicate with the party by telephone, I was unsuccessful. For the time being I propose to withdraw my objections;

these will be taken up in another place if necessary.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 10, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 24th October.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [7.40]: This Bill, I think, has been completely explained by the Minister for Justice. All I can say is that it intends to make lawful under the Transfer of Land Act that which the Government decreed should take place a year or so ago. I notice that the public will have two hours more of access to the Titles Office on five days a week than they have had hitherto on six days a week. I have no objection to the measure. I understand from an officer of the Land Titles Office that on Saturday mornings at no time has there been a great pressure of work. There has been only a skeleton staff working on Saturday morning, and there has been very little demand upon its services. From this it may be gathered that the public at large is not dissatisfied with the closing of the office on Saturday morning, and will have ample time during the week to attend to its affairs at that office. I have not been able to find any real reason why a skeleton staff should be employed at the office, and cannot see in the Act anything to indicate that there is a pressing necessity for officers of the department to be in attendance on six days a week. I think we can safely pass the second reading of the Bill.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [7.42]: I have not much to add to the remarks of the member for Katanning (Mr. Watts). For many years I have been in fairly constant contact with the office concerned, and can support the remarks of the hon. member. In the main the services of that office are used by those who invariably find that their transactions involve other departments, which now close on Saturday morning. In consequence, they use the office on week-days rather than on Saturday mornings, seeing that such a procedure does much to facili-

tate the conduct of their business. In my view the Supreme Court offices might well follow suit. I feel sure, as the Minister pointed out, that the facilities now proposed to be given for an extra period of search will be a valuable consideration to those who use the office. I agree with the member for Katanning that no section of the public would make use of Saturday morning to visit the office if that could be avoided. It is a short morning and does not provide very much opportunity for work being done in instances where business has also to be conducted with other departments of Government. This Bill is only complementary to legislation we have already passed dealing with other Government departments, and can readily be supported.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 12th October.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [7.45]: As the Minister pointed out when he moved the second reading of the Bill, the measure is short and is divided into two parts. The first portion seeks to amend Section 58 of the principal Act, and the second confers upon the Commissioner of Railways the right to control lights in the vicinity of the railways. Section 58 gives the Commissioner power, with the approval of the Minister, to lease railway land, not required for departmental purposes, for a period of seven years. The Bill contains a provision to enable the Commissioner to grant leases for 21 years, instead of for seven years as formerly. The obvious answer to that proposal is that if the Commissioner of Railways holds lands not required for departmental purposes, he should be allowed to sell those areas.

The Premier: No.

Mr. Sampson: He cannot sell railway property.

Mr. SEWARD: If he cannot sell land, I cannot see why, if there is a demand for the leasing of such areas, provision should not be made to enable them to be disposed of.

The Premier: The Commissioner might want the land in 21 years' time.

Mr. SEWARD: Should that be the position, I think there is an objection from the standpoint of those who might desire to erect substantial buildings on railway land so leased. If such buildings are to be erected, apparently they will be associated with most lucrative businesses, seeing that the cost of those structures is to be repaid within 21 years. The land in question was made available to the department for the purpose of railway operations. If the department holds more land than it requires for its use, the proper course to follow is to sell that land.

The Premier: Should we sell all Government land that we have and are not using now?

Mr. SEWARD: Not necessarily.

The Premier: Why not, in view of your suggestion?

Mr. SEWARD: The reason why I make my suggestion is that if power is given to the Commissioner to lease parts of railway reserves for 21 years, the object in view is to establish businesses on such areas. Premises so situated will have a great advantage over other business premises in country towns. I have in mind the position at my home town, Pingelly. The railway line runs through that township. On one side of the line are the business premises, and on the other is the railway reserve. If the Commissioner were to lease parts of the railway reserve for the erection of business premises, the lessees of those properties would not be required to pay road board rates, and would thus be in a very advantageous position. The local governing authority would be correspondingly at a disadvantage. On one side of the line, the business premises would be rated; those on the other side of the line would not be rated. In the circumstances, the position of the respective business people would not be fair, and their trading conditions would be unjust.

The Premier: I do not think such business premises would be exempt from payment of rates.

Mr. SEWARD: If the Minister will give the House an assurance that no business premises erected on land leased from the Commissioner of Railways will be exempt from the payment of road board rates, he will remove much of my opposition.

Mr. Rodoreda: The road boards will give you that assurance.

Mr. SEWARD: Several instances have been dealt with in this House of buildings erected on railway reserves, the occupiers not being subject to road board or municipal rates.

The Premier: Those premises were occupied by employees of the department.

Mr. SEWARD: As I have pointed out, if the Premier will give me his assurance that local governing bodies will be able to collect rates from those conducting business in premises erected on property leased from the Commissioner of Railways, my objection will be largely overcome. The second part of the Bill, which deals with the control of lights, should meet with the approval of members generally. With the installation of Neon lights for advertising purposes, particularly those lights that are red and green, the use of which colours has always been regarded as the prerogative of the Commissioner of Railways, it will be conceded that confusion is likely to arise. In the circumstances it is logical that the Commissioner of Railways shall be relieved of any consequent embarrassment, and I am sure that this part of the Bill will receive the hearty support of the House. I have an amendment on the notice paper that deals with one phase in respect of which the House is asked to give the Commissioner a little more authority than is necessary. Apart from that aspect, I support the Bill. If the Minister will give me the assurance I have asked for regarding the rating of properties erected on land leased from the Commissioner of Railways, that, too, will remove much of my objection to the Bill.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [7.51]: I do not propose to raise any serious opposition to the Bill. At Manjimup the railway line runs down the middle of the main street. On one side are the business premises, and on the other side is the railway reserve. It is quite possible that the business people there at present will be at a great disadvantage if the Bill is agreed to and others

are able to erect business premises on land leased from the Commissioner. Those in occupation of business premises at Manjimup to-day had to pay big prices for their sites. If the Commissioner of Railways is to lease sites on railway property at nominal rentals, the position will become difficult.

The Premier: The department does not give away something for nothing.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If tenders were called for the leasing of the properties, it would be a different matter.

The Premier: The Railway Department would not charge nominal rentals.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) was correct regarding his references to railway cottages. The local authorities are not allowed to collect rates in respect of such premises. On the other hand, if buildings erected on land leased from the railways were used for business purposes, the local authority would be able to levy rates. For my part, I would prefer the Commissioner to have the right to sell railway land not required for departmental purposes. A period of 21 years is quite considerable, and if the department can do without land for that period, then I think the area should be alienated.

Mr. Withers: What is required at Manjimup is to shift the premises to the other side of the line.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I would not like to see the railway land at Manjimup leased for business purposes. The railway station and conveniences at Manjimup would be an absolute disgrace to Woop Woop, let alone to an important centre like Manjimup.

Mr. Withers: You have to leave the train on the wrong side of the town.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: That is so. When I mention Manjimup, I think I can appreciate the Minister's intention, which is to raise more revenue. As I say, I would prefer railway property that is not required to be sold.

The Premier: Why dispose of the assets of the public?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Premier needs revenue, and that would assist him. I approve of the proposal regarding the control of lights adjacent to railway property, and I certainly have no serious objection to raise to the Bill.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [7.54]: To give the Commissioner of Railways the right to sell railway property not immediately required for departmental purposes would be a grave error. Such a suggestion would not meet with the approval of the House or of the general public. As to the control of red and green lights, the former of which is used to indicate danger and the other to show the necessity to proceed with caution, I consider that the power should be vested in the Commissioner of Railways without question. I am aware that a little while ago fear animated the Minister regarding the effect upon the nerves of locomotive drivers when negotiating level crossings. In this instance, however, there is justification for the request advanced on behalf of the Railway Department. One difficulty that I see has relation to hotels which, under the provisions of the Licensing Act, must keep a light burning at night. I am not raising any objection to the Bill, but merely pointing out that matter in passing. Some consideration should be given to the point.

The Minister for Lands: What coloured lights are used on hotels?

MR. SAMPSON: White lights.

The Premier: The Bill will not make any difference to them.

MR. SAMPSON: In view of the definition of "light," in the Bill, it seems to me that a difficulty might arise under that heading. No doubt the Minister will give that matter consideration. Whether the light be white, red, or green, the request of the department should be met. With regard to the leasing of railway property, the contention has been raised that the land preferably should be sold. I understand that before the land is leased from the railways, the lessee is required to undertake to pay municipal or road board rates that may be levied on the property. The leasing of railway property should be subject to a special agreement, because it is not otherwise competent for local authorities to rate buildings on railway property. We have the famous, or infamous, instance of the cottages at Merredin.

The Premier: They are occupied by railway employees.

MR. SAMPSON: I shall not again refer to that matter, although quite a lot could be said about it. The House is not in favour of the Railway Department refusing to pay rates in respect of such properties. Under the provisions of the Bill it would be quite

competent for the department to provide in the lease that the lessee shall pay rates. I hope the Minister will give the House an assurance that that will be done. Unless that is the position those occupying premises on land leased from the department will enjoy a distinct advantage, through not being required to pay rates, compared with the position of others occupying premises that are liable to rates. Subject to the condition I have indicated applying to leases, I shall support the Bill.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [7.58]: The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) is under a misapprehension if he imagines that the Bill can be made to provide that a lessee of any land that the Commissioner of Railways may deal with under the measure, can, under this Bill, be compelled to pay rates. This is not a taxing measure and no amendment of such a character, however desirable, could be entertained. I wish to point out that the provisions of the Bill regarding lights, apply to lights of all colours, not to red and green lights alone. I am prepared to give the Commissioner power to object to any kind of light, coloured or not, if it interferes with the management and the proper carrying out of railway operations. A bright white light might be most dangerous.

The Premier: It would be. It might obscure the signal lights.

HON. N. KEENAN: The fact that the lighting is not confined to colours is no objection, but there is an objection that I have to the measure, and it is that it gives the right of action to any member of the public who considers he has suffered any damage or alleged damage as the result of the exhibition of a light by any user. The Bill provides that it shall be deemed to be negligence on his part, or a nuisance. I am prepared to assent to the fact that if the Commissioner gives notice of any light being dangerous and the person controlling that light does not remove it, that that should be deemed—unless proved to the contrary to the court—to be a nuisance. But why give that right to every member of the public? It seems to me an extraordinary proposition. A person not at all connected with the railways may allege that he has suffered damage because some one has exhibited a light; and the fact that the Commissioner has given notice that the light is

dangerous from a railway point of view immediately creates the position that it is a nuisance on the part of a person exhibiting it, to the advantage of the private person alleging that he has suffered damage. We are seeking to protect the Railway Department. We are not called upon in a Bill of this character to go further than to give full protection to the Commissioner of Railways to enable him to have lights removed which are dangerous to railway working, and if such lights are not removed, to enable him to recover damages for any loss that the department may have suffered. Why go to the length of altering the law and removing what otherwise is the universal rule of proof by a plaintiff? Why remove that necessity by this measure, which is only required for the protection of the railways? When we reach the Committee stage, I will certainly ask the Minister to consider this particular provision of the Bill, which I think is wholly foreign to it and should not be included. If the Premier will read Subclause 9 he will see what I am referring to. Otherwise, I see no reason why the House should not assent to the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 58:

Mr. SAMPSON: In the second reading stage I mentioned that I hoped the Minister would be able to give the House an assurance that before any railway land was leased, the lessee would be required by the lease to pay rates to the local authority. I did not, as the member for Nedlands seemed to think, suggest that such a provision should be included in the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not understand the exact legal position. Personally, I do not think the Commissioner would be averse to making provision that the lessee should pay rates to a local authority. If the lessees are in opposition to other business people, they ought to be put on the same footing.

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope the Minister will take the matter up with the Commissioner.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Insertion of new Section 76A:

The CHAIRMAN: I point out that the proposed new Section 76A contains 11 subsections, and that if the clause is passed as printed, the subsections cannot then be amended.

Hon. N. KEENAN: With regard to Subsection (9) of the proposed new Section, I pointed out on the second reading that we are anxious to give full protection to the Commissioner and his employees, but the subsection goes beyond that. It enables any member of the public, who alleges that the exhibition of a light in respect of which the Commissioner has given notice under Subsection (2) has caused damage to him, to take advantage of that notice. It is quite possible that a light in a private house, by reason of its position, might constitute considerable danger to the working of the railways; it may be a nuisance. If the person who exhibited the light persisted in using it and damage resulted to the commissioner's property or to any employee of the commissioner, that person could be brought within the ambit of the Bill. But why should a private person not be called upon to do what the law calls upon all plaintiffs to do, to prove his case? Why should the private person not have to prove that a light is a nuisance to him—not to the Commissioner, but to the private individual? This is not a Bill to regulate private rights; it is a Bill to protect the Commissioner of Railways and his servants.

The Premier: It is only after damage has been caused that the Commissioner has the right.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The Commissioner cannot complain if no damage has been caused; but he gets over the proof which the law requires of a plaintiff to prove a nuisance. A nuisance becomes actionable immediately it is proved in law. It is a tort, and so becomes immediately actionable. But why should an absolute outsider have the right to say that, because the Commissioner said a light in a window was a nuisance to the railways, it is an actionable tort against him, the private person, who would be entitled to recover damages without any further proof at all? I do not wish to move an amendment, but I would like the Minister to consider what I have put forward.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I promise the member for Nedlands that I will look into the matter and discuss it with the

Commissioner, in order to ascertain if it can be rectified.

Mr. SEWARD: I move—

That Subsection (10) of proposed new Section 76A be struck out.

The proposed subsection deals with the control of lights. Subsection (2) gives the Commissioner authority to order the removal of any light interfering with the working of the railways. The Commissioner may give the owners of the light notice that they must remove it; and if it is not removed, then a penalty is provided. By Subsection (6) the Commissioner is empowered to remove any light if the owner of it does not comply with the request contained in the notice. Subsection 10 then goes on to provide that the omission on the part of the Commissioner to give any notice under Subsection (2), or the failure on the part of the Commissioner to exercise the power conferred by Subsection (6) shall not make the Commissioner in any respect responsible or liable for any damage resulting to any person or property as the result of any light being mistaken for or obscuring or conflicting with or adversely interfering with the effectiveness of a railway light. In my opinion, that is giving the Commissioner too much power altogether. The Bill first provides, as I have pointed out, that the Commissioner has power to give notice to the owner of any light which interferes with the lighting of the railways and which in his opinion should be removed, to remove such light. If the owner does not remove the light, the Commissioner is empowered to do so himself at the owner's expense. Those are reasonable powers; but it is unfair then to provide that the Commissioner shall be free from all responsibility if he fails to give the necessary notice. That is going too far. It is only reasonable to expect the Commissioner to exercise the powers given him under the other two sub-clauses, but he should not be relieved of responsibility as proposed in Sub-clause 10.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I cannot support the amendment. The Commissioner must be protected. If the sub-clause is deleted, the Commissioner might be held responsible for an accident involving a huge amount of money for damages. The sub-clause will not penalise anyone, but will afford the Commissioner protection.

Mr. WATTS: Suppose a light is situated outside Government property and not under the control of the Commissioner. He realises that the light is likely to interfere with the satisfactory working of the railways, but does not give notice and consequently cannot remove the light. If an accident took place the provisions of Sub-clause 10 would apply. The absence of notice and the absence of steps to remove the light could not involve the Commissioner in the large outlay suggested by the Minister, and therefore I see no necessity for the sub-clause.

Mr. SAMPSON: The fact that the Commissioner has power to order the removal of certain lights implies that he should be protected against any omission to ask for their removal. Therefore the sub-clause is necessary. The absence of this provision would open the door, in the event of an accident, to an action for damages for not doing what he had power to do.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1939-40.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 17th October; Mr. Withers in the Chair.

Note—Public Works and Buildings, £93,650:

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [8.22]: Some members might desire to discuss the policy of the Government in regard to loan undertakings, but the proper time to do that will be when the Loan Estimates are presented. They might desire to discuss the financial position of the goldfields water supply undertakings. That comes under a special division. The same remark applies to drainage and irrigation work etc., for which special divisions appear on the Estimates. It is usual when introducing the Revenue Estimates to present a brief resume of the activities of the department.

during the preceding year. The expenditure last year was—

	£	£
From revenue—ordinary public works and buildings	100,757	
From revenue votes (for maintenance and other charges, including interest and sinking fund)—		
Goldfields Water Supply ...	135,389	
Other hydraulic undertakings	58,685	
		194,074
From loan funds (including expenditure from Loan Suspense Account)		812,444
		<u>£1,107,275</u>

In addition, an amount of £180,364 was expended by the department on works not provided for on the Estimates under my control, namely, from hospital funds and other departments. A comparison between the total expenditure for 1938-39 from all sources, namely £1,287,639, and the total expenditure for the previous year, namely £1,182,510, shows an increase of £105,129. A dissection of the total expenditure—£1,287,639—plus expenditure on town planning—£1,653—a grand total of £1,289,292, is as follows:—

	£
Salaries and incidentals	96,429
Harbours and rivers	104,834
Water supplies, drainage and irrigation	593,319
Roads and bridges	145,211
Public buildings (including abattoirs)	323,259
Bulk-handling of wheat facilities, Bunbury	6,627
Miscellaneous	19,613
	<u>£1,289,292</u>

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That would include loan expenditure.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. The principal works undertaken by the department last year were—

	£
Harbours and Rivers—	
Premantle Harbour Works	32,981
Premantle fishing boat breakwater	1,019
Mandurah Bar (construction of wall)	2,273
Swan River improvements	40,265
North-West jetties	24,159
Roebourne Harbour facilities, Pt. Samson jetty	1,471
Other works	2,666
Water Supplies for towns—	
Geraldton water supply	14,129
Narrogin water supply	18,957
Brunswick water supply (new scheme)	11,987

Mr. Doney: Those amounts would include expenditure from loan, would they not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, I am dealing with the activities of the department during the year.

	£
Goldfields Water Supply—	
Further progress in renewing main conduit, and steel and wood pipes	187,390
Cement lining reticulation pipes	18,471
Goomalling main improvement	3,220
Purchase of meters	2,827
Toodyay main improvements	1,520
Parkerville extension	1,038

Water Supplies in agricultural areas, drainage and irrigation—	
Country tanks	42,884
Collie district irrigation and drainage	8,783
Coolup drainage	38,007
Dardanup drainage	5,237
Harvey district irrigation and drainage	5,093
Mayfields drain	6,914
Waroona irrigation and drainage, including Samson's Brook reservoir (£27,270)	33,856
Water Supplies, Eastern and other Goldfields—	
Big Bell water supply	2,748
Cue water supply	1,625
Abattoirs—	
Improvements and additions	1,818
Roads and Bridges—	
Continuation of road programme	145,211
Public Buildings—	
New schools and quarters	49,720
Hospitals and institutions	40,917
Police stations, gaols, court houses and quarters	1,592
Bunbury bulk wheat terminal	6,627

Now as to revenue collections for the year 1938-39. The estimated amount of revenue from all sources for that year was £393,060. The actual revenue received amounted to £381,283, showing a deficiency of £11,777 on the estimate for the year. The details of revenue are shown. Estimated revenue for 1939-40 in the case of the Public Works Department is £28,000. The actual revenue for the previous year was £30,178. In respect of Town Planning the estimate was £60, and the actual revenue £57. In the case of Goldfields Water Supply the estimate was £300,000, and we collected £296,993. For other Hydraulic Undertakings the estimate was £58,000 and the actual collection £54,055. So that the total estimate was £386,060, and the actual collection £381,283. This shows an increase for the year 1939-40 of £4,777 on the actual amount received last

year. I have already stated that for Public Works expenditure from revenue was £100,757, for Town Planning £1,653, Goldfields Water Supply Undertakings £135,389, and Other Hydraulic Undertakings £58,683; a total of £296,484. Expenditure from loan was £812,444. Local water boards, hospitals, etc., accounted for an expenditure of £183,664, making up the previously mentioned total of £1,289,292.

Now as regards classification of the above expenditure: Public Works salaries and incidentals, from revenue £17,203 and from loan £22,716; making a total for that item of £39,919. In the case of Town Planning, as stated, expenditure from revenue was £1,653; in the case of Goldfields Water Supply and Other Hydraulic Undertakings, from revenue £27,382, and from loan £34,475; a total expenditure on account of those incidentals of £54,857. Total expenditure on salaries and incidentals from revenue was £39,238, and from loan £57,191; a total of £96,429. In connection with Harbours and Rivers and North-West Jetties, from revenue was expended £14,822, from loan £8,305, and from other sources £1,032; or a total of £24,159. Bunbury Harbour Works expenditure from revenue was £108, and expenditure from loan £285; a total of £395. On Fremantle Harbour Works £15 was spent from revenue, £31,376 from loan, and from other sources £15,090; a total of £32,981. On Geraldton Harbour Works revenue expenditure amounted to £310,000 and loan expenditure to £270. Fremantle fishing boat harbour, extension of breakwater, and crayfishing facilities accounted for an expenditure of £1,016 from loan; Mandurah Bar, construction of wall, £2,273 from loan; Roebourne harbour facilities and Point Samson jetty, £1,471.

Under the heading of Harbours and Rivers, from revenue was expended £18,164 and from loan £83,912; a total of £104,834. In respect of water supply to towns there was expended from revenue £17,991 and from loan £47,313; a total of £65,304. On Water Supply for Stock Routes was expended £876 from revenue and £121 from loan; a total of £997. As regards water supplies in agricultural areas, drainage and irrigation, on country tanks was expended £475 from revenue and £42,884 from loan. Under this heading, on drainage and irrigation £23,721 was spent from revenue and

£106,988 from loan. On Goldfields Water Supply £122,551 was spent from revenue and £211,659 from loan. Water supplies for the Murchison and Eastern and other goldfields accounted for revenue expenditure of £9,216 and loan expenditure of £8,564; or a total expenditure on revenue account of £574,831 and on loan account of £417,545. As I mentioned previously, on Abattoirs £1,818 was spent from loan, on Roads and Bridges £145,211 from loan, and on Public Buildings £46,218 from revenue and £100,140 from loan as well as £175,021 from other sources. Under the heading of Public Buildings the total expenditure was £321,441. On Miscellaneous Services the expenditure was £13,000 from revenue. Those are the particulars regarding expenditure of the Department of Public Works.

Under another heading of the same vote appears the expenditure on Unemployment Relief and State Labour Bureau. Salaries show an excess of £795 over the actual expenditure of the previous year. This increase covers basic wage and other salary increments. There is an increase although in 1935 the staff numbered 69 and in 1939 the figure was reduced to 48. During the course of the year the unemployment portfolio was transferred from the Department of Labour and Industrial Development to that of Public Works, and an assistant Minister, the Hon. E. H. Gray, was placed in charge, office accommodation being found in James-street. The estimates of the department for 1939-40 are—Salaries £13,030, showing an increase of £795 over actual expenditure for the previous financial year. Unemployment relief and sustenance, £50,000, represents £3,141 over what was actually expended last year. Extra assistance by means of milk orders is provided for expectant mothers, and firewood is supplied during the winter months to families receiving sustenance. Labour Bureau incidentals are estimated at £5,100, representing an increase of £11 over the last financial year's expenditure. The services of the State Labour Bureau, both the men's and women's sections, are available to employer and employee without fee or charge. Repayable fares advanced to persons proceeding to private employment form the major portion of the expenditure from this item. Last year 3,623 fares to a value of £4,891 were advanced. Repayment to the extent of

£4,686 was received, representing a recovery of 95 per cent.

Mr. Sampson: Splendid!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Revenue is not so great an item. On unemployment relief the actual expenditure for 1938-39 was £963, and on the State Labour Bureau £4,686. Revenue in respect of unemployment relief is mostly sustenance advanced on a repayable basis, chiefly to men pending finalisation of claims for workers' compensation. Labour Bureau revenue is derived mainly from the recovery of railway fares advanced to workers proceeding to private employment. I am sure that the position has not altered during the year as regards men employed on relief work. The periods of work allotted are based on their family responsibilities thus: 14s. case works six weeks and stands down two weeks; 21s. case works seven weeks and stands down two weeks; 28s. case works seven weeks and stands down one week; 35s., 42s. and 49s. cases work full time for duration of job.

Mr. Doney: Was that arrangement continuous?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It has not been altered.

Mr. Doney: That is not my question.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We guarantee that men with families of more than three children shall be permitted to stay on a job for the duration of the job.

Mr. Doney: That does not amount to too much, does it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is almost full time. In practice it works out almost equal to that, but the fact remains what has been guaranteed by the Government is full time for the duration of a job.

Mr. Doney: There have been many complaints.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The policy of the Government has been to provide work rather than sustenance. When considering the undertakings that could be included in its programme of relief works the Government has been compelled, owing to the limited amount of money available, to restrict the jobs. That is one of our greatest difficulties, and consequently we have selected work which will provide a big percentage of wages rather than expenditure on material. So we have carried out undertakings on that basis, and have had to

discard work that did not necessitate the engagement of a big percentage of labour.

Mr. Doney: And you are experiencing difficulty in finding work now?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is becoming more difficult each year because of the fact of our not having any major undertakings on hand. The Metropolitan Water Supply, which at one time employed 2,000 men, is now providing work for about 500, and by Christmas that number will be down to between 350 and 400 men. At the present time there is a vast number of men employed on roads over and above the number that really should be employed, and the consequence is that not only have we expended the full amount of Federal Aid Roads money which I think this year, speaking from memory, amounted to £800,000 but in addition have spent other moneys which brought the total up to considerably over £1,000,000. That work absorbed labour, and it is the type of employment that we are providing in preference to other work. So we have employed 6,000 men throughout the year with the limited loan funds available, plus the amount received under the Federal Aid Roads Agreement. It has all had to be very carefully rationed, and the schedule of works set out so as to enable us to carry on throughout the whole year. It would not do to have funds exhausted before the end of June, and the consequence is that work of the type I have referred to has had to be given preference.

Mr. Doney: It puzzles me why you always break down in October.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have not broken down yet.

Mr. Doney: Then I do not know what you call it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We will discuss that later. Those who are in country districts have also been well treated. Immediately we know that men are out of employment in a country district, work is made available. I am not suggesting that they are fully employed, but those with family obligations receive every consideration.

Mr. Doney: This, then, is the first major upset for quite a long time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Speaking generally, the department is now under the control of the Honorary Minis-

ter, Mr. Gray, and he attends to all the details regarding the placing of men. There is the utmost difficulty in finding suitable work for many people. Personally, I have nothing to do with the actual placing of the men. We know the number of men who require work, and they are made available to the department. There was a difficulty some time ago with regard to these men, a greater number being on sustenance than is usually the case. Work, however, was made available recently, and other employment is being arranged for the near future, employment in connection with main roads, the Public Works Department, the Forests Department, the Lands Department and the Railways. In this way we shall decrease the number on sustenance. So we hope that, with the arrangements we have in hand, the position will soon be back to normal. The number at present on sustenance is something over 6,000.

Mr. J. H. Smith: That can be multiplied by two.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Immediately any work is suspended, as happened in connection with the Canning Dam for a fortnight, private employers of labour were in difficulties as their manufactured material was not required. So we say that in the expenditure of a million pounds by the Public Works Department, half of that amount goes in wages and half in material, and, as I have just said, outside employers and employees get the advantage. Thus we can say that practically the whole of the money is spent in employment, and in the manufacture of material within the State. With the loan funds at our disposal and Federal Aid money, we are able to provide an enormous amount of work for employees outside. That is the effect of the Government's policy. I remember that some time ago attention was drawn to the expenditure of a sum of money, about £180,000—I cannot recall on what it was spent—and it was suggested that some of it might have been used to supply milk for school children, or perhaps food for them. I contend that it has been spent in that direction, because the money was used in providing employment, and the wages earned would be certain to go into homes, and so sustenance would be provided in the proper way. I have no desire to enlarge upon that aspect. I do not know that I need give any further particulars as far as the employment department

is concerned. If any member desires additional information I shall be glad to supply details later. As far as we have been able to do so, we have reduced the number of those on sustenance by providing them with work.

Member: Are the Commonwealth Government's activities in this State relieving the position at all?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To a certain extent but not appreciably. It seems to me that the State Government has to take the full responsibility for those seeking employment.

Mr. Doney: I suppose the filling of positions vacated by those who have joined up has not helped very much?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It has slightly but there are still a number of able-bodied single men available. In the Eastern States the position in that respect would be much better than it is here because so much more money is being spent there by the Commonwealth for defence purposes. In this State defence expenditure has helped the position in respect of skilled trades. At present I think there are no carpenters at all out of work. We had to find carpenters for the rush job at Northam. With regard to unskilled labour, Commonwealth defence works do not appear to have relieved unemployment in this State. However, we have made representations to the Commonwealth Government; but whether the work it has undertaken for defence purposes here will relieve us we are not just now in a position to say. As I have said, it has had not much effect so far. One would think that with the approach of the harvest many men in the country districts would find employment. At least we are hopeful that harvesting operations will relieve the obligation on the part of the Government to find work for those who may be in the country. We should like to do work that could be undertaken on a basis of 50 per cent. for wages and 50 per cent. for material. One very desirable work was recommended to me the other day that would cost not £8 or £9 per man, but £18 per man. We should like to undertake works such as that, which would be better for the State.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [9.1]: Apparently there is no decrease at all, or no appreciable decrease, in the number of those for whom the Government is forced to find relief work. Last year and the year be-

fore, and once more this year, the number in receipt of relief or sustenance stands at approximately 6,000. That apparently must be regarded as the irreducible minimum. I thought, and probably most other members thought, that the war would ease the situation to a greater extent than it has done; but so long as the position is not intensified we shall have nothing substantial to grumble at. Remembering the fact that this is not the Minister's department and that he does not come daily into contact with unemployment matters, he has certainly reported on the situation in a manner very easy for the House to understand. There are one of two points as to unemployment with which I shall deal later.

The report on the activities of the Public Works Department for the year embodied expenditure not only from revenue but also from loan funds. That makes the position rather difficult to follow. To digest at short notice exactly what was implied by the information the Minister afforded is not especially easy. I shall therefore need to leave consideration of some matters until we reach the items. For some years I have been accustomed when dealing with this section of the Estimates to make weighty complaints about the Narrogin water supply. I am happy to admit now that the position, so far as I can judge, has been dealt with satisfactorily.

The Minister for Mines: What are you going to talk about now?

Mr. DONEY: I wish there was nothing else to talk about now; but I have one or two small references—I will not call them complaints—to make as to Narrogin's water supply and building requirements. Even though in course of time—say in three or four years—the increased population of Narrogin, or other factors should demand an increased water supply, the department has at hand a reasonably cheap method of increasing the present supply.

The Premier: By increasing the catchment area?

Mr. DONEY: No. There is no better, quicker or cheaper way than by the establishment of another 50 acres of bitumenised catchment. I intended under this vote to submit to the House Narrogin's requirements of a high school and a court house. As regards the high school, somewhat to my surprise and certainly to my very deep regret, some of us have been forestalled by the Premier.

I shall not go into that now, nor do I wish unduly to disturb the situation in regard to such a school at Narrogin, because in a few days the Minister for Education and the Director of Education will visit Narrogin, and the question of a high school, or alternatively of additions to the existing buildings, will be discussed with them. As to the court house, I think the Minister is now quite convinced of the need for that building. The sale of the present site and the erection of a court house on a new site are, I understand, provided for in the Estimates. I suspect, however, that more than likely the war will militate against the necessary action in that direction this year.

I greatly regret that I have to make some remarks about the state of the buildings at the Narrogin School of Agriculture. I would like the Minister to pay attention to this, because I am hopeful that as a result of my bringing the matter up he will decide to do something quickly. Hon. members will appreciate that the one institution in Narrogin of whose splendid achievements we on the Great Southern are constantly boasting is the School of Agriculture. By general consent, that school is doing really good work, particularly amongst the young farmers of this State. I might claim, and the House will probably agree with me, that nothing better in that direction is done anywhere in Australia. The Director of Education and the Minister for Education and all who know anything about it point with great satisfaction to the work accomplished there. From no other direction, I think, does the Government get such a fine return for money expended as from the expenditure on the Narrogin School of Agriculture. Having regard to that fact, it may come as a surprise to hon. members to learn that so much of the equipment at that institution and so many of the buildings are in a condition that may be described as miserable, and perhaps miserly, in the extreme.

The Premier: We have concentrated on stud flocks.

Mr. DONEY: That is a very fine thing. Unfortunately, if the Premier's interjection means anything, it means that the concentration on stud flocks has been at the expense of the buildings.

The Premier: It has been necessary to establish flocks there, and we cannot find money for all things at once.

Mr. DONEY: As a stud man, I do not know that I agree with the wisdom of the change to the breed now selected. However, that has been done and appears to have met with general satisfaction, even though not with mine. The buildings, however, stand sadly in need of repair, and that should not be. An institution doing the good work that school is doing deserves better treatment. I am not contending that all the buildings are in disrepair. The staff, in any event, would ensure that that was not so. If anything could be remedied merely by undertaking repairs that did not involve expenditure of money, the staff would always see that repairs were done. I point out, however, that certain buildings and, in particular, the boys' dormitories might truthfully be described as a disgrace to the Government. Of course, I would not be allowed under this vote to refer to the farm implements; but I can do so to their disparagement when we deal with the Education Vote. I am constantly at the School of Agriculture, and these disabilities are always before me. I do not think the Minister can know too much about this matter, because otherwise he would certainly see into it without delay. There is, for instance, the building known as the school and office building. That needs immediate repair. The walls of all the rooms in that building—and there are many rooms—are in a disgraceful state. There are cracks everywhere. Big pieces of plaster have left the walls and are to be found on the floor, and big patches of plaster threaten to leave the ceiling at any time. In view of the fact that during the day-time those rooms are nearly always filled with boys, this condition should not be permitted to continue. I made reference to the boys' dormitories; they are a real disgrace. There is no doubt whatever about that. The majority are dark and dreary and ill-ventilated; and when one walks into them there is a heavy, musty smell that is far from pleasant; and must also be far from healthy. The department should erect new dormitories, but if that cannot be done I suggest to the Minister that he might spend a few pounds on paint and calomine so that the dormitories might be generally freshened.

The Premier: Would you give some of the boys training along those lines?

Mr. DONEY: As the Premier knows, the boys are there to learn farming and not house decorating. I have no doubt, however, that if the materials were available the Principal would ensure that the work was done. I would like the Minister to have an inspection made; and if then it is thought wise to saddle the boys with the job, the Principal, I am sure, would be only too glad to fall into line. I may also mention a house on the property. I did not think it was a dwelling house, but on going into it I found that it was intended to be one. There are two rooms—a bedroom and a kitchen—plus a narrow, partly-enclosed verandah. The bedroom contained three beds; and the kitchen, in addition to being a kitchen, was also a dining-room and a bathroom, besides possibly serving the purposes of other rooms as well. In addition to the man and his wife, three children occupy this small, so-called dwelling house. That should arouse the ire of the Minister for Works. To the credit of the occupants let it be said that that tiny place, though cramped, is scrupulously clean. I say that, lest anyone reading my remarks should think I was indirectly reflecting on the fine couple occupying the house.

The Minister for Works: There is a nice little local touch about that.

Mr. DONEY: My only desire is to tell the truth regarding the couple in the house. People may say that the couple must be dirty, but I am glad to testify that it is not so. There are other places out there, not standing in such need of repair as is the house I have mentioned; but when the carpenters and builders are on the spot, those places too could be seen to. I believe it was the Public Works Department's intention some time ago to build certain dwelling houses and dormitories some 10 or 12 chains to the west; but the Minister may tell me that the war has put a stop to that. If that is the explanation, I hope he will at all events put in hand the repairs I have mentioned.

The Minister for Works: You should impress the Minister for Education with that.

Mr. DONEY: It is better to submit these matters to the Minister for Works than to the Minister for Education.

The Premier: We have to await recommendations from the Minister concerned.

Mr. DONEY: The Premier has already had them. I am giving him a special prodding in the matter.

Mr. Thorn: The Premier has the real say.

Mr. DONEY: I have already made a few remarks about the unemployed. As the result of the last election certain changes were made in the personnel of the Ministry, and consequential adjustments in respect of certain departmental offices. The Honorary Minister, who is concerned with unemployment found himself in James-street. I see no sense in that. This is one of the busiest of all departments, and yet is the furthest away from the City. I take it to be one of the Premier's duties to find accommodation for the Honorary Minister and other Ministers reasonably close to the centre of the city. Members have not time to tramp up to James-street when they want to see into some matter relating to unemployment. Mr. Scott, officer in charge at Marquis-street, is a busy man. He must waste hours weekly in going to James-street to visit the Honorary Minister.

The Minister for Lands: What would be a good place for central offices?

Mr. DONEY: A good position for the Honorary Minister's office would be at Marquis-street. The offices there appear to be very roomy. Why the Honorary Minister is not located there I do not understand. There must be some reason for isolating him in James-street. Members would no doubt be interested to hear what that reason is. At Marquis-street the Honorary Minister would be close to his work, and close to Parliament House, and reasonably close for anyone who wished to see him. To put him in James-street is quite senseless.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: What about Hale School? That is for sale.

Mr. DONEY: That opportunity cannot be taken advantage of until the premises have been bought by the Government.

Mr. Cross: The offices in Marquis-street are very dingy.

Mr. DONEY: That may be so. I notice that the place is undergoing extensive repairs. If the offices are dingy, they are not too dingy for Mr. Scott and the other Government officers who use the premises. Neither are they too dingy for the

men who have to hang around the building all day. Is it suggested that they are too dingy for the Honorary Minister, and is that why he has no office there?

The Premier: You are not allowed to ask a question like that.

Mr. Cross: The premises are dingy for the existing staff.

Mr. DONEY: One can be sure the truth will always be told by the member for Canning. I desire to read portion of a letter which appeared recently in the "West Australian"—from the Honorary Minister to Mr. Howard, the secretary of the Unemployed Disputes Committee. That committee is composed of men who are down and out and who should be the special care of the party to which members opposite belong, if those members are true to their platform and to the principles they claim for themselves at election time. The letter is as follows:—

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of August 9, enumerating the grievances of single men. I have also received a letter from Mr. Millington asking me to receive a deputation from your committee. I regret I cannot accede to this request and can only receive a deputation from an accredited Labour organisation. Any request presented for a deputation from an accredited union will receive immediate attention.

Later, Mr. Howard made a statement to the following effect:—

At present there was no duplication of organisations. There was only one organisation of unemployed and that was known as the Unemployed Disputes Committee. The letter from Mr. Gray related to single men concerning whom the Disputes Committee was at present concerned.

It was desired to make it clear that in the circumstances Mr. Gray's reason for refusing to meet the deputation was not a valid one. It had been found it was not possible to get representations made to the Minister on behalf of single unemployed through recognised Labour channels, and it was considered necessary to form an organisation to put their case to the Minister.

I do not know the facts of the case. I merely quote from these remarks and from the letter for what they are worth. The Minister may be able to say that this is not a proper interpretation of the position. The part that annoyed me most in the letter from the Honorary Minister was his statement that he would receive a deputation only through an accredited labour organisation. I see no decency in an intimation of that kind. There

was no obligation on him to give the men what they wanted, but surely there was nothing to prevent him from seeing them and discussing the position. If that is the truly democratic attitude members opposite adopt, well and good; but I thought they stood for something better.

The Minister for Labour: Apparently you think the Honorary Minister should receive deputations every minute.

Mr. DONEY: This is probably what is sometimes referred to as the new democracy. It does appear that to-day many Western Australians do not possess equal rights with other Western Australians. I thought members of Parliament represented everyone, and had the interests of all at heart. I certainly believed them willing to give a fair hearing to minorities, and to give rather more than a square deal to the poor and defenceless. Now we seem to have an Honorary Minister who will listen to the point of view of the poor and defenceless only if it is put to him by an accredited section of his own party. To me that appears a mean attitude, and, from the aspect of the future of the party opposite, a pretty senseless one to adopt.

The Minister for Mines: You are worrying a good deal about our future.

Mr. DONEY: Not from the aspect the Minister has in mind. I cannot think that the Labour men of the past, those who are sometimes referred to as "dinkum" Labour men, your Keir Hardies, your Will Crooks, your Andrew Fishers, would have stood for any such paltriness. Neither do the true Labour men of to-day view the position as do those who sit opposite.

The Minister for Works: Do you know the people for whom you are putting up this story?

Mr. DONEY: No.

The Minister for Works: You would get a shock if you did.

Mr. DONEY: That does not affect the principle. I have made it plain that I consider they should have been given a hearing. The Honorary Minister turned them down, not because there was anything wrong with the individuals but because they did not submit their claims through channels that were suitable to him.

The Minister for Works: You are labouring the matter very heavily.

Mr. DONEY: Suppose a deputation of storekeepers or farmers, or even of business men, wished to wait upon the Minister. He

would not turn them down—at any rate not for a reason of that sort. I am referring to the Honorary Minister's miserable attitude towards unemployed who have neither work nor money, and apparently no privileges or rights. One might describe them as outcasts from society.

Mr. Cross: But they have votes.

Mr. DONEY: When matters of this sort are brought up and it is desired to discuss them in a proper vein, members opposite treat them with levity. Even the very solemn Minister for Railways is smiling for the first time since he joined Cabinet. I would suggest to members opposite that it is time they overhauled and re-cast their platform.

When the Minister was speaking about the unemployed, I inquired why in October for some reason there should be a shortage of work. I am glad to admit that in the last five or six months, the machinery in regard to the unemployed has worked very smoothly. I recall that on the 3rd October last year the unemployed were informed, and promised, that from then onwards until Christmas Day they would have full-time work. Despite that promise, they then went through the worst period they had throughout the year. I asked the Minister for Industries whether it was true that he had guaranteed work from that date until Christmas. When he replied in the affirmative I said, "Why, that has been the worst period the men have encountered!" He said, "You have not interpreted that in the right way. It meant that work would be found from the 3rd October to the 24th December provided that work was available." I do not know. I take it I am interpreting the Minister's attitude correctly. It looks very much like a confidence trick to me.

The Minister for Labour: You leave me speechless. This is some performance!

Mr. DONEY: The position this October is much the same as it was last October, despite the promises that have been made. The fact is that work is slackening off all over the State. If that is not the position, the Minister will perhaps advise me to the contrary; but I have been told that it is so. There is one other matter to which I shall allude, although I admit it is not of great consequence. Nevertheless I want to clean it up if I can. What I specially dislike about the present method of dealing with new applications for relief is the tremendous delay experienced in finalising

them. There may be quite a number of acceptable explanations of work not being readily available, or, if available, why men cannot be sent forward straight away to the jobs. In such instances there is much delay even in procuring rations. Only rarely am I successful in securing assistance along those lines. When an aboriginal applies for rations he is given supplies at once, at the discretion of the sergeant of police. I can see no reason why, when a white man is in a similar state of destitution, it should not be allowable for the sergeant of police to exercise discretion in the same way and provide him with rations. That is a matter I hope the Minister will deal with when he replies to the debate.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [9.32]: I do not propose to embark on criticism of the department now, as I shall have opportunities to deal with various matters on the relevant items. First of all, I want to touch on the question of schools and buildings, as the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney) has done. I have no complaint to make regarding our agricultural college and other such like institutions, because we have none in the South-West, which apparently is not regarded as of sufficient importance to warrant such provisions. What we particularly require in that part of the State is a high school such as exists at Bunbury, Katanning, Collie and elsewhere.

Mr. Doney: There is none at Katanning!

The CHAIRMAN: And the matter cannot be discussed under this Vote.

MR. J. H. SMITH: The Minister for Works is responsible for building the institutions to which I allude. I want him to build more schools and shelter-sheds in my electorate.

The Minister for Works: That can be discussed under the Loan Estimates.

MR. J. H. SMITH: And under the General Estimates, too.

The Minister for Works: That is not so.

MR. J. H. SMITH: As to unemployment, the Minister says an improvement has been effected. In my opinion the position has not improved. I admit it has been relieved to a considerable extent because of enlistments, but the problem is as acute as ever it was. Certainly I was surprised to hear the Minister say the amount still in

hand for sustenance amounted to a few thousand pounds. That strikes me as most scandalous, particularly when I consider the starvation conditions obtaining in so many quarters throughout the State. Naturally, we blame the Government for the position; everyone does so. It is to the Government that people look for a betterment of that position. We do not blame our system at all, although that is what is at fault. Until we alter the system, and until all who are in employment contribute towards the support of those who are unable to obtain work, so that all may be in a better position, we shall never get out of the present rut.

We are certainly not paying sufficient by way of sustenance. No one can say that 7s. per unit is sufficient. Who could exist on that? The Minister was right in his references to married men who are working on the roads. The scheme of standing down for one week and working for six weeks is satisfactory. But that applies only to married men, and that is the best we can do for them under existing conditions. On the other hand, there are thousands of people who are not in that category. The Minister mentioned 6,000, and I interjected that we could multiply that number by two. I think the larger number would be nearer the mark. Many single persons in Perth live on Marquis-street and what they can pick up. The Minister was probably right when he said there would always be some in that category. Those people receive two sixpenny meal tickets a day. The cost of living has gone up. How can the men live on two meal tickets a day? They receive three to last them over the week-end, and they get 8s. for a bed. That means the single men receive 15s. a week for sustenance. In my opinion, some of the conditions experienced are the worst known in any civilised country. Married couples are in receipt of assistance that makes no provision at all for house rent, although single men have that advantage. A married couple receive 14s. a week, and can live where they like and do what they like. Fancy expecting married people to live and do their duty by increasing the population when they are in receipt of 14s. per week, or 7s. per unit! The Minister says £5,000 has been unexpended under the heading of sustenance. If that is correct, then the payment should be immediately increased to 10s. per unit. How people are

living under the existing conditions I cannot imagine.

Then again, we ask young men to engage in farm work. No inducement is offered them to do so. If they do accept work they have to take return tickets to Perth for the standing-down period. Men undertaking that work should receive their railway fares both to and from it. That is not the practice, and so no inducement is offered men to go to the farms. Another anomaly in the sustenance provisions affects the "C" class men who cannot undertake laborious work. There are many jobs they could take on but those are mostly given to "A" and "B" class men because there is not sufficient work to go all round. The "C" class men just have to do the best they can, and the system is certainly wrong. If the Government cannot alter it, Parliament should endeavour to rectify the position.

Mr. J. Hegney: How could Parliament alter the position?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: By utilising the financial emergency tax to provide employment and improve living conditions.

Mr. J. Hegney: Would that solve the problem?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes, to a great extent. We cannot solve the problem until we place men in employment. We have been elected by the people, and it is our duty to attempt to solve the problem.

Mr. Fox: This Parliament will never solve it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No; because we do not seem inclined to try. Members on the Government side must be loyal to their Government.

Mr. J. Hegney: Were you loyal to your Government?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes. I spoke my mind and voted against the Government on its emergency legislation. I have not heard many Government members raise their voices against Government proposals in this House, and so things must continue as they are. Cannot Parliament do something to alleviate the position? The unemployed have formed an association and are endeavouring to secure registration. They cannot obtain it. Men must belong to a union before they can get work. Is that not absolutely wrong? How can a man belong to a union unless he first obtains work? Preference to unionists is the policy applied to-day, and how can a man

join a union before work is available for him?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: No one demands that.

Mr. Fox: Of course not.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Before a man can get a job, he must belong to the A.W.U. Of course, that is correct. I do not wish to raise a vexed question again, but my statement is true.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They join the union only after they get work.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: How can a man join a union unless he first obtains work?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is nonsense.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The hon. member cannot deny the truth of what I say. Before a man in the metropolitan area can obtain work on a building—I do not refer to tradesmen—he must first belong to the Builders' Labourers' Union.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Nonsense!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: That is an absolute fact. He has to belong to the union before he can get work.

Mr. J. Hegney: Plenty of unionists are out of work.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not say that is not so. There are numbers of unemployed unionists throughout the State.

The Minister for Works: Do you mean to say a man cannot get a job through the Marquis-street bureau unless he joins a union?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Of course he can. I was replying to the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson).

The Minister for Labour: You have changed your ground.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: A man can get a job at Marquis-street and go to work, but he has to join a union.

The Minister for Labour: You used to be a red-hot unionist.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Of course, and I believe that every man to-day should be a unionist.

Mr. Cross: You are on the right track now.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am dealing with the matter from a humanitarian point of view. There is another aspect, which relates to the foreigners in our midst. They are human beings and have the right to live. There are many of them in my electorate, and I spoke to the Minister about their position. The Minister who controls the sustenance activi-

ties is one of the finest men I have ever met. He is most kind-hearted, and anxious to do what he can. After speaking to him about the position of the foreigners, of whom I estimate there are about 200 in my district, I suggested that as the men had to register with the police, the sergeants in charge of the local stations might be allowed to exercise discretion in the matter and make available the sustenance payment of 7s. weekly. The Minister said he would see the Premier about it. When we discussed the possibility of their participating in the clearing work for single men, we came to the conclusion that, as aliens, they would not be eligible for employment under those conditions. But the Government must do something to relieve the position of these men. It is no use our depending upon the Federal Government. We have sufficient taxation to cover this expense. We are imposing a financial emergency tax which will bring in £1,200,000 or £1,300,000 this year. Let us use that money for this purpose. My desire is to see as many people as possible in employment and contributing to a fund to assist men not in work. The Minister's object is to find suitable work that will absorb labour and will require as little as possible to be spent upon materials. That is why the roads programme proved so beneficial. If I can assist in any way I shall be pleased to do so. I do not wish merely to tions under which unemployed men are liv-criticise; but I must point out the condition. They receive two sixpenny meal tickets per day. There are "C" class men unemployed who cannot obtain work. More unfortunately, there are some who fought in the last war, but who are now derelicts. They receive a miserly pension, which is taken into consideration when they apply for rations. That is one of the roughest things I have heard of. The pension may be only 3s. or 4s. a week, but it is taken into account. We must alter this state of affairs somehow or other: it is impossible to allow it to continue. I do not desire to say more on the General Estimates, but I shall speak on some of the items.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [9.46]: The hon. member who has just resumed his seat kept telling the Minister that something must be done to relieve unemployment, but he did not tell the Minister how to make a change for the better. He did not offer one

solitary item of constructive criticism; he simply bemoaned the existing state of affairs. Every member of this House feels the rather unfortunate position of any Government that can only afford to pay a miserly pittance of 7s. a week for sustenance. No one in this House or outside it could justify that amount. I was hoping the hon. member would suggest a method whereby that miserly sum could be increased, but he has not done so. He spoke about the need for changing our system. I presume he means the monetary system. He said this Parliament could change it. I tell him that this Parliament cannot change it while it is constituted, as it is, of this Chamber and of 30 members in another place who would do everything possible to prevent any change in our monetary system. There is no hope of this Parliament changing the position.

Mr. Watts: What would you do if the other place were abolished?

Mr. NEEDHAM: In that case, if we had a majority similar to that which we have in this House as far as Labour is concerned, there would be a big change in the monetary system and a big change in connection with the Loan Council. Even if we had but one Chamber, as Queensland has, there would still be some trouble. We would still experience difficulty in increasing the miserly pittance referred to by the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith). That hon. member was a supporter of the Government which introduced the system of paying 7s. per week for sustenance. He was a loyal supporter of the Mitchell Government.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Not so very loyal.

Mr. NEEDHAM: He certainly did nothing to endanger the Government's position, although it instituted the system which he now condemns. I am not blaming the Mitchell Government or this Government because of the fact that only 7s. per week is provided. I blame the system of control. It lies with the Loan Council. The only way in which the monetary system can be changed is to place enough members of the Labour Party in the nation's Parliament. A change in the monetary system would then be made that would satisfy even the member for Nelson.

Mr. J. H. Smith: By nationalisation of banking?

MR. NEEDHAM: There is no hope of changing the monetary system until such time as the Government of the Commonwealth is changed to make it of a Labour complexion. It is regrettable that while we are spending millions of pounds on preparing to destroy human life, we can only pay 7s. per week to an unemployed man to keep body and soul together. I am concerned about the present unemployment position. I am alarmed because the number is greater than it was some months ago. Although the unemployment pool has been relieved as the result of enlistment, still it is appreciably larger than it was before the outbreak of war, and I am afraid it will grow larger still. Quite recently in the Federal arena taxation has been increased. We have it from the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth himself that it is the intention of the Commonwealth Government further to increase taxation. I believe that will be necessary if we are to do the right thing and protect this country or prepare it against an invader. But we must not forget that the more we increase taxation, the greater the danger of increasing unemployment.

I desire to repeat a suggestion that I made when speaking on the General Estimates some weeks ago. Our Premier is leaving for the Eastern States on Saturday to attend a meeting of the Loan Council. The Prime Minister of the Commonwealth has made it quite plain that an effort will be made to raise more money for defence purposes and less money for public works. There is not the slightest doubt that the Premiers will be faced with that position. I know our Premier will put up a good fight against increasing expenditure on defence and reducing the amount available for public works. We cannot afford to do with less money than we shall get under the present allocation, and, in view of the fact that it was said in this House quite recently that the major portion of the money to be raised for defence will be expended in two States, it is imperative that additional money be made available for public works in the States that will not benefit by defence expenditure. If that is not done, I am afraid our unemployment pool will increase. Private employers have certainly added to the pool by dismissals from their establishments, and that after only eight weeks of war. God knows what it will be the longer the war

continues! I rose on this occasion to impress upon the Premier the necessity for putting up the strongest possible fight in the Loan Council for enough money so that our public works may not suffer.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [9.56]: I will not go over all the old ground to-night. Year after year these points are made, and made well. I desire, however, to stress two other points. The first is that there seems to be great conflict between Federal defence works and public works carried out by the States. The Minister told us to-night that the Government's objective was to employ as many men as possible and to expend as little as possible upon material. The Federal Government's desire is to get the very best material, regardless of cost, and to employ as few men as possible. The Federal Government is not concerned with the employment aspect. So we have a complete contrast! What is most distressing is that the Government which is expending money upon material regardless of cost is for the most part unfortunately spending the money on something which in the long run will be absolutely useless. The second point is this: Will the Minister say whether the present practice of penalising private workers who suddenly fall out of employment, and so are thrown on the labour market, is to continue? On several occasions, not just recently—I am not giving imaginary instances—men who had been working for some firm and receiving £5 or £6 a week have come to me. They said that when they got out of employment they went to the department to obtain relief, but were told that they had to be out of work for two months before they could receive assistance. The reason given was that it was considered they should have saved enough out of their wages to keep them for that period. Is it expected that such men should have banked out of their wages the sum of £20 or £30 in order to keep them for two months if they got out of work? Such cases I admit have been comparatively few; but I raise the point because of the drastic effect it would have on our economic system if our ordinary worker in private employment were to be expected to save so large a sum of money out of his wages to meet this very situation. I do not think that is happening to-day. I believe the average worker spends all he earns in order to live. That is the very best thing

he can do from the point of view of the storekeeper and the manufacturer. Some of the men have approached me and explained that it is very difficult indeed for them to subsist for a period of two months after having lost their employment. For the sake of argument, if there was a family of two children, the father out of his earnings of £5 a week could spend £3 and should bank £2. If private employees generally adopted that course, the effect on our economic system would be drastic. Some years ago when I was amongst those who were fighting for a Royal Commission on banking and economics, that was the particular method some of us suggested should be adopted by the reformers if they desired to bring the economic system to a lower standard in order to prove their contention. Therefore, if this practice is still adopted, the Government should provide for quite a short period of standing down. If a man has been earning £5 a week for a long time, he might be asked to set aside £10 at the outside.

Not long ago a man came to me in search of work. He told me that he was unable to get a job. I asked the reason, and he said, "I had some money in the bank." This man had been saving; he had adopted the course recommended by the department. I asked him how much he had saved and he told me the amount was £100. Of course that was quite a different case. Under present arrangements we cannot encourage people to expect Government work if they have money in the bank.

Member: He should have spent it first of all.

Mr. NORTH: But there is an unfair distinction. If a man already has a home, I understand the fact of his possessing a home is passed over. He is not penalised for it, but can still get relief work and retain his home. There we have a definite distinction. A man with £100 cash has to spend all of it before he can get a job, whereas a man who has invested his savings in a home is permitted to get work. There are many other anomalies of which I have heard, some of which have been mentioned to-night. I support the suggestion of the member for West Perth that the unemployment problem is so involved and has so many ramifications and is capable of being viewed from so many angles that the Premier might reasonably set aside a certain time so that the whole matter might be debated. Then all the ideas

could be voiced and thrashed out and the Government could perhaps improve the system for the benefit of all.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco)

[10.3]: I wish to bring rather a new note into the discussion. What I wish to say will not be said in a spirit of criticism, because I realise that this is one of the hardest departments to administer. The position I wish to put before the Minister is that of young men on sustenance who desire to marry. They are not allowed to do so unless they accept rations as single relief men for a period of six months after marriage. I hope I have made the point clear. I have been to the department on this matter, and have found that these men would have to go on single men's relief work or rations for six months after marriage. On the other hand, if a girl is pregnant and the couple wish to marry, consideration is given to them and the husband may get the full allowance for a married man. Further, if they were living together and she was registered as a partner, the man could get the full allowance for a married man. All these things are absolutely true, and I feel that it is like putting a premium on immorality. I am sure that this is something of which the Minister would not approve. My impression is that the Minister leaves these matters to the discretion of the departmental officers. I have had fully half-a-dozen cases in my district to investigate. I cannot see why a married man should not be given full relief work.

I also wish to emphasise the fact stressed by the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) that a man and woman cannot live on 14s. a week. They cannot exist on that amount, and I feel that something must be done to help them. We should allow them what is done in Victoria, where two days work a week is given with the object of their paying the rent. They must pay the rent with the money received from the two days work, but they are given rations over and above that. Another injustice is that just mentioned by the member for Claremont (Mr. North) that no married man who has savings may receive rations. I have in mind the case of a man with three children. He had been on relief work for some months. He was on his stand-down period and had saved £12 13s. His wife had gone into the King Edward

Hospital, and when he came to me, she was still in hospital, and he could not get rations because he had declared that he had saved the £12 13s. He had done so with the specific object of buying a perambulator and the necessary extras for his wife when she came out of hospital. I rang the department and asked whether his statement of the case was correct, and was informed that it was correct. I said, "My advice to the man would be to spend the whole of the £12 13s. at once." Then the departmental officer said, "The man will not receive rations until that £12 13s. has been cut out at the rate of £3 a week. Surely this is an injustice. This man had been saving for nine months to get together the £12 13s., and the family had lived on reduced income in order that the wife might have the extras he intended she should have."

There is another case I wish to bring before the Minister, similar to the one mentioned by the member for Claremont. This happened only two or three weeks ago. A man had been in employment for a considerable time and then lost his work. He had three children under the age of three years. After a few weeks of unemployment, they came to the House in a starving condition to see me and ask for help, but unfortunately I was not in the House that evening. I called at the home about 11 o'clock the next morning to ascertain what the trouble was. I found that the three children for their breakfast had bread soaked in weak tea, and that one of the children was only three weeks old. The mother herself was unable to feed the baby, which was given only weak tea. The family had not a penny in the house, and did not know which way to turn for money. In Subiaco we have a very sympathetic health officer. I was able to get a certain amount of relief from him and take food immediately to these unfortunate people. The point I wish to make is that the man had applied to the Relief Department at Marquis-street. When he asked for rations he was told that he had had employment at a certain wage for a particular period, and that he must continue for so many weeks without any rations.

Another case is that of a man who had not paid his union fees. He was working on the goldfields, and had paid only 2s. 6d. towards those fees. He was employed about

three months. He possessed a union ticket because he had been in the employ of the Water Supply Department. He showed the ticket to me. When he ceased to be employed by that department, the officers at Marquis-street sent him to the country. The man paid 2s. 6d. towards his union ticket, and was dismissed by the foreman because he had not paid for it in full. He was given his wages cheque, but could not change it at that time and pay the union fee. He was only able to change it later. When he reached Perth he had to pay the rent and buy food for the family. He then went to Marquis-street and asked for rations. The officers there said, "No. You have not paid for your union ticket, and cannot get rations."

Members: Oh!

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: The statement is true. The officers of the department are always very good, and will do anything in their power to help in these cases; but there are some things they cannot do. I rang up the department and the officer said the man had not paid for his union ticket and could not get rations. This unfortunate man has three children and his wife to feed, but he had no food to give them. I said to the department, "If I pay for the union ticket now, will you give the man rations this afternoon?" The reply was in the affirmative. I sent the money for the union ticket, which was duly paid for, and the rations were given out that afternoon. What I say is true.

Mr. J. Hegney: It is very far-fetched.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: It makes me mad to hear members talk like that. I wish they were numbered among the unemployed. Were I at Marquis-street, I would make them starve for a month.

Mr. Fox: We know more about the unemployed than you do.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I suppose that in Fremantle and certain other electorates there are no unemployed.

Mr. Fox: You stand for the present system.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I do not.

[Mr. Marshall took the Chair.]

The CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. member address the Chair and pay no heed to interjections?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I hope members opposite will cease from interjecting.

I wish to refer to "C" class men. A little while ago I had a man in my employment because he could not get rations or employment. I was forced to give him work as his children were starving. He had been a "C" class man for a number of years, employed on and off by the department. His people sent for him, and he went to England with his five children. He found that conditions there were not good. The children were all born in Australia, and he himself is a returned soldier. His sister-in-law paid for his return journey. When he got back he found he could not get rations until he had been in the State for six months. The man therefore enlisted, and was found to be 100 per cent. physically fit. For years he had been regarded as a "C" class man. Who was wrong, the man or the department?

The Minister for Mines: If he got past Dr. MacKenzie as a "C" class man he must be pretty good.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: He was classed as 100 per cent. physically fit. Because he could not get rations or work, he is a soldier to-day. I offer these few remarks for the benefit of the Minister. What I have said is true. I know he will, if he can, alter any conditions that he considers unjust. Some of them are distinctly unjust and should be altered. I hope what the member for Claremont (Mr. North) has asked for, a kind of round-table conference between some members representing districts in which there are many unemployed, will come to pass. We could then let the Government have the names and the number of the individuals concerned, and it could have a proper investigation made of the cases brought before it. The Government would then know, when we gave such facts as have been stated, that we were not putting forward invented cases but were telling the truth.

MR. HILL (Albany) [10.17]: I should like to pay tribute to the work that has been done throughout the State, and in my electorate in particular, by the Main Roads Department. There is very close co-operation between the officers of that department and the local governing bodies in the Albany district. Last January the work that has been done by the department was most severely tested. We had a phenomenal rainfall of 11

inches in a short time. It is a great tribute to the department to find that practically no damage was done to the roads in the electorate. We certainly suffered the loss of the Kalgan Bridge, which was built some 30 years ago. I was one of the first people to walk over the bridge after it was finished, and was the last to walk over it before it gave way. The sight that Sunday afternoon was a fascinating one. The chairman and secretary of the road board were there, as well as the member for the district. We could do nothing but look on. We thought the bridge would hold, but deemed it advisable to prevent any traffic going over it until the river had subsided. We were engaged in putting logs across the road to block it when my young son called out "The bridge has gone." It was not pleasant to see a bridge 200 feet long carried away like a box of matches. We had it brought forcibly home to us that man is a poor old thing when contending against Nature.

A few weeks ago I had the pleasure of a quiet conversation with an expert on harbours and ports. That gentleman has the confidence of the British Admiralty and the Commonwealth Government. We discussed ports in Australia, and I would give something to have had the Minister and his colleagues with me when that gentleman said, "My word, you politicians have something to answer for! It is shameful to see the way you have neglected your beautiful natural harbours and spent money on places where ports should never have been established." Nature has been very generous to the southern end of this State. I hope the day is not far distant when Ministers will realise that it is a better proposition to work in with Nature than to fight against it.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [10.21]: Undoubtedly the question of unemployment is one of the most important for this Committee to discuss. It has been with us for many years, and will no doubt be with us for many years to come. In fact, it is part of our present economic existence. Whatever Government may occupy the Treasury bench will have an unemployment problem. As the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) has pointed out, many men who cannot come within the scope of unemployment relief are being paid below the basic wage. A Commonwealth census of five years ago proved

that 50 per cent. of Australian workers received less than the basic wage. What affects Western Australia in that respect, affects the Eastern States as well. We have a Minister appointed to establish industries here, whereby unemployment may be minimised and our young men afforded opportunities to secure work. The Eastern States have ample industries, and consequently the youth in those States has found scope for employment. Having worked in industry practically all my life, here as well as in Eastern Australia, I know that industry in the East, where it is much more highly industrialised than it is here, has a greater percentage of unemployment than obtains in Western Australia. I repeat, unemployment is part of the economic system; and notwithstanding the establishment of additional industries in Western Australia we shall still have unemployment until such questions as usury and excessive profits are tackled from the economic aspects. Until economists are set to work to solve such problems, we shall all remain in the morass of unemployment.

The member for Nelson advances reasons for believing that if money were allotted to that purpose and this purpose, the trouble would be removed. However, the same trouble would show itself in other directions. Ministers have done their utmost, within the limits of their powers, for the unemployed; but the same problem still confronts the Government. The predecessor of the present Minister said he was perfectly willing to create unemployment in the Unemployment Department. He said his hope was that the Unemployment Department would speedily be linked up with the Works Department, and thus become extinguished. The time for that has not yet arrived, unhappily. Our State Government has loan funds and other resources for dealing with the problem, but if its resources are not sufficient, it cannot cope with the problem in its entirety. However, our Government spends Loan moneys in giving as much employment as practicable. Since the outbreak of war dismissals have taken place from private employment, and the dismissed persons have been thrust on the Government. They seek assistance, and to the extent they come on Government funds they affect the position of others dependent on the State. Unemployment is a national problem. The State Government is limited in its scope, and cannot solve the problem, be-

cause it does not deal with the main function of government, which would probably enable a solution to be achieved. A New Zealand Labour Government has used the power of the State to tackle the problem on a national basis, and to a great extent it has succeeded. Until our Commonwealth Parliament has a Government prepared to proceed on a national basis, no State Government will be able to solve the problem. We must try to minimise the severity of the evil by creating as much employment as possible, and by giving assistance to those for whom employment cannot be found. Even with the development of industries here, while the present economic system continues, there will be periods of unemployment. To the present economic system, reservoirs of workers are almost indispensable for transfer hither and thither. The farming and pastoral industries need an army of workers available to be called upon for gathering the harvest and taking the wool off the sheep's back. Such workers are employed for only part of the year, and then are sent about their business to seek employment in other industries.

The building industry has been dormant for the last 12 months. True, there was a spasmodic increase in the demand for carpenters, who have been workless for a great part of the year. The same position applies to painters. The building industry has been affected by the war scare of 12 months ago. Unhappily that has also affected the economic position of the State. To provide work for unemployed workers a national scheme of insurance must be instituted. The Commonwealth Government did not tackle the unemployed-worker problem at all, preferring to leave it in the background. In Western Australia we have only a scheme to provide for workers unfortunately dismissed from industry, sufficient employment to enable them to carry on until they can find work in private industry again. The army of unemployed workers on the hands of our Government to-day is with us for all time. Our most important problem is to deal with unemployment as a whole. As stated by the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver), to get up here and talk about the difficulty of things, the difficulty of dealing with that phase and this phase, does not help at all. The hon. member referred to single men who were living with single women, the couples not being regarded as married. I have

found that the department recognises their position and in many instances deals with them as married couples. On the other hand, the man who marries decently because he wishes to secure employment has much greater difficulty in securing relief than the others to whom I have alluded. Then there is the case of the man who is living with a woman as his wife and there are children as well. They are treated properly by the department, and the rights of those individuals are not denied.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: If the woman is registered as the man's wife, they can get assistance.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I have known of instances where the women have had children and men have been living with them. The women have not even been divorced. In cases where men have been keeping the women and children for a period, the department takes the long view. In each instance the department, wherever possible, endeavours to straighten out the difficulties. The Minister mentioned the trouble experienced in finding work of a reproductive nature for many men, in view of the fact that so many jobs had petered out. I can suggest several works that could be undertaken in the metropolitan area, so as to provide employment for quite a number of men. First there is the Rivervale crossing. The time is long overdue for that work to be undertaken. It is on a national highway, and for years I have advocated the construction of a subway at that point. If that were done, protection would be afforded for people who do not notice oncoming trains or do not observe the signal lights and so meet with serious or fatal accidents. Only recently a young man who was proceeding from Guildford to Fremantle was killed there. The crossing lends itself to the construction of a subway, and that would provide a number of men with relief work. Then there is the Guildford-road through the back portions of the Bayswater and Baysendean districts. Originally it was constructed as a developmental road to enable settlers to have access to the metropolitan abattoirs. To-day that road is used by trucks carrying heavy loads and it serves the Caversham and West Swan districts. The heavy traffic is cutting up the road badly, and the time is opportune for that thoroughfare to be widened and re-

constructed so as to carry the heavy traffic. Another work that could be undertaken is the straightening out of the Guildford-road near Whatley siding. The road there carries 50 per cent. of the traffic from the Bayswater district. Those works would provide employment for a considerable number of men, and I urge the Government to give consideration to them. During the course of his remarks, the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) contended that single men were not given any inducement to accept work on farms. The Leader of the Opposition has often criticised the Minister for Labour on the ground that he was making jobs for single men too attractive, with the result that they would not accept employment in the rural areas. The criticism offered by the member for Nelson was in a different category. He also adversely commented upon men being required to secure union tickets before they could obtain employment. That is not the policy of the Government. When a man gets a job he usually is willing to join a union, which is advantageous to him. He is asked to join a union only after he has been employed and has indicated his willingness to join.

Mr. Hughes: That is not so. I had to pay for a union ticket for a man last week.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: There may be a few men on relief work who are not willing to become members of a union. The percentage would be very small. By far the greater proportion are willing to join a union because they appreciate the advantage of membership in many directions.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: But they have not the money with which to buy a union ticket.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: What nonsense! It costs only 6d. a week to join a union, and membership of a union affords them protection. If a worker should be involved in a compensation case he can secure advice and assistance from his union secretary. These men do not know members of Parliament.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Is that so?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Of course they don't. On the other hand, they know what the organisation to which they belong stands for. They know they can go to the secretary of the union and have grievances rectified.

The CHAIRMAN: That has nothing to do with the Estimates before the Committee. They say nothing about industrial organisation.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: This matter was discussed by the member for Nelson and other members.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot help that. I want that phase of the discussion curtailed.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: As to the policy of the Government in connection with employment on public works, the question of work and unionism is involved. I am dealing with the criticism levelled at the Government. It has been said that a man must join a union before he can secure employment. I submit that very few men on Government relief works do not desire to belong to a union. They know how essential it is to have the assistance of an industrial organisation. Generally speaking, in such cases as those referred to by the member for Subiaco, some other explanation is at the back of it all.

The Minister for Labour: The member for Subiaco spoke about one case, and he was a man who paid an average of 2d. a week to a union out of a wage of over £5 a week.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The member for Nelson referred to the position of builders' labourers and said a man could not get a job in that line unless he held a union ticket. The members of the Builders' Labourers' Union contend that the unionist is entitled to the first call for work in that industry. In my opinion they have a sound case, too. They contributed to their own organisation to better their conditions. So we have political unionism on the one hand and industrial unionism on the other. I will not pursue that point further. The unemployment question is a very serious phase of the Government's activities. The Commonwealth Government is supposed to be spending a considerable sum of money in Western Australia upon defence works, but notwithstanding that, the number of men dependent upon the State Government has not diminished to any great extent. There have been dismissals from private employment and there have been enlistments; but, on a balance, practically no alteration has taken place in the number of men depending upon the Government for relief work. I hope the expenditure by the Commonwealth Government in Western Australia will improve the position. I have submitted a list of works for consideration by the Minister. The subway at Rivervale is work that could be undertaken and it would give employment to a large number of men.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle) [10.42]: I shall not attempt in any way to justify the system for the relief of the unemployed, but I am surprised, in view of the unanimity among members on both sides of this Chamber, that we have not worked out some better scheme. I know we cannot alter the monetary system of the Commonwealth; that is a matter for the Commonwealth Parliament, but were we in earnest, were we not in a sense hypocrites, we would do something to even up the national income. That is the only way in which we can deal effectively with the unemployment problem; there is no other way. I have heard it said that if we increase taxation we are likely to increase unemployment. Many of us could live on less than we are receiving at the present time. I, for one, would be quite prepared to allow the Government to take some of the income I now receive; and I think every person in Western Australia who is receiving over the basic wage should contribute also. It would be very difficult to effect this; if the Government attempted such a course it would go out of office, of that I am quite sure. I believe that if we put this proposal to various organisations throughout the State they would not agree to it.

Mr. Hughes: They would if they could be sure that it would mean full-time employment for everybody.

Mr. FOX: If every person, including every member of this House, were in earnest, no one in Western Australia would be compelled to live on 7s. a week. We should tax all people earning above the basic wage such an amount as would bring in sufficient to raise the standard of living of those persons now forced to subsist on 7s. a week. But such a proposal would be thrown out by the Legislative Council. If members on the opposite side of this Chamber are in earnest, they would see that the present members of the Legislative Council are defeated and members returned who would pass legislation of the kind I have indicated. That is the only way in which the problem can be solved.

Mr. Doney: Are you quite sure that all members on your side of the House are agreeable?

Mr. FOX: I believe so.

Mr. Doney: I do not.

Mr. FOX: I do. The member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) made a

statement in regard to a man who she said had to join a union before he could obtain sustenance.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: It was rations I said.

Mr. FOX: Sustenance and rations are the same thing. There is no difference between them.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I mentioned ration tickets.

Mr. FOX: They are called sustenance tickets. I hope the Minister will look into that matter, because I know hundreds of men who are drawing rations, but are not members of unions. They cannot afford to belong to a union. Personally, I believe every man in work should become a member of a union; because unions keep up the standard of living. Unfortunately, many workers in industries in Western Australia contribute nothing to unions, although they reap the advantages of unionism. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) mentioned the Builders' Labourers' Union. I can quite understand why no person, other than a unionist, can obtain work in the building industry, because that union has more members than is necessary to meet the demand. Therefore, the union is justified in keeping its membership down to such a number as will supply all the labour necessary. In fact, the Judge of the Arbitration Court has said that a union comprised of casual workers is justified in keeping its numbers down to a point where the members can earn sufficient to provide a decent standard of living for themselves.

Member: Do the unions give the man out of work credit to pay his union fees?

Mr. FOX: They do.

Member: They do not.

Mr. FOX: They do.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order! These interjections must cease.

Mr. FOX: When a man has been out of work for some time he is allowed to pay his union fee by instalments, providing that he is willing to join. That should be the main consideration. He is not asked to pay the 25s. in a lump sum, but is requested to pay it by weekly instalments of 2s. 6d. That is not too hard on anyone. The Minister has said that quite a lot of work in the metropolitan area is nearing completion. I hope his department will plan a little further ahead, so that no considerable number of men will be out of work for a long period.

I know there are not very many big works that can be started in the metropolitan area and so it may be difficult to place all the men that will be coming out of employment about Christmas time; but if the engineers plan ahead, there should not be much difficulty in finding work for the greater number of the men. We know that unemployment is to be with us for all time and therefore the Government should make some decided effort to provide men who must rely on Government work with a home of their own and two or three acres of land, so that they might be given the opportunity of providing part of their income themselves. That would lessen the liability of the Government and would make the men more independent. Rent is the bugbear of every man, particularly the man who is on rations; he is allocated 28s. per week but draws only 8s. in cash and consequently has no possible chance of paying rent. Such a man may sometimes be out of work for six or seven weeks at a time. Then the landlord is after him, he gets notice to leave and finds it exceedingly difficult to obtain another house unless he has a clear rent book. That makes it all the more difficult for him. The member for Middle Swan (Mr. J. Hegney) spoke about having economists work out some system to get us out of our difficulties. I do not know that economists are going to do any good. I suppose economics is their profession, but it is a notable fact that one of the greatest inventions was produced by a man who knew little or nothing of the industry in which the invention was used.

Mr. Hughes: It is not their job to solve problems.

Mr. FOX: I refer to Arkwright, who invented the spinning wheel. It was not a tailor who invented the sewing machine. He could not do so when all his life he had been threading from the other end. All we need is a little common sense to get us out of our difficulties. I wish to pay a tribute to the good work being done by the new Minister for Employment. He is very sympathetic, and I am quite sure he will perform his duties as capably as any of his predecessors.

MR. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [10.52]: It is to be hoped that in the opinion of members of the Country Party the importance of this matter is in inverse ratio to their attendance in the Cham-

ber. Apparently they do not feel very keenly on the subject.

Mr. Doney: We have suitable arrangements made.

Mr. TONKIN: I desire to make a few remarks, with due regard to the hour at which I am commencing. This is the first occasion, since I have been a member of this House, when the departments of Employment and Public Works have been amalgamated under one Minister. In my opinion the policy is a distinct improvement on the previous practice, inasmuch as the correlation now possible between those departments should make for greater efficiency. Previously there was considerable difficulty in so mapping out a programme of public works as to keep fully engaged the number of men unemployed. Despite the more difficult times we are experiencing, the amalgamation of those two departments will considerably facilitate the handling of a problem of great magnitude. For some time large proportions of the national incomes have been absorbed by Governments in providing armaments, and now we are in the position that a still larger proportion of our national income will be absorbed in additional armaments and in carrying on the war in which we are engaged. We may expect serious trouble amongst the lower-income groups. Quite probably there will be actual starvation in the lowest-income group, because it will inevitably follow that if the nation continues to utilise an increasing amount of the national income, those in the lowest-income group will suffer most. I hope some endeavour will be made to shift the burden from that group and spread it throughout the community. That may mean increased taxation on the higher-income groups; but, whether it does or not, we must ensure that there is money available to provide sufficient employment for those in the lower-income groups to avoid starvation, which otherwise appears inescapable. Everyone knows that we do not make the fullest use of the productive capacities of mankind. It is extraordinary that with the nation engaged in war we still have large numbers of men out of employment. We are told that the war will resolve itself into an economic struggle rather than a struggle of another kind, and that the nation with the greatest staying power will be the successful nation. Germany has no un-

employment, and has found a lengthening of hours necessary; but in Australia we have considerable unemployment. We are not taking advantage of the available manpower to increase our supplies of raw materials. We should be putting every man to work. Part of the national defence policy should be to provide sufficient credit to absorb every available man in producing a maximum quantity of materials that can be stored up for future use. Instead of that, we are simply wasting the man-power that is available to us. I was interested to read in the "West Australian" of the 12th September, 1939, this paragraph:—

The economic organisation of war time certainly increases very greatly the national output, which has not then to worry about profits.

I was greatly surprised to see a paragraph like that in the "West Australian," because it is a straight-out admission that worrying about profits is the thing that causes us to restrict the national income in times of peace. But the sentence quoted says that because we need not worry about profits in time of war, the national income will increase as a result of a different organisation. That has not become apparent yet, but I hope it will. I hope that before long we shall see a different economic organisation, under which the national output will increase tremendously, because it is only as a result of a largely increased national output that we can expect to get anything like a decent standard of living for those in the lower-income groups. I hope that the Department of Public Works and the Department of Employment will work in co-operation so closely that there will be a minimum number of men on sustenance and a maximum number of men at work.

Mr. Doney: That is the position now.

Mr. TONKIN: I was indeed surprised at the statement of the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) that it was necessary for her to pay the union subscription of a man who applied for sustenance. The officer who demanded that should be sacked on the spot.

Mr. Cross: You did not believe that yarn, did you?

Mr. TONKIN: If it is a fact, the officer responsible should be sacked on the spot, because he is nothing less than a fool. It has never been the policy, so far as I know,

to demand a union ticket as a qualification for sustenance. True, men without union tickets had to fall in behind those with union tickets when applying for work, and I agree with that policy. I agree with preference to unionists, and I believe that the man who has a union ticket should definitely be picked up in front of the man who will not get one. But when it comes to a matter of sustenance, which a man must have in order to maintain himself, his wife and family, I have never known the question of a union ticket to enter into consideration. If a case did arise, as the member for Subiaco stated, I am satisfied the question was raised by some junior officer who was endeavouring to show his authority, and was not the result of any governmental policy. I am also convinced that if it happened once, it will not happen again.

The Minister for Labour: Out of £60 received in wages by a man in 12 weeks, he paid 2s. 6d. into his union.

Mr. TONKIN: Despite considerable difficulty, I believe that the department in Western Australia can derive some satisfaction from the fact that it has done as well as any similar department in any other State of the Commonwealth. I am not saying that our officers should sit down and say there is no need for further endeavour, but I do say they are entitled to just praise for doing at least as good a job as has been done under this system elsewhere.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Town Planning, £1,715; Unemployment Relief and State Labour Bureau, £68,130—agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.3 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 1st November, 1939.

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

QUESTION—TAXATION.

Commissioner's Report.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: When will the report of the Commissioner of Taxation be made available?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The report is now in the hands of the Government Printer and it is expected it will be available for distribution on the 9th inst.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURE.

Premium Wheat and Barley.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Will he inform the House of the procedure that will be adopted for the purchase of premium wheat and barley for the coming season? 2, Will the premium be paid direct to the growers by the millers and maltsters, or into the pool?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1 and 2, The information desired has not been supplied either to the State Wheat Committee or to the Government.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS.

Tabling of By-law.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: If it is not necessary under the Government Railways Act, 1904, to lay be-