

important aspect of housing has been allowed for in the principal Act, and also in the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement Act; and it is hoped that in the not too distant future, the Commission will be able to turn to this work. In order to carry out slum clearance, it is certain that the Commission would require the power of compulsory acquisition.

Particular attention has been given in the principal Act to the protection of owners, where compulsory acquisition of land is sought, and provision is made for the return of resumed land to those who can establish certain claims in regard to its proposed use—especially where the land is required for the future residence of the owner or a near relative, or where it is being used for commercial, manufacturing, or primary production purposes. In this respect it can be claimed that the Act has been liberally interpreted. Where it has not been possible to return the actual blocks, others of comparable value and position have been provided where claims have been established.

Owners have the additional protection of having the right of appeal against compulsory acquisition, to the Minister, who may allow or dismiss an appeal wholly or in part and subject to such terms and conditions as he thinks fit. The matter does not end there, and any appellant who feels dissatisfied by the Minister's decision may appeal to a judge of the Supreme Court against such decision. If there are instances where that has gone too far, recourse may be had to the law.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: The appellants would have an enormous amount in legal costs to defray in going to the Supreme Court.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Parker will be able to tell you more about that. We all recognise that the power of compulsory acquisition of land is something that must be handled with care and discretion and it is claimed that the Commission's activities in this connection have, in the past, been carried out in the best interests of the State; and, of course, with due regard to the rights and intentions of owners. The House has the assurance that the powers of resumption will be exercised only in extreme and essential cases, and owners will still have the protection afforded under the Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. H. K. Watson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.35 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Friday, 4th December, 1953.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

OIL

(a) *As to Reported Discovery at Exmouth Gulf.*

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

This morning there are strong rumours in the city and at Parliament House that oil has been discovered at Exmouth Gulf. Has the Premier had any official information which he could give to the House, or any other information in regard to this rumour?

The PREMIER replied:

I understand that the "Daily News" of Perth has received through the Australian Associated Press a message claimed to have been released in California by the Standard Oil Coy. to the effect that oil has been discovered at Exmouth Gulf, and that a certain quantity has been sent to America for testing. A further announcement in connection with the matter will be made by the Standard Oil Coy. at a later date. I checked this morning, as did the Minister for Mines, with the local company, but it has not yet received any official advice from America. Therefore, I am not in a position to say that the Government has received any official advice up to date, nor up to about 10 o'clock this morning had the local company received any official advice from America.

(b) *As to Benefit to State.*

Mr. ACKLAND (without notice) asked the Premier:

If it proves to be a fact that oil has been struck in Western Australia, will he give consideration to ensuring that the State shall receive benefit from it on similar lines to that received by the people in Alberta? That State of Canada was bankrupt in 1935 and yet possibly today it is the only State in the British Commonwealth that shows a credit balance because of royalties collected by the State from oil.

The PREMIER replied:

The Minister for Mines and his officers have already given quite a deal of consideration to this angle, which is tremendously important from the point of view of the people of Western Australia.

They have studied the laws and practices which operate in Canada, particularly in Alberta, and I should say that, if our hopes on the information that has come from America this morning are realised, and that oil in payable quantities is available in the North-West, action would be taken by the Government to ensure that the State and the people as a whole will receive some substantial benefit from what promises to be a very wonderful discovery of oil in Western Australia.

SURF LIFE SAVING ASSOCIATION.

As to Free Insurance Cover.

Mr. HUTCHINSON (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Is he aware that the Commonwealth General Assurance Corporation Ltd. extends a free insurance cover to surf life-savers in Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania?

(2) As a gesture towards the admirable work done in this State, will he consider adopting a system of free insurance for members of the Surf Life Saving Association of W.A. who regularly perform, without remuneration, life saving duties on our beaches?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) Yes.

ROYAL VISIT

As to Cleaning up Observatory Grounds.

Mr. HEAL (without notice) asked the Premier:

Would he consider allocating a special grant to the Chief Secretary for the purpose of cleaning up the Observatory grounds before the visit of Her Majesty, the Queen?

The PREMIER replied:

Yes.

PICTURE THEATRES.

As to Extension of Sunday Permits.

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

Has there been a general extending of the permits granted for the operating of Sunday night picture theatres in the metropolitan area and other parts of the State?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied: Yes.

TRAMWAY DEPARTMENT.

As to Reprinting Regulations.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Railways:

As the Tramway Department rules and regulations and working orders have not been consolidated for many years and as the type of vehicles, routes, and traffic

have varied in that period, will he consider reprinting the consolidated orders for the information of staff after consulting with representative members of the various staff sections as to suitable amendments to meet modern conditions?

The MINISTER replied:

I will refer this request to the general manager as it is a matter within his jurisdiction.

PUSH CYCLES.

As to Test for Riders and Machines.

Mr. McCULLOCH asked the Minister for Police:

(1) How many push or pedal cycles are registered with the Traffic Branch in the metropolitan area?

(2) As Appendix "D" of the report by the Commissioner of Police for the year ended the 30th June, 1952, indicates that many serious accidents occurred where push cycles were involved during that year, has any consideration been given to require applicants to pass an adequate test prior to the issue of a licence to the owner, also the mechanical suitability of the cycle?

(3) Is any check made by the Police Traffic Branch to ascertain whether push cycles are registered with a current licence; if so, what was the result of such check and what action was taken?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The number of push cycle licences issued in the metropolitan area for the 1952-53 period, ended June is 42,401.

(2) No test is given to an applicant regarding his or her ability to ride a push cycle.

Push cycles are inspected to ascertain if they are fitted with the necessary bell and satisfactory brakes before licences are issued.

(3) Periodical road checks are made.

Also, under general patrol and supervision inspection is made in regard to currency of licence and necessary equipment, such as brakes, bell and lights.

A number of prosecutions have been submitted to the court, such as those mentioned.

CO-OPERATIVE BULK HANDLING LTD.

As to Grant of Site, North Fremantle.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Is he aware that he had done something which he had no right to do, namely, granted land to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. and gave it authority to erect a building on same?

(2) Is he not aware that the land does not belong to the State, and there was only one authority that could give the company the required permit for the land—

and that is the Federal Minister, and I understand the local governing bodies should have given the company the permit to build, which has not even been applied for?

(3) Is it proposed, if this land is purchased by the State, to pay for it from Harbour Trust funds; if so, would it not then be the right of the Minister controlling the Harbour Trust to do anything necessary about this block?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Portion of the land is Crown land of the State and the balance is in course of purchase from the Commonwealth.

(3) Portion being purchased from Commonwealth will be paid for out of Fremantle Harbour Trust funds and ultimately the total area will be included in Harbour Trust territory and final tenancy for the new wheat bin will be negotiated between the commissioners and Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., subject to approval of the Governor on the recommendation of the commissioners in whom is vested exclusive control of the harbour.

RAILWAYS.

(a) As to Marshalling Yards, Alternative Sites.

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Works:

In the report of Messrs. Dumas and Brisbane dealing with railway marshalling yards and chord line proposal, they make the statement under the heading—

Sites of Marshalling Yards.

A number of alternate sites for marshalling yards have been examined. The site selected at Bassendean has advantages over all the other sites, etc.

Can he inform the House the location of the alternate sites examined?

The MINISTER replied:

South of Midland Junction.

South-east of Guildford Air Port.

North-east of Welshpool.

(b) As to Employees' Homes, Geraldton.

Mr. SEWELL asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Has the Railway Department any imported prefabricated houses in store?

(2) If so, is it the intention of the department to recommence building these homes for railway employees at Geraldton?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The claims of Geraldton will receive full consideration when funds are available for erecting the houses.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.*(a) As to Claims by Local Authorities.*

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

With regard to electricity undertaking compensation—

(1) Have all claims submitted by the local authorities concerned been satisfied?

(2) If not, which authorities' claims are outstanding, and when are they likely to be finalised?

(3) What amounts are involved?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Guildford Municipality and South Perth Road Board. Negotiations are now proceeding.

(3) Not known until matter finalised.

(b) As to Extension to Kellerberrin.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) When is it expected that the power line from Northam to Kellerberrin will be completed?

(2) How long after the completion of the power line, is it likely to be, before a.c. current can be made available to Kellerberrin consumers?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The summer of 1954-55.

(2) By the end of June, 1955. No electrical work or wiring should be done on any consumer's premises unless advised by an officer of the Electricity Commission.

EDUCATION.*(a) As to Junior High School for Kalamunda.*

Mr. OWEN asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is it the intention of the Education Department to proceed with the establishment of a junior high school at Kalamunda?

(2) If the answer is "Yes"—

(a) will the new school site in Cannington-rd. be utilised;

(b) when will a commencement be made on this work?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes, ultimately.

(2) (a) Yes.

(b) Unable to indicate at present as the date of commencement will depend on the numbers of children available and the State finances

(b) As to Effect of Altered School Holidays.

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

(1) To what extent, if any, has the recent decision to alter school holidays shortened the period during which schools will be open in December, 1953?

(2) To what extent, if any, has such decision postponed the reopening of schools—as compared with the former procedure—in the new year?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) It has not affected primary schools but has caused secondary schools to work an additional five days in December, 1953.

(2) In 1953 schools resumed on the 2nd February, 1953. In 1954 schools will resume on the 8th February, 1954.

(c) As to Conditions at School, Carnarvon.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Education:

In view of the fact that it is not the department's intention to erect any new classrooms at Carnarvon, thus causing classes to be held in the old school, which is in a very bad state of repair, will he advise the House who would be responsible in the event of a child being seriously, or to any degree, injured through the bad state of repair of the floors and their perished condition?

The MINISTER replied:

Immediate inquiries will be made into the condition of this building, but in the meantime the Government will accept responsibility.

(d) As to Additional Accommodation, Wialki School.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is it a fact that the classroom at Wialki school is an unlined wood and asbestos building measuring approximately 16ft. x 14ft.?

(2) Is he aware that this room will be required to accommodate 25 pupils in the new school year?

(3) If the answers to Nos. (2) and (3) are in the affirmative, does it not indicate that the accommodation is hopelessly inadequate and that some additional accommodation is imperative?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes, Wialki, a small 18ft. x 14ft. building, is unlined; the Public Works Department was asked to have the building lined following the district superintendent's last visit.

(2) The anticipated enrolment for 1954 as given to the department is 20, the maximum that this building can hold.

(3) Wialki has been included on the building programme and as soon as funds are available a standard classroom will be erected at that centre.

(e) As to Additional Accommodation, Mukinbudin School.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Has he received a request from the Parents and Citizens' Association at Mukinbudin for additional classroom accommodation?

(2) Is he aware that there is a vacant school at North Mukinbudin available for transfer?

(3) Is he aware that there is a contractor in the district with equipment capable of moving this school bodily from its present location to Mukinbudin and the cost of doing so would be only £150?

(4) If the answer to (3) is in the affirmative, will he give consideration to authorising the expenditure to enable the classroom to be moved?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Cleomine school is suitable for removal.

(3) Yes, this information was given in the Parents and Citizens' Association's letter of the 12th November.

(4) The enrolment at the Mukinbudin school justifies the appointment of a head-teacher and first assistant only. As there are two classrooms at the school it is not considered necessary to remove the Cleomine building to Mukinbudin at the present time.

(f) As to Tammin School, Renovation.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Education:

(1) What is the contract price for renovating the Tammin school, and generally what is the nature of the work involved?

(2) Would he give consideration to applying the amount involved in this contract towards the cost of erecting new school buildings at Tammin?

The MINISTER replied:

Tammin School.

(1) Contract price—£2,780. Contract comprises:—

(a) Raising main school building 18in.

(b) New 10ft. enclosed verandah to north side of the main school building.

(c) Complete new floor to one classroom.

(d) An extra window to each classroom of main school.

(e) Four new basins in the new enclosed verandah, including drainage.

(f) New ramp to provide access to new verandah.

(g) Remodel classroom fireplaces.

(h) Remove one shelter shed to a more suitable position.

(i) Provision of hoods to three windows of quarters.

(j) Provision of enclosed dado to front verandah of quarters.

(k) Ceiling and completion of internal lining to back verandah of quarters.

(l) Complete repair and renovation of main school building, both shelter sheds and quarters.

(2) With the completion of the present contract, three good classrooms and two shelter sheds, quite up to standard will be available.

New brick latrines and septic tank installations were provided in 1948 and are in good condition.

The replacement of the foregoing buildings, together with the quarters, could not be justified.

The only substandard building will be the manual training room, which is considered to be beyond rehabilitation and should be replaced when funds are available.

HOSPITALS.

As to Electricity Supply, Carnarvon.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Will he advise the House the reason for the delay in supplying electricity to the new Carnarvon hospital?

(2) What is the earliest date on which it can be expected to have this work completed?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Inadequacy of existing power supply to meet hospital requirements.

(2) Within three weeks, when a limited power supply will be sought.

MILK.

As to Cost of Supply to School Children.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Education:

(1) What was the approximate cost of implementing the free milk scheme to school children in W.A. for the 1952-53 financial year?

(2) How many classrooms does the amount represent?

(3) Does he consider that the free milk scheme has operated satisfactorily in the State?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) Capital cost—£99,228. (Supply and delivery of milk, drinking straws, etc.)

(b) Administrative costs—£1,325.

As the Commonwealth Government reimburses the State (by quarterly payments) total costs under (a) and 50 per cent. of costs under (b), the actual cost to the State of implementing the free milk scheme is £662 10s.

(2) Nil.

(3) Yes.

HOUSING.

As to Commission Rents at Kellerberrin.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) What are highest and lowest rents paid by tenants of the State Housing Commission at Kellerberrin?

(2) What was the extent of the latest increase in rent?

(3) Will he give consideration to reducing the rents of these homes to figures comparable with the rents permitted to be charged by private landlords?

(4) If the answer to No. (3) is in the negative, can he justify the obvious inconsistency in regulating the rents charged by private landlords but imposing no restrictions on those charged by the State Housing Commission?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) £3 7s. per week and £1 13s. 6d. per week.

(2) Approximately 1s. 6d. to 2s. per week to cover increases in rates.

(3) Representations have already been made by this Government to the Commonwealth recommending a variation of the formula to bring about a reduction in rents. These representations were made some months ago but to date no reply has been received.

(4) The rents charged are in accordance with the formula laid down in the Commonwealth-State housing agreement. Rents would be considerably higher if it were not for the low rate of interest charged on the moneys used for this scheme and also because a profit factor is not included.

WATER SUPPLIES.

(a) As to Steel Plate for Cunderdin-Minnivale Pipeline.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Have tenders been called for the supply of steel plate for the pipeline from Cunderdin to Minnivale?

(2) If not, is it intended to call tenders at an early date?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(b) As to Rural and Metropolitan Charges.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

When I was speaking on the Budget, I referred to the promise made by the Premier to bring rural water supply charges into conformity with those in the metropolitan area. At that time the Premier said that something of that nature had already been done. Would the Minister indicate what has been done?

The MINISTER replied:

The Leader of the Opposition has framed his question in such general terms that I have not the slightest idea to what he is referring. So that I may give him substantial information in answer to his question, I ask him to place it on the notice paper.

(c) As to Premier's Election Promise.

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

When speaking to the Budget I drew his attention to his electioneering promise, as contained in his policy speech, that charges for water supplies to rural towns would be brought more into conformity with charges for water in the metropolitan area. Can he tell me what has been done?

The PREMIER replied:

I am afraid the interjection that I made was facetious to some extent. What I had in mind was that charges for water in the metropolitan area had been increased, and consequently the margin between metropolitan water supply charges and country water supply charges had been thinned down.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Is that the way you are carrying it out?

(d) As to Premier's Reply.

Mr. ACKLAND (without notice) asked the Premier:

Is he sufficiently imbued with his responsibilities as Premier of the State that he should make such a facetious remark?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: And misleading.

The PREMIER replied:

Yes, and I think the member for Moore would be greatly improved if he could develop some facetiousness himself.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

As to Consideration of Appointment.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Premier:

In view of the apparent success of the Federal Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee, will he give consideration to the appointment of a similar committee in this State?

The PREMIER replied:

Yes, certainly.

LOAN FUNDS.

As to Validation of Use.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Premier:

(1) Has the item on the "Miscellaneous" page of the Estimates, namely, £34,000 to industrial users of cement, been placed on this year's Estimates to validate an unlawful act of the previous Treasurer?

(2) Is he aware that the Audit Act says that "it shall not be lawful for the Treasurer to expend any money standing to the credit of the General Loan Fund except under the authority of an Act"; and also "that until such failure is made good all salary and moneys that may be or become due or payable to such person may be withheld"?

(3) Is he also aware that the previous Treasurer defied everybody, including the member for Fremantle and said he was quite right to use Loan funds for that purpose—this notwithstanding he had not the authority of an Act?

(4) Is he also aware that the way the item is placed on the Estimates precludes any discussion on same?

(5) If No. (1) is not correct, will he inform the House why it was necessary to place this item on the Estimates a couple of years after the subsidy had been paid?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) The charge to Consolidated Revenue was made in order to refund to General Loan Fund expenditure debited to loan but which it is considered is a proper charge against revenue.

(2) Yes.

(3) Costs not actually incurred regarding the cement used at Mundaring were charged against the Loan Fund. At that time there was no legal authority for that action.

(4) Yes.

(5) Answered by No. (1).

TRAM AND BUS SERVICES.

(a) As to Purchase of North Beach Coy's Vehicles.

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Have the six buses taken over by the Tramway Department from the North Beach Bus Coy. Ltd., in December, 1952, at an assessed value of £11,000, been sold?

(2) Were they sold by public tender or private treaty?

(3) What amount was received for each bus?

(4) Was the Tramway Department unable to use the buses in their ordinary services, and what was the reason why they could not do so?

(5) Were the semi-trailers offered to the Railway Department?

(6) Can he state as a fact or not whether the two semi-trailer buses were in use by the North Beach Bus Coy. as operator of the Perth-Bedford Park and Morley Park service?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Tenders were invited but as prices offered were not acceptable the buses were disposed of by private treaty.

(3) One only bus, £1,200; one only bus, £900; two only buses, £1,800; two only buses, £2,100. Total, £6,000.

(4) To have rehabilitated the buses for departmental use, expenditure of £6,000 would have needed to be undertaken, and as sufficient buses for requirements were held, it was decided to dispose of the vehicles.

(5) Yes.

(6) The vehicles concerned were licensed to operate on the Perth-Bedford Park and Morely Park service. I am informed that they did in fact operate thereon on occasions, but they were used mainly on the North Beach route.

(b) As to Papers re North Beach Bus Coy.

Mr. J. HEGNEY (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways:

In answer to a request made by me, the Minister, a week ago, laid on the table of the House papers dealing with the North Beach Bus Coy. At the moment I am not able to find the papers and therefore, could he permit them to remain on the Table of the House for another week?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes; I think the papers could remain on the Table of the House for another week

(c) As to Inglewood and Bedford Park Route.

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is he aware that the tram service serving the needs of lower Inglewood and Bedford Park is far from being efficient and satisfactory?

(2) Is he aware that at peak periods an insufficient number of trams run to the terminus, with the result that many users have to stand for three parts of the journey?

(3) As many more trams are now available, will he take up with the management the urgency of improving the service?

(4) Is he aware that the practice of running No. 17 trams to Salisbury-st. is outmoded, because of the considerable increase in population north of the terminus?

(5) Will he have the management investigate this, with a view to its abolition?

(6) If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) It is not considered these services are inefficient and unsatisfactory.

(2) Sufficient trams are provided for the conveyance of passengers offering. No transport service guarantees seating in heavy loading periods.

(3) Answered by Nos. (1) and (2).

(4) The practice of short tripping some trams is not considered as outmoded.

(5) Answered by No. (4).

(6) The final 15 chains of track is single track only and unless provision of double track is made, and for which loan money is not available, the single track cannot handle the number of trams which arrive at Salisbury-st. during peak traffic times. Before any further tramway extension is made, alternative means of transport would receive consideration due to the now heavy costs involved in provision of tram car services.

BILL—LAND AGENTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—PERTH TOWN HALL AGREEMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [11.29]: I have had a good look at the schedule and the agreement which are included in this measure and have also again examined the Minister's speech. At first sight I imagined that the agreement had not been signed by the Perth City Council, as that does not appear from the reproduction of the agreement in the Bill itself. But on a closer look at the Minister's speech I find he said that it had been signed both by the Government and by the Perth City Council. In those circumstances it will be clear that the arrangement which had been made, and the rectification of minor errors that previously occurred, have been done with the approval of both parties concerned.

In those circumstances it is hardly necessary for the Legislature to discuss the matter at any length. Unless there is some reason in the opinion of Parliament why this agreement should not be ratified, the proper thing to do would be to ratify it immediately. It is quite evident not only from what has been said by the Minister, but also from an examination of the plan and the schedules to the agreement, that unless the piece of land coloured brown in the Fifth Schedule is dealt with as suggested, it will be of little use to its present owners. It can be readily understood why the present owners agreed to the change in view of the purchase of the adjoining land by the hospital authorities since the date of the original agreement.

It is strange that an error like this should have crept in regarding the Wellington-st. site. I suppose even in the

best organised institutions, mistakes of that kind can occur. I had a lot to do with the discussions that took place between the City Council and the Government departments concerned at the time when the original agreement was made. Representatives of the three parties to the discussion were firmly convinced that the plans showed the correct alignments. It now appears they do not and the Bill seeks to rectify the minor error that has been made. In view of the fact that the agreement has been signed by both parties, and so far as I can see there is not the slightest objection to the Bill, I hope it will have a speedy passage.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [11.36]: The Bill is one which I have no doubt will receive the unanimous support of members of this Chamber. It is very small and, as explained by the Minister yesterday, its object is to bring the parent Act into line with the Road Districts Act.

From time to time municipal bodies find it necessary to sell land for the recovery of arrears of rates. When the Registrar of Titles is notified of a sale and the transfer of the title is required, he has to advertise his intentions. In most cases this is unnecessary. The amendment will give the Registrar of Titles discretionary power as to whether it is necessary to advertise.

A perusal of the second reading speeches of the Ministers in this Chamber and in another place indicate that there is no need to advertise the registrar's intention to issue a transfer. In the past the cost of advertisement was negligible and it was borne by the purchaser of the land, but today the rates have increased many times over, and an endeavour should be made to avoid such costs. It has been found unnecessary, except in isolated cases, to advertise the registrar's intention to issue a duplicate certificate because the original could not be found. I support the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILL—CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS (VALIDATION).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. WILD (Dale) [11.43]: With the Minister, I feel that this is not an appropriate time to enter upon any further argument over what transpired three of four months ago in relation to the appointment of the Conservator of Forests. This measure is obviously designed to validate any actions that may have been taken by the department after the 31st January of this year and the date when the new conservator was appointed. Validation is necessary, particularly with regard to some of the leases and permits that may have been granted by the conservator in an acting capacity and without statutory authority. I have no objection to the Bill and support the second reading.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [11.44]: I disagree with the opinion of the Minister for Forests and the member for Dale that this is not an appropriate time to ventilate our views on the appointment of the new conservator. The object of the Bill is to ratify the actions of the officer who served the State during practically the whole of his working life and for the last seven years as conservator. I consider that the action of the Government in deposing him was a very shabby one indeed and accordingly voice my protest. In fact, the Bill ought not to be passed, but should be thrown out, leaving the Government to stew in its own juice. I would not have opposed the measure had the Government done the right thing by the man who had served the State so ably and conscientiously.

On a number of occasions the Minister has accused me, following my asking of questions regarding the appointment of the conservator, of having been advised by senior officers of the department. He implied that I had been in close touch with Dr. Stoate and had attended various meetings of forestry officers, which I had no right to do. I wish to offer a flat denial to those accusations. Dr. Stoate did not approach me on any occasion during the time the appointment of a new conservator was under consideration. On one occasion I met him in Busselton and raised a question with him, and he replied, "It is not for me as a servant of the Government and the people of this State to discuss matters which are being considered by the Government at the present time."

The Minister for Native Welfare: What did you say?

MR. BOVELL: I wish the Minister to understand that at no time did I discuss the matter with him or with any of his senior officers. In the course of my normal duties as a member of Parliament repre-

senting an area which contains a fair extent of State forest, I have for the past seven years kept continually in touch with the department about the release of forestry land for agricultural purposes, but during the time the controversy prevailed about the appointment of the new conservator, I did not consult one of those forestry officers on that matter. I considered that, had I done so, such an officer might have felt that I was prejudiced, and so I held off until the new appointment had been made.

Let me repeat—and this will be my last word on the subject—that I think Dr. Stoate has been treated very shabbily. I again voice my protest at the action of the Government which, I hope, will not be repeated against any other public servant who has contributed so well towards the advancement of his department. I oppose the Bill because I feel that the Government does not deserve any co-operation in this matter.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—MARKETING OF ONIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 2nd December.

HON. L. THORN (Toodyay) [11.51]: Legislation to control the marketing of onions was first introduced in this House by the late member for South Fremantle, Mr. Tom Fox. The Act has been of assistance to the onion growers because onions are not an easy product to market. It is necessary that the position in the other States be known in order to organise the exporting of onions so that we do not over-export, and to assist in the marketing of onions on the local market. The Minister intends to increase the size of the board by one. I do not altogether agree with this proposition—although I quite agree that there should be another grower-representative on the board—because this additional representative will make it a board of six.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Will you agree to another workers' representative on the Arbitration Court?

Hon. L. THORN: We are not discussing the Arbitration Court at the moment. I do not object to there being another grower, but it will become a board of six, and I think that boards should not be constituted so that the voting can be equal, as by so doing the chairman is given a casting vote and has more power than ever.

Mr. Lawrence: He has a casting vote now.

Hon. L. THORN: That is so, but he has less chance of using it.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Has the chairman got a deliberative vote as well as a casting vote?

Hon. L. THORN: Yes. The other point I want to make is that this grower is to be nominated by the Minister. That is not fair. The Minister already nominates three members of the board, namely, the consumers' representative, Mr. Mann; the mercantile representative, Mr. Murray; and Mr. Eckersley, the Government nominee. If the growers are to be allowed to have another representative, why not permit them to elect him?

Mr. Nalder: That is the fair way.

Hon. L. THORN: Of course it is. The board will be out of balance. When a grower-representative is subject to the favour of the Government in that he is appointed by the Minister, he does not carry out his job as fearlessly as if he were elected by the growers themselves. By this Bill, the Government will appoint four members of a board of six. I do not think that is desirable. The chairman will have a casting vote, and I point out that, being an officer of the Agricultural Department, he is a Government servant. In these days, we seem to be getting too many boards.

Mr. Lawrence: This board already exists.

Hon. L. THORN: That is so, and it has done good work in assisting growers to market their onions, which are a difficult commodity to handle. It is the same with the marketing of potatoes. It is necessary to know the conditions in the other States in order to be able to advise the growers as to how the markets stand; otherwise the growers may over-produce and so cause a glut, and then they do not get the full return for their labours.

I believe that the Onion Board and the Potato Board assist the growers greatly in their plantings by giving them an idea of the extent to which they should plant. Primary production is always a big gamble particularly in the vegetable section. At one moment there is a shortage, and the next a glut. As the Onion Board is of great assistance to the growers as well as to the commercial side, I support the second reading.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [11.58]: I hardly think the Bill is necessary. I agree with the ex-Minister for Lands when he says it is not altogether a good thing that the chairman shall have a casting vote. These boards should be evenly balanced, and the consumers should have good representation on them because it is only natural that the producers will seek to obtain the best possible price they can for their products; and that is exactly

what they do. The Potato Board has seldom been satisfied with the prices allowed by the Prices Control Branch; and it certainly would have charged more had it not been for price-fixing. I say the same about the Onion Board. When I was Minister for Prices, the Onion Board was never quite happy because it thought it was entitled to more for the onions than it received. Both boards have a monopoly in the State.

The Minister for Native Welfare: Do you think it is necessary for the price-fixing authority to scrutinise the figures of the Potato Marketing Board?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: If the board is to be under the sole control of those people who are interested in the higher prices, yes. But if the producers only have representation on the board, no, because full investigation would be made. This registration will mean more book-work and expense and in the long run the consumer must pay.

Mr. Lawrence: How does it mean more expense?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: There is provision for fees to be paid.

Mr. Lawrence: Fees are paid now.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: But this apparently provides for additional fees. What possible advantage can it be? The Minister said it was, "for statistical purposes," but I cannot see why the statistician's office cannot get just as much information in this regard as it does in respect of other produce and livestock.

The Minister for Agriculture: I was thinking of statistical purposes from the point of view of the board itself.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: There is possibly some argument in that. It might give some additional facilities, but is it worth the red tape and the extra charge to the community? The argument in this House has always been that the cost of distribution is becoming too high and I think this is another charge against distribution.

Mr. Lawrence: Does that mean that you do not believe a board should exist at all?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not believe that. With a commodity such as onions I do not mind a board, so long as anyone is entitled to produce the product if he acts in a reasonable way. I remember Gardener Bros. growing some onions for canning and after they were canned the board said, "You have not put them through the board." The company had to pay the board an additional fee on those onions, although they were only for canning and use in this community, so they gave it up.

In that instance the board acted within its rights, but I think its action was extraordinary and I do not know that growers of onions for canning purposes should not

be exempted from the provisions of the board. I think further consideration should be given to the Bill as no great advantage will be gained from it. Every board likes to increase its powers and I would be surprised if this one had not asked the Minister to give it discretionary power to issue licences or not. Apparently the Minister has not given it that power because it must issue a licence to anyone who applies.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is right.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I approve of that, because I think anyone should be entitled to engage in an industry—that is, anyone who is qualified. I am half-hearted about the measure.

The Minister for Native Welfare: You look it, too.

The Minister for Agriculture: Have you any real objection to it?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I can only say that I think the Bill is unnecessary. I see nothing very objectionable about it, but I do not think it is necessary to put an extra producer-representative on the board. The proper thing is to have a board where the chairman represents the Government and the people, and he should have an independent vote. I believe five is the right number on the board and so did the member who introduced the original measure.

Hon. L. Thorn: It has been working very well up to date.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Why have six, when it means so much to the community? At one time in connection with the Milk Board the producers objected to the chairman's casting vote—

Mr. Lawrence: There is still a casting vote.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes, because one man has two votes. The chairman should be a person thoroughly competent to look after the interests of the consumer.

The Minister for Agriculture: He is not now appointed to the position of chairman, but is elected by the members of the board and he need not necessarily be the consumers' representative.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: If one of the producers happened to be elected chairman, he would practically control the board.

The Minister for Agriculture: There is provision in the Bill to obviate that. Under it the chairman will be appointed and not elected.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: But he must be a producer.

The Minister for Agriculture: No, and that is why we did it—to obviate the point you are referring to.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I think the Minister has given thought to that aspect and I am sure that he would, naturally, give every heed to the consumer. Justice

must be done to all concerned, but I feel that the consumer is the least protected. The other man knows what he is doing and is organised and where he has a monopoly—which, except in very unusual circumstances, I do not approve—he has an advantage.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [12.7]: I would like the Minister to clear up one point in connection with Clause 7, which deals with the area of land. There are scores of people around the metropolitan area who are using in excess of a quarter of acre of land on which to grow vegetables for domestic use, but they do not use the whole of that area to grow onions in one season. The practice is that a portion of it is used this year to grow onions and another portion the following year, and so on, but I think such a person could be made to take out a licence. I do not believe the Minister intends that. Perhaps the clause should be amended so as to apply only to the person who uses the whole quarter-acre for growing onions in the one season.

The Minister for Agriculture: He would have to use it all for growing onions.

Mr. BRADY: He does so although he might use only one-eighth of it for growing onions this year, one-eighth next year and so on.

The Minister for Agriculture: He certainly would not come under the provisions of the Act.

Mr. BRADY: That is what I wanted to clear up as I thought an amendment might be necessary there. It will be appreciated that there are scores of people in the metropolitan area who use in excess of a quarter of an acre for the growing of vegetables. Near where I am living a man is using three-quarters of an acre of land for the growing of onions, potatoes, beans, peas and so on. He does not use a full quarter-acre for the growing of onions.

The Minister for Agriculture: He would not come under the provisions of the Act.

MR. LAWRENCE (South Fremantle) [12.11]: My remarks will be brief, but after listening to the member for Mt. Lawley I would like to tell him that his fears about the question of the chairman are absolutely groundless. As the Minister pointed out by interjection, the chairman will not be elected by members of the board but shall be appointed. It is obvious to me that the Minister would not lead with his chin, to use a common expression, by appointing a growers' representative as chairman. I do not think it makes much difference because if the chairman can exercise two votes, it still allows him to command a majority. But the person appointed as chairman would be a man of integrity who would look

after the interests of the consumers, the producers, the general public and the Government.

Hon. L. Thorn: Yes, but it gives him an opportunity to express his views twice.

Mr. LAWRENCE: That is correct, but naturally he would not have two different opinions. His second opinion would agree with the first he expressed. There are a number of growers in my electorate and I know that they are anxious to have this measure passed as it stands. In fact, they would have been happier if there had been further provisions in the Bill.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Do they think that the board should have the right to limit the number of growers?

Mr. LAWRENCE: No. We must be democratic in our outlook and I would remind the hon. member that the market gardeners in my district are democratic in their views. No suggestion has been made, at any time, that there should be any limitation of growers. At one stage the registered growers did say that there should be some limit on the tonnage of onions grown by each person, according to the acreage under crop. However, the Minister does not see fit to agree to that at the moment.

I was in touch with the growers only a day or so ago and they are happy with the provisions of this measure. They have thoroughly considered the question and are quite happy about it. So that members will be quite sure in their minds when they vote on this Bill, I would remind them that it is absolutely essential that we have the board, otherwise the industry will become chaotic. If members make a close study of the question, I think they will agree with that contention.

Hon. L. Thorn: What is your view of the growers electing a representative instead of the Minister appointing him?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I do not see that it makes much difference. I think we can rest assured that the Minister will make full inquiries before he elects a third representative of the growers. I do not know what the Minister's opinion may be, but at some future date, or even in Committee, he might agree to alter that provision. However, that is up to him to decide. I do not think that the further member to represent the growers on the board would have any marked effect—in fact, I do not think he would have any effect on the cost of the distribution of onions because no further administrative work would be entailed. Certainly there would be no further cost so far as payment to members of the board was concerned.

However, it is absolutely necessary that the board should continue to function, and function properly. I feel sure that the present members of the board as well as officers of the department, must have been

consulted by the Minister. I would say that he would have discussed these amendments with them and that they must be happy about them.

Hon. L. Thorn: My point is that when a grower is appointed by the Minister he might feel that he is answerable to the Minister instead of to the growers. I think there is a weakness there.

Mr. LAWRENCE: The Minister will have to answer that for himself. I might have some sympathy with the viewpoint expressed by the hon. member in that particular instance. I have no option—but a good deal of pleasure—in supporting the second reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren—in reply) [12.16]: There are one or two matters raised by members to which I would like to reply and I shall deal firstly with the query raised by the member for Guildford-Midland. He expressed some fears about the interpretation of Clause 7 which lays down the basis of "area." To me it is quite clear because the clause reads—

no person shall, for the production of onions,—

There is no reference to any other vegetables.

—use in any year land of an area of or exceeding a quarter of an acre—

unless he has obtained a license under the Act. The clause means exactly what it says. It does not matter how much land a man is using for growing other vegetables; if he is using a quarter of an acre or more for growing onions, he will be obliged to become registered under the Act and obtain a license.

It appears at first glance, as the member for Mt. Lawley said, that this is a fairly large board to control a relatively small amount of production—that is, in relation to our other forms of agricultural production. Nevertheless, the reason why the board is of its present size is because Parliament, when it passed the legislation in the first place, insisted on certain interests being represented. Had it been a growers' board entirely, perhaps with a chairman appointed by the Governor, there would have been no need to have more than three members.

But Parliament insisted that the mercantile people should be represented, the consumers should be represented and that the Government should have a nominee. So we can easily imagine how the board has reached its present strength and, of course, the growers have been kept in a minority. It was not the policy of this Government to allow that to happen where it could reasonably be altered. We think that the growers are entitled to a bigger share than two votes out of five in deciding what should be done with the goods they produce.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Do you think they should have a bigger say than the consumers?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: When a man, through his own labour, produces a commodity, in the first place it belongs to him; it does not belong to the consumers until it is sold to them. Therefore, so long as the consumers are adequately represented on the marketing board, that is all that one could expect. But a grower who gets his living from producing such a commodity must surely get proper representation on the marketing board.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: He has the power to fix any price he likes to the consumer.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, he has not.

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

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: For the simple reason that he is not in the majority on the board, either on the existing board or on the new board when it is created.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: No, but with the new board he will very nearly have it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If he has a good case the rest of the board will have to agree with him. But one does not have divergent opinions pulling against each other unless there is a reason for it. There is reason in everything. If, for instance, there are three representatives of other interests on a board I do not think it is fair or reasonable that the growers should have any lesser strength. There should be a balance so that, with reasonable argument between all sides, a decision can be reached.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: The marketing people do not care what price is fixed because they merely pass it on to the consumer. There will be three producers on the board and the marketing man will control its operations. What does he care about the board? The higher the price, the better it will be for him.

Mr. Ackland: Perhaps the member for Mt. Lawley would like to introduce such a principle into the manufacturing industry.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I would, too, where there is a monopoly.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I bet the hon. member would not put three workers on the Arbitration Court bench.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The member for Toodyay has said that he has no objection to the Bill but believes that the third grower should be elected and not nominated. That is what I understood him to say.

Hon. L. Thorn: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: With other legislation dealing with marketing, it has been felt that in those cases

where half of the board's members represent one set of interests, and the board allows that number to be elected, there are likely to be appointed members who, although they might reflect the popularity they have among the growers and members of their organisation, might not have any ability to handle an important commodity and place it on the world's markets.

We have democratic parties in Parliament that believe in the election method of appointment, but on a number of occasions we have provided in several Acts that at least one of the growers shall be nominated by either the Minister or the Governor in order to make certain that there is at least one grower of some prominence and standing in the industry who will create a certain balance when a particular commodity is marketed.

I hope what I am about to say now will meet the wishes of the member for Toodyay and the member for South Fremantle. Although I do not want to budge from the principle of the Governor having the right to nominate one of the three growers, I think provision could be made in the Bill whereby a panel of names could be submitted by the growers' executive to the Governor who could then select the man to be appointed. We would then be certain that there would be one grower appointed to the board whom the growers wanted. I think the Governor should have some say as to the quality and standing of the third member appointed to the board.

Hon. L. Thorn: That would ease the position, but if my memory serves me aright, a similar provision was in the Egg Marketing Board legislation which provided for the election of producers to the board. However, I think that was altered so that the producers could nominate their own representatives.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not remember that, but in the legislation dealing with the Potato Marketing Board provision was made for the grower to be selected from a panel of names for appointment to the board. In this case I think it would be advisable if the Governor had the right to select that third member but the growers could be given the right to submit a panel of names from whom the selection could be made.

Hon. L. Thorn: Would it be necessary to insert such a provision in the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I think it could be done to make certain of the position once and for all.

Hon. L. Thorn: Will you do that?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.
 Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Section 3 amended:

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In order to bring this clause into line with what the member for Toodyay requires, I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of paragraph (b), after the word "grower," the words "selected from a panel of names submitted by the growers' executive" be inserted.

MR. LAWRENCE: What does the Minister mean by the words "a panel of names submitted by the growers' executive"? I am not sure whether the various growers in Spearwood and those parts have an executive, or even that section of producers headed by Mr. Cruickshank.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Does the hon. member think it would be better to strike out the word "executive"?

MR. LAWRENCE: I am not sure what the position will be.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member is the only one in the Chamber who knows how these growers operate, and I included the word "executive" because I thought the growers had one. Is the hon. member implying that the onion growers have no executive, but are merely swallowed up by a larger organisation? If it is, I do not see how we can insert these words.

HON. L. THORN: I think it would be better to strike out the word "executive." The growers would be registered and I think, on further inquiry, it will be found that the onion growers do have an organisation. I do not disagree with the member for South Fremantle because he raised an important point when he suggested that the word "executive" should be struck out from the amendment moved by the Minister.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have no objection to striking out the word "executive" from the amendment I have moved if that is in order.

THE CHAIRMAN: The words to be inserted will then read, "selected from a panel of names submitted by the growers."

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

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

Clauses 5 and 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Sections 16A to 16F added:

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I raise the same question as did the member for Guildford-Midland, namely, the question of the area of land being confined to a quarter of an acre. Are not onions grown

as spring onions by the ordinary market gardener, and are we compelling him to register?

HON. L. THORN: They will not come under this.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Is the Minister satisfied that the area is not too small? I should have thought that half an acre would have been better.

HON. A. F. WATTS: I subscribe to the objection raised by the member for Guildford-Midland. I think the trouble lies with the word "use" in line 5 of Subsection 1(a) of proposed new Section 16A. Instead of that word we should insert the words, "plant with onions." I think the point is that it is not desired that anybody should have an onion plantation of more than a quarter of an acre unless he applies for a license. I move an amendment—

That in line 5 or paragraph (a) of Subsection (1) of proposed new Section 16A the word "use" be struck out with a view to inserting the words "plant with onions."

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I cannot see that the amendment will make any difference. A man can grow up to a quarter of an acre of onions without being licensed; after that he must be registered. If he has a couple of acres of other vegetables his acreage of onions must not exceed a quarter of an acre without being registered.

HON. A. F. WATTS: I differ with the Minister, and I do not think he has grasped the objection of the member for Guildford-Midland. If a man has three-eighths of an acre in production of various kinds, one-eighth of an acre being under onions, I think he could be said to be using three-eighths of an acre for the production of onions.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, he could not.

HON. A. F. WATTS: I think the amendment will avoid any conflict and will clarify the position.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: While I do not see what difference it can make to the provisions in the Bill, I have no objection to the amendment if the member for Stirling wishes to persist with it.

Amendment (to strike out word) put and passed.

HON. A. F. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That the words "plant with onions" be inserted in lieu of the word struck out.

HON. L. THORN: I support the amendment as it will clarify the position. A man can grow two or three tons of onions on a quarter of an acre. If there is not some restriction, there will be too many

unions out of control and this will upset the marketing of onions. There must be some control of the area allowed to be registered.

Amendment (to insert words) put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 8, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

BILL—FIRE BRIGADES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 2nd December.

MR. YATES (South Perth) [12.40]: When moving the second reading of this Bill, the Minister mentioned that it was the policy of the Government to include employees on boards. That being the policy, he intended to move for the inclusion of an employee of one of the two unions to add to the already large number on the Fire Brigades Board. I am surprised that the Minister wants to increase the number from ten to eleven.

The board has been functioning very satisfactory for many years without meeting any of the major problems that have affected other unions, such as strikes or disputes, which could not be settled amicably between the union representatives and the board. I have been informed that in the past the board has always met representatives of both unions to discuss any matters or differences that arose between the employees and itself, or between the employees and the Chief Fire Officer concerning pay, conditions and disciplinary matters. The Act provides that ten members shall constitute the board; it defines the system of rotation which is adopted for appointing members to the board. For many years, that system has not been altered.

To include on the Fire Brigades Board a member of the staff is not in the best interests of the board, for the reason that matters affecting policy, mechanical appliances and so on are discussed in the presence of the Chief Fire Officer at board meetings. Those matters are considered during the first part of the meeting, after which the Chief Fire Officer leaves, then matters affecting staff and administration are dealt with. It is not fair then for an employee to sit on the board during the entire meeting, even when the Chief Fire Officer is not present. Further, that board member can go into the Chief Fire Officer's quarters and use his facilities, a practice followed by other members of the board. I do not think it is fair that that should happen. It may be all right to appoint representatives of employees on certain boards where they do not directly affect the administration or the decisions of heads of departments.

A large number of men are employed throughout Western Australia in the various fire brigades. On occasions, matters affecting discipline might be brought up, and it is not advisable for an employee's representative to take part in discussions because the representative might be of a garrulous nature and might repeat the discussions amongst the men. As there are already ten members on the board, I cannot see that the addition of another would make the board function any more satisfactorily. The Minister said that in New South Wales an employee's representative was appointed to the Fire Brigades Board. I have been informed of one instance which occurred, and this is contained in the annual report: A matter was brought before the board affecting an employee who happened to be a representative of the employees on the board. He was asked to leave the meeting so that the other members could discuss the problem, but did not do so without making a strong protest. A similar position could arise in this State, and I do not think it would be fair for him to adjudicate on a problem affecting himself. It has happened in New South Wales, and could happen here.

Under section 15 of the principal Act it is provided that no person who is an employee of the board can be appointed to it. That provision was included for a definite reason, namely, because Parliament did not consider it wise to have an employee on the board. It is now proposed to amend the provision to enable an employee to be so appointed, and I do not think that is wise. A deputation from the Fire Brigades Board went to the Minister on this question. The board was unanimous in protesting that an employee should not sit on the board. The Minister should have taken cognisance of its desire to preserve the happy relations which now exist between the board and its employees. Parliament should not appoint to the board a representative of employees who number some hundreds.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: How many are there?

Mr. YATES: Hundreds. I do not know exactly.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: There are not hundreds. You ought to know, because you are talking about them.

Mr. YATES: I do know.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You do not know what you are talking about, because there are not hundreds concerned.

Mr. YATES: There are over 300 employed by the Fire Brigades Board. I did not ask for the figures. I was told it was about that number, and they are stationed all over Western Australia. Mention has been made of the fact that the volunteer fire brigades have a representative on the board, and the argument was advanced

that if it was wise for them to have representation, so should the employees. A circumstance that should be taken into account is that the volunteers are not paid for their services, and they were given representation because matters of board policy did not intimately affect them and so the representative could bring to bear an open mind on board matters.

The volunteer fire brigades have performed a very useful service and are continuing to do so, not only in country areas, but also in some of the near metropolitan areas. I believe they were given representation on the board because of their voluntary work, and it was thought that a representative would have considerable knowledge of the functioning of fire brigade services. It is natural to assume that such a representative would have experience and knowledge that would qualify him to act as a member of the board.

I am not denying that a representative of the employees would not have similar knowledge, but, as I have explained, the circumstances are different. A permanent fireman is employed by the board as a servant, and this being so, he should not sit on the board and be in a position to adjudicate on others. The board is of such a strength now that to add to its number would make it very unwieldy.

For my part, I trust that the Minister will not proceed with the Bill, which is not in the best interests of all concerned. The board is against the proposal and I am certain that most of the local authorities also are opposed to it. When the matter was referred back to the Local Government Association by its representative, the decision of most of the local authorities favoured the board's attitude that an employee should not be a member of the board. The decision was not unanimous; I believe one or two local authorities did not express an opinion, but a large majority of those contacted were opposed to an employee being appointed to the board. I shall vote against the second reading because I consider the proposal is not a wise one.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [12.52]: This about the most inconsistent place I have struck for many years. We have just completed the passing of a Bill to place three representatives of onion growers on that board—men who are concerned with the growing and selling of onions.

Mr. Yates: They are not employees of the board.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Let the hon. member wait a minute. They are interested in the price they can get for their commodity. Now, when we propose to appoint a representative of the workers to the Fire Brigades Board, the member for South Perth opposes it. Why, one would scarcely believe that we are living in the

year 1953. There should have been a representative of the workers on the board years ago.

Mr. Yates: They why did not your Party appoint one?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: It was news to me to hear the hon. member say that the Fire Brigades Board is against this proposal. I know members of the board intimately, and I think that a number of them would welcome the appointment of a representative of the workers.

Mr. Yates: Then why did the board say unanimously that it did not want a representative of the workers?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I think the Minister for Justice knows a good deal about this matter. The member for South Perth told us that there were hundreds of permanent firemen. He does not know anything about it; there are not hundreds. At present there are roughly 170 firemen, excluding officers, and there are not too many officers. I consider that it would be an admirable move to appoint a fireman to the board because he would have the necessary knowledge to assist the board.

The member for South Perth said that the volunteer firemen were entitled to a representative because his experience would be of considerable benefit to the board. My reply is that an experienced permanent fireman would be of much greater value on the board because of his greater knowledge. As a matter of fact the volunteer firemen devote quite a lot of time to sporting activities. These firemen are very useful in small towns, but we should not rely upon their services in large towns because they are not able to give the time that fire protection requires in big centres such as Midland Junction. I should be surprised to learn that any of those men would offer any objection to the appointment of a representative of the firemen's union, and I am satisfied that such an appointment would make for the better working of the board.

We have workers' representatives on various boards and growers' representatives on boards such as the Potato Board and the Onion Board. They are workers in their respective industries, and all they are interested in is the price that can be obtained for their commodities. I hope that before long we shall have an arbitration board including two or three representatives of the workers in its personnel, so that the workers will obtain greater benefit from their labour, just as the onion growers are going to get.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You did not oppose the proposal in the onion Bill.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: No; in my opinion the worker is entitled to the full benefit of his labour irrespective of whether he is working for himself or for a boss. I am disgusted that a member of Parliament in the year 1953 should be found opposing the idea of having a repre-

sentative of the workers on a board of 10. What harm could he do? None at all; but he could do a lot of good and assist in the better working of the board. I hope that the Bill will be passed.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth—in reply) [12.57]: With the member for Fremantle, I must express surprise at the attitude adopted by the member for South Perth, though I am aware that there is a definite bias against the workers on the part of members occupying seats on the other side of the Chamber.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You think there is?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Why not use accurate language?

Mr. Yates: The board is large enough at present.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The bias of members opposite has been manifested on many occasions.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: No, it has not.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I would have expected that, when one of the younger members of Parliament was dealing with the Bill and therefore was free to adopt the attitude he thought right, he would have been more generous. It is a different matter when a member out of Party loyalty follows the lead of the senior members of his Party.

The member for South Perth adduced as one of his arguments against the proposal that the board for years had worked in a manner that was entirely satisfactory and that there had been no detriment to the workers because, in that industry, they had been singularly free from disputes and strikes. That portion of his statement was quite true, but does the hon. member suggest that the workers should be penalised because of their good industrial record?

We may conclude from the hon. member's argument that had there been trouble, he would have agreed to the workers having a representative on the board with a view to introducing a little industrial harmony. However, their conduct has indicated that they are a body of responsible men, and because of their experience and knowledge, they are well qualified to play a part in the administration of fire brigade work.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You think that one of the employees should be on the board.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Unquestionably.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That is what you mean?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes, unquestionably. Had the hon. member noticed what has been happening in the

last few minutes, he would have realised that the only proposal in the Bill that has been discussed is the one dealing with the appointment of a representative of the workers to the board.

Sitting suspended from 1.0 to 2.15 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The member for South Perth was also concerned lest the representative of the professional firemen who was appointed to the board should prove to be irresponsible and carry tales back to the men, which would be damaging to the smooth working of the fire brigades. I do not think the hon. member does himself justice when he casts a reflection on the possible appointee, because as I explained when introducing the measure, there is nothing novel in this procedure. The member for South Perth should give some warrant for his assertion or suspicion.

I do not know whether he has any complaints to make about the employees' representative on the State Electricity Commission. That representative is Mr. Richter, and he has carried out his duties in a satisfactory manner and with a due sense of responsibility for the position he occupies. There is, accordingly, no reason for thinking that a fireman, appointed to the board, would behave in anything but a proper manner. The hon. member went further and suggested that the fireman on the board might be confronted with a matter concerning himself, and therefore would be adjudicating on a question of self-interest. There is, of course, the rare chance that such would be the case.

Mr. Yates: It did happen once in New South Wales, so it is possible for it to occur.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes, but in any event he would be one member of a board of 11, and irrespective of what he said or did, his voice would be heard and that would be about all. The member for South Perth was apparently wrongly briefed to some extent because he informed us that the Fire Brigades Board had waited on the Minister, namely, the Chief Secretary, by way of deputation, and had unanimously protested that an employee should not sit on the board.

That is not in accordance with fact, because no such deputation ever waited on the Minister. He did receive from the board a communication stating that it had unanimously decided to request that he should receive a deputation to discuss the matter, but there was no suggestion in the communication that a decision had been carried, or that if it had, there was anything unanimous about it. Some notice should be taken of the views expressed by the board.

The Chief Secretary replied to the communication indicating that this was a Cabinet decision on a matter of principle,

and therefore no good purpose would be served by receiving the deputation. I think it is time we had a look at these matters in proper perspective. After all, the Government or Parliament is the chief executive of the State, and the Fire Brigades Board was established, and still exists, as a result of legislation passed by Parliament. Accordingly, it is the board's duty to accept the wishes of the representatives of the people.

The member for South Perth further suggested that the board, at present composed of ten persons, would, by the fact of its being increased to 11, be unwieldy. I do not know where the line of demarcation is; or if there is anything magical about the number ten. Apparently it is just perfect in the eyes of the member for South Perth, so that with one more it would be out of balance.

Mr. Yates: It is still a bit large at ten.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I would be prepared to give serious consideration to an amendment, if the hon. member cares to move it, to reduce the representation of the insurance companies from three to two or one, but I do feel that in order to have a properly balanced board, all interested sections should be represented. This is not a question of a tug-of-war or of an interminable battle between the board and the employees. The suggestion here is to assist in the smoother working of the board and to give some impetus to the good relationships existing between the parties; and they have been very favourable, with, of course, a number of exceptions.

As I indicated earlier, there is, from the Government's point of view, this matter of principle, that in Government instrumentalities and public concerns there should be a representative of that most important section, namely, the workers engaged in the particular industry concerned. I hope Parliament will agree to the Bill, particularly the important proposition round which the whole debate has revolved.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair, the Minister for Housing in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Section 7 amended:

Mr. YATES: Following an interjection by the member for Mt. Lawley, the Minister assured us that the intention in introducing the Bill was to make sure that a member of either the Fire Brigades Employees' Industrial Union of Workers or of the Fire Brigades Officers' Association Union of Workers of Western Australia

should be appointed to the board. To ensure that the appointment comes within those terms, I move an amendment—

That at the end of the clause the following words be added:— "and who shall be an employee of the Western Australian Fire Brigades Board".

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I am unable to agree to the amendment as I think the unions concerned should be empowered to appoint any person whom they consider best qualified to represent them. The secretaries of unions are not, as a rule, employed by the Fire Brigades Board but are individuals appointed to the post by the unions. A union secretary is appointed to represent its members in the Arbitration Court, the Industrial Court or in negotiations with employers and so on, and I feel that for the purpose we are now discussing the unions concerned should be able to appoint whoever they desire to express their point of view at meetings of the board.

Mr. YATES: We are now getting the real story. I agree with the member for Fremantle that no one is better qualified than a member of a union to represent that organisation and the amendment would ensure that such a person was appointed. The hon. member added that such a man would have more experience than would a volunteer fireman, but now it seems that it will be a union secretary who will be appointed to the board, and I am entirely against that.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The union should have the right to select whoever it wants for this purpose. The volunteer fireman did not elect a volunteer member—

Mr. Oldfield: Yes, they did.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I can remember when Mr. Carey was the volunteers' representative on the board. He was an ex-member of the Leederville Fire Brigade but had not been a member of any brigade for many years when he was a representative on the board. Later Tommy Carlisle won the ballot—it is taken every Easter by the volunteers—and represented the volunteer firemen on the board. In just the same way the unions should be allowed to appoint whoever they wish to represent them.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Apparently the Minister has changed his mind since he replied to my interjection. He now says that anyone could be appointed. That man might be an absolute agitator, but as long as the union was satisfied with its selection, he could be appointed to be a member of the board. However, I am not worried about that, because I think union members have some sense. A union secretary is not one who would be impartial. He is a paid organiser and a servant of the union. I do not think it would be right to appoint him.

The Minister has stated that union secretaries appear before the Arbitration Court. Therefore, as a member of the board, he could hear all the points of view submitted at any meeting, and then use that information for his own purposes in the Arbitration Court. The Minister for Labour apparently realises that is so; that is why he is groaning. When a case is heard before the court, each side has the right to investigate the facts that are to be presented, but if a union secretary is appointed he will be in a most advantageous position.

The Minister for Labour: Who puts the board's case before the Arbitration Court now?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not know; Mr. Reeves, I suppose. I know that the Minister would object to a union secretary being present at a Cabinet meeting and hearing all the views expressed, and then go to the Arbitration Court and say, "Well, Mr. Justice Jackson, I know Cabinet does not agree to that because I was there. Mr. Hegney said so-and-so." Members can realise how foolish this proposition is. If the representative of the men is to have regard to union affairs, a man who is directly responsible to the union should not be appointed. A member of the board should be there to represent only a specific point of view.

The Minister for Labour: What about the advocates who appear in the Arbitration Court? Do not they represent specific interests?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: They do not.

The Minister for Labour: Well, who appoints them?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I will admit that they do represent specific interests, but I do not know whether they should disclose the views of the court to the respective parties. They do not represent them. The Minister would not expect Mr. Schnaars to attend a union meeting and say, "We discussed this matter, and Mr. Justice Jackson said so-and-so." This provision intends to place a union secretary, who represents one point of view, in an administrative position. He would not be on the board to represent his union. He should be appointed because of his knowledge of the matters that have to be discussed and to assist with the administration. If a union secretary is appointed, he is merely the agent of the members of his union. The man appointed should be impartial, but a union secretary would be biased because he would be bound to fight for a particular cause. The point of view expressed by the Minister will not be accepted, so why should he not be reasonable about the position?

Mr. BRADY: I hope the amendment will not be accepted because the member for South Perth contradicts himself by mov-

ing it. A few minutes ago, he put forward the argument that a man should not be on the board to judge his own case. He now proposes that an employee should be on the board to judge his own case. In any case, members are jumping to conclusions. The Minister merely said that it would be possible for a secretary of a union to be appointed. It is also possible that a retired fireman could be appointed to the board, or anybody else, for that matter. The union should be given an opportunity to choose the most suitable appointee, whether he is a retired fireman, the president of the union, or even a solicitor, if it is considered that he is the best man for the job.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Do you think he should be an independent man or a paid advocate?

Mr. BRADY: I think he should be appointed so that he might perform the job in the interests of all parties. A union secretary would be a most suitable man because he confers with the men from time to time and has a knowledge of their ability and he would also know if the best man had been appointed to any vacancy. Generally the secretary is the best person for the job because of his research regarding conditions in Australia and overseas. He watches the affairs of the fire brigades; he is in contact with all the prominent men; he is watching all the equipment, fire hazards and the interests of the insurance companies. He is the person best suited to represent the employees and officers. The amendment does not stipulate that the secretary of a union shall get the job. It merely says a person elected by the union. I oppose the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I cannot direct the unions to appoint their representative.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Do you think he should be there definitely to represent the union?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That is entirely the union's business. The remark of the member for Mt. Lawley is in complete variance with the other provisions of the Act. Ten members are appointed to the board, of whom two are appointed by the Governor and three by the insurance companies.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: But not to represent the companies.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: They are elected by the companies and there are no conditions attached. The representatives can be anybody—the member for Mt. Lawley, the president or secretary of the Employers' Federation.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not approve of that, and I will support any amendment you put forward.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: If the member for Mt. Lawley thinks that the provisions relating to the appointment of members are at variance with principles, he should take steps to amend the Act. In the appointment of the additional member to the board the same procedure will be adopted as in the case of the other ten. The representatives of the municipal councils or road boards need not be members of those bodies. As was pointed out by the member for South Fremantle, one member shall be elected by the voluntary fire brigades.

I suppose it would be all right to have officers of the Employers' Federation on the board, but there is something terribly wrong when it is proposed that a representative of the workers shall be appointed. It is not a case of electing a worker to represent the unions and workers, but of one member of the board being elected by the two unions, therefore there is no substance in the contention of those opposed to the clause.

Mr. MOIR: The member for Mt. Lawley contended that the union's representative would be a union official and would know the arguments of the board against any claims that might be made by the two unions, and therefore would be at an advantage. Everyone is aware that when a claim is made against an employer by a union, first of all a log of claims is served on the employer. Before going to court, a settlement of issues takes place at which the parties meet and discuss the items put forward. Often agreement is reached on many items. Only the items in disagreement are the subject of dispute when the case goes before the court.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: But they do not disclose their evidence.

Mr. MOIR: The parties give their reasons. The procedure is exactly the same as that carried out in any other meeting where speakers on either side give their reasons for certain things. Naturally the representatives present would hear the reasons. When a union representative is appointed to the Fire Brigades Board he will be placed at no greater advantage than if he was not sitting on the board because when it comes to industrial questions, only the reasons for refusal of requests are discussed.

Naturally, the unions would appoint the person they consider could best represent them, and he would report back to the union on the decisions and discussions of the board. After all, he is appointed to represent their interests and he would be in duty bound to report back to the body he represents. This is also the case with other members of the board; they would have to report back to the people they represent.

I take it the board is not a secret society and members are not on oath to refrain from disclosing the proceedings. Therefore any representative would be free to report back to his particular organisation on any matters discussed. I am astounded at the member for Mt. Lawley camouflaging with a smokescreen the real issue to support the amendment by the member for South Perth.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I think the Minister, in his remarks on the second reading, unwittingly misrepresented the position. He seemed to suggest that the representative should be an employee, one whose interests were bound up in the work at which he earned a livelihood. The amendment is logical and follows the line indicated by the Minister. It is not unreasonable to assume that if a union secretary were appointed, the atmosphere would not be conducive to harmonious working.

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

Ayes	....	....	....	16
Noes	....	....	....	19
Majority against				3

Ayes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Owen
Mr. Court	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hill	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Nalder	Mr. Yates
Mr. North	Mr. Bovell

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lapham
Mr. Brady	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Cornell	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Graham	Mr. Moir
Mr. Heal	Mr. Norton
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Steeman
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Styants
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Kelly	

(Teller.)

Pair.

Ayes.	Noes.
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Guthrie
Mr. Brand	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Hearman	Mr. O'Brien
Sir Ross McLarty	Mr. Hawke
Mr. Manning	Mr. May

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 to 8, Title—agreed.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

- 1, Jury Act Amendment (No. 2).
- 2, Water Boards Act Amendment.
Without amendment.

BILL—AGRICULTURE PROTECTION BOARD ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. OWEN (Darling Range) [3.5]: As members know, the Agriculture Protection Board was established by Act of Parliament in 1950, that Act having been amended since then, but the purpose of the board is to assist local authorities to control or eradicate vermin and noxious weeds and to co-ordinate the administration of the Vermin Act and the Noxious Weeds Act. I believe it has done good work since it was established.

The present board consists of the Chief Vermin Control Officer, as chairman, the Chief Weed Control Officer, the Government Entomologist, the Chief Warden of Fauna and representatives of the Treasury and the pastoral and agricultural industries, together with two representatives of local authorities. It seems to me to be a well balanced board. Its members are particularly well versed in the various fields they represent and I see no need to change the representation.

Under the present set-up the Chief Vermin Control Officer is chairman of the board, which is directly responsible to the Minister. The two departmental officers, the Government Entomologist, and the Chief Weed Control Officer are also members of the board, but, as such, are not directly responsible to the Director of Agriculture who therefore has no say in the operations of the board. Of course the Minister for Agriculture always has the director to consult on matters in which he needs direction.

It may appear to be putting the cart before the horse, but I see no great harm in that arrangement. In fact, the anomalies that the Minister mentioned are, I think, more apparent than real. The officers mentioned hold very responsible positions in the department and are well qualified to give opinions and make recommendations on the board. As responsible officers of the department I do not think they would deliberately cut across its policy. If a controversial question arose I think they would be quite willing to discuss it with the Director of Agriculture or their fellow officers so that the recommendations they made would represent the considered opinion of the department as a whole. I cannot see why the recommendations should go through the Director of Agriculture.

The Bill, as introduced, seeks to make the director chairman of the board, but I do not see that that would help in its administration or operation. It has been

the practice for many years for various officers of the department to undertake work and act in the capacity of Federal officers, particularly in the Department of Commerce, and while engaged in that way they are not responsible in those spheres to the Director of Agriculture here.

There has been no trouble in that regard in the past and I see no reason why the Director of Agriculture should be appointed as chairman of this board. There may have been some professional jealousy in the past through certain officers being given particular work of this kind, but I do not think that is sufficient reason for making the suggested change.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is not so in this case.

Mr. OWEN: That may be so, but I cannot see the necessity for including the director as chairman of the board. It would be easier for the Minister if that were done, and particularly if he were prepared to take the ideas of the chairman without question, but if he did that he would ultimately become merely a rubber stamp and that should be avoided at all costs.

A further point is that the present Director of Agriculture, in his association with other departments, is already greatly overloaded with various duties and, although he has great ability as an administrator, I do not think we should thrust any extra work upon him. In recent years there has been some reorganisation in the department and particularly at higher administrative levels, together with some recent changes in personnel. That may have resulted in the director receiving a greater measure of assistance, but I still feel that he already has more than enough work to do. Although undoubtedly he would be in a position to appoint a deputy to act as chairman for him, I cannot see that it will help in the activities of administering the board.

The Bill also proposes to make a change in the appointment of individuals instead of specified officers of the department; I refer particularly to the office of Government Entomologist and the Chief Weed Control Officer. The Minister said that there was no doubt that the persons occupying those offices were doing a good job and he also remarked that if either of them should pass away or be removed from office for any other cause, his successor might not be in a position to carry out the work entailed as a member of the board.

I feel that any person who was appointed to take the place of the present officers should be sufficiently qualified to carry out the duties of those offices, and, as such, would be quite suitable to serve on the Agriculture Protection Board. So I cannot see any need to change those appointments; they should be left to specified offices rather than individuals. If in-

dividuals were appointed, it would be possible to select officers who would be mere puppets and who would do what they were told instead of what they knew would be the best for the control of vermin and weeds.

There is a provision in the Bill that will enable the moneys paid into the fund by the Treasury and the Railways Commission for the use of the board to be used for any of the purposes set out in the Act instead of for specified purposes as is now provided. That will lead to an improvement in the working of the board because there will be greater elasticity. As the Minister mentioned, under the present set-up it would be possible for a large reserve to be held for one specified purpose, while the funds necessary for another purpose might be sadly depleted.

I have no objection to this proposal. But, at the same time, I think it would be wise not to rush in and spend the whole lot for one particular purpose and leave nothing in the fund for any other activities of the board. There might be a possibility, if most of the money had been spent, that later in the year another pest or weed would show up and in such a case no funds would be available for its control. I think some reserve should be allowed for contingencies so that there will always be at least some money available in case the unexpected arises.

All in all, the Bill has some good points, but in the main I think that the changes proposed will not achieve any greater efficiency or bring about any progress or improvement; they could result in the present director, or any future director, becoming a dictator. The director could get the ear of a sympathetic Minister for the purposes of administering the affairs of the board in a manner that the director wished. From that point of view I am inclined to oppose the measure.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [3.22]: I do not intend to take up much of the time of the House, but this measure is more important than it may appear on the surface. I agree entirely with what the member for Darling Range has said, and I appeal to the Minister to have another look at this before the Bill is passed—I say that because undoubtedly he can have it passed by force of numbers.

When the personnel of the present Cabinet was announced, it gave me a considerable amount of pleasure to know that the member for Warren had been allotted the portfolio of Minister for Agriculture. Although many of the other portfolios are important, I believe that, from a Western Australian point of view, the portfolio of Minister for Agriculture is by far the most important of them all, because our security and prosperity depend so much upon it. I believed that in

the Minister we would have a man with a will of his own; one who would not be overawed by any officer in his department. But I look with a good deal of disfavour and suspicion on the proposed alteration to the personnel of this very important board.

The present composition of the board is very good because its members are qualified men—qualified by virtue of the positions they occupy—and they have done a good job. But in the Director of Agriculture we have a man who is an excellent administrator and I say, "Let him keep to his administrative job and not enter into a specialised field for which, in my opinion, he has no real qualifications." There is no doubt that with this new appointment will come the request for a new classification; but if we leave the personnel as it is, there will be no need for any extra expenditure on salaries because of the extra responsibility carried by the officers concerned. The Minister laughed when the member for Darling Range used the words "a rubber stamp".

The Minister for Agriculture: I should say I did.

Mr. ACKLAND: The hon. member did not mean that in a derogatory sense; I am certain that he did not think that the Minister was a rubber stamp. But at the same time the more power that we give to the chief administrative officer of that department, the harder it will be for the Minister to assert his own viewpoint.

I agree with the proposal in the Bill which will enable the funds of the board to be spent in any direction considered necessary. It may be essential to use the funds of one section almost exclusively on one area and for one specific job. That has some advantage; but with all the good will in the world towards the Minister, I sincerely ask him to have another look at this measure. Without wanting to be disrespectful to the Minister, I would say that the member for Darling Range, particularly, and I have far more knowledge of the department, and especially this branch, than the Minister. We wish the Minister well and we wish the industry well. Therefore we strongly suggest to the Minister that he does not bludgeon this measure through the House by force of numbers.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [3.26]: I, too, would like to dissuade the Minister for Agriculture from the course that he apparently intends to take by means of the Bill. Obviously this is a most important board and many of us who represent country areas have a considerable amount to do with it and its activities, which are of a specialised nature. I cannot visualise the Director of Agriculture being able, in

addition to all his other duties, to give suitable attention to the job of chairman of the board.

As far as I know, the board has been working satisfactorily up to date, and the Minister has not justified any necessity for a change. Another point that strikes me is that the Minister has changed his ideas. If he thinks back a little he will realise that the course he is suggesting in this measure is at variance with the principle that he advocated only yesterday or the day before. In the abattoirs Bill he insisted that the chief administrative officer of that particular department should be on the board.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is right.

Mr. PERKINS: When dealing with this measure the Minister changed his views. Now, apparently, it is all right to have some other officer on the board and the chief administrative officer is still to be an employee of the department. I want the Minister to explain why he is following one policy in one activity that he administers and suggesting another course of action with regard to some other activity.

The Minister for Agriculture: You have not read it aright.

Mr. PERKINS: I rose to speak because I wanted to ask the Minister to explain the position. The board has been working satisfactorily and the local authorities have a good deal of confidence in it because of its present personnel. I think the Minister needs to make out a strong case to justify an alteration in the set-up. Up to date he has not done so.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [3.29]: I, for one moment, would like to remind the Minister that the provisions in this Bill are not in any way in accordance with the recommendations which he subscribed to as a member of the select committee—and subsequently an honorary Royal Commission—which inquired into the subject some few years ago. The members of that committee recommended the creation of an agriculture protection board. It is true that that select committee or honorary Royal Commission recommended the appointment of the Minister as chairman. But it certainly recommended the appointment of a vice-chairman and of the officer who is to be in charge and who today is known as a chief executive officer under this legislation; in other words, Mr. Tomlinson.

It seems difficult for me to understand. Not only is there some weight in the remark made by the member for Roe, but there is a substantial difference in principle as well as in detail shown between the recommendations of the Royal Com-

mission, to which the Minister subscribed, and the provisions of the Bill. If I remember aright, the honorary Royal Commission was most anxious for a professional officer to have a superior position as a member of the board. In the net result, he was made responsible to the Minister, instead of the Minister being chairman of the board.

That was probably the better course; to ensure that the Minister was not the chairman of the board. As to the rest, I extend my opposition except to the clause which relates to the financial appropriation. In that, of course, there is sound commonsense. I think it was an error to endeavour to separate the funds for expenditure and the method adopted in this amending Bill is the wiser one. That reduces me to supporting the second reading; otherwise I would have tried to boot the Bill out forthwith. When we come to that clause in Committee—the one making an appointment in lieu of the present one—I will oppose it.

MR. MANN (Avon Valley) [3.32]: I oppose this Bill. I cannot see why the Minister wants to alter the board. I have spoken to members of the local authorities in my district and they say they get first-hand information on the question of vermin, and indeed all the road boards in my electorate that have had dealings with this board are quite satisfied with its operations. Why should we alter it? The person it is proposed to appoint to this Board has a full-time job as Director of Agriculture and of Land Settlement, and I hope the Minister will agree to delete that part of the Bill. Other members have said that the financial part of the Bill is all right, and I think perhaps it is. I only wanted to make a protest to the House on the appointment of the Director of Agriculture as chairman of the board.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [3.34]: I also would like to make a few comments on the Bill. I agree with the line taken by previous speakers. Throughout the State we find there is satisfaction with the constitution of this board and there is entire agreement right through the agricultural areas that the manner in which it is carrying out its duties provides a far greater service to the State than it has had previously.

In many country areas the vermin problem is not nearly so bad as it was in years prior to the appointment of the board. We also find that the rabbit menace in many of these areas has diminished in proportion to what it was during the war years. The board has tackled this problem with much efficiency and the manner in which it has carried out its duties is sufficient argument against displacing the chairman of the board with another.

It has been mentioned that the Director of Agriculture has a full-time job. There is no doubt about that. I cannot see how he can adequately deal with the work he has on hand without taking on further duties. Accordingly, I too appeal to the Minister to let the present board continue its duties; let it continue to perform these duties in the efficient manner in which it is carrying them out today. The work of the board meets with the general approval of road boards and local governing bodies throughout the State. I trust the Minister will not push this Bill and will allow the personnel of the board to carry out still further the work it has in hand.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren—in reply) [3.36]: I can assure members that my only reason for bringing this Bill before the House is to make the Agriculture Protection Board more effective in its work than it is at present.

Mr. Ackland: It will not have that effect, except with respect to finance.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I understand the hon. member's point of view, and I appreciate it very much. At present, however, the chairman of the Agriculture Protection Board should be available for more important work than chairing the meetings. He should be released to do the work for which he was appointed, namely, the destruction of vermin. I know quite well what his opinion is in this matter. So, much of his time is taken up in doing administrative work which could be left to departmental officers, which would allow him to devote his energies and time to the job for which he was appointed. That point seems to be overlooked by members.

Hon. A. F. Watts: He could be chairman without doing administrative work.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The fact of putting the Director of Agriculture as chairman of the board is not going to interfere with the efficiency of the board by depriving it of the services and advice of the chief executive officer; and as that is the position he will then hold, he will be on tap the whole time to handle the work of the board, apart from his normal duties. The board will be in a stronger position than at present.

Mr. Nalder: That is the argument you used in favour of the appointment of the Controller of Abattoirs.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I never said that the Controller of the Abattoirs, as chief executive officer, should be chairman of the Abattoirs Board. I said he should be there in his capacity of controller, to give advice to the board, and that is exactly the position I am trying to ask Mr. Tomlinson to take. I want to free him from his other activities to permit him to do the job for which he was

appointed, as is the case with the controller at Midland Junction. I have not changed my ideas at all; these two cases are parallel. If I get what I am after, then the chief executive officer of the Agriculture Protection Board will be in the same position as the Controller of Abattoirs at Midland Junction, in their respective spheres. I do not think there can be any argument about that.

Mr. Nalder: Will he be a member of the board?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, except to be a consultant for the board at its meetings. The Controller of Abattoirs at Midland Junction is not the consultant for that board at its meetings.

Mr. Nalder: If the board required him he would be.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Then they do not often require him, but that is not the point. It is that this officer should be allowed to do the job for which he was appointed. He is doing it to the best of his ability and he is a very valuable officer, but the services he would render to the State would be better if he were limited to his own work without the onus of administration. So if the Director of Agriculture is placed on the board as chairman it will have the effect I desire, in spite of what the member for Darling Range says. It will have a better effect because the position of the Minister today is a rather unfortunate one.

I am not suggesting that any Minister should become a rubber stamp, though it would probably be quite easy for him to do so. In order to enable the Minister to know what is going on, what is proposed is the best set-up; when the present chairman of the Agriculture Protection Board approaches the Minister direct, under his own authority, without any reference to officers in intervening departments, it places the Minister in an awkward position. It is not a question of making decisions on policy because that is a Minister's responsibility, but, week after week, hundreds of technical things crop up about which the Minister knows nothing at all and on which a decision has to be made.

The result is that he has, in effect, to go behind the backs of the Agriculture Protection Board to get advice from the Director of Agriculture, who has no power under the Act to give it to him. This situation is really working in reverse; it is completely upside down. If the findings of the Royal Commission on vermin had been agreed to and the Minister become what was nominally known as chairman, I am almost certain that the Minister of the day, whoever he was, would have made the Director of Agriculture the chairman.

Mr. Ackland: Why cannot the chairman of the protection board talk to you?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: He can.

Mr. Ackland: You are suggesting that it is very awkward.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I say it is awkward in technical details. If the proposed sequence worked, there would be a complete set-up in administration. Bearing in mind what the member for Moore said regarding the qualities of the present Director of Agriculture in an administrative sense, there can be no doubt that the set-up would be complete. I have had experience of some of the difficulties I have mentioned, and that is why I asked a committee of responsible, experienced officers to examine what they felt to be the weaknesses in the set-up from the administrative point of view. The committee examined the set-up and reported to me, and that report is the basis of this Bill.

It was approved by the Public Service Commissioner, the Under Treasurer and so on. Each of them has examined the situation and knows the weaknesses. I do not mind whether we have the Director of Agriculture or anybody else, or whether his name is Baron Hay or Smith. There is a definite weakness in the set-up and we are endeavouring to overcome it.

With regard to the other matter dealt with in the Bill, we might have Mr. Jenkins as Government Entomologist today—and he is undoubtedly a very good man in his services to this board—but we do not know whom he will have as a successor. As a consequence, we should not lay it down that the Government Entomologist shall automatically be a member of this board. We should stipulate an officer—or in this case, two officers—of the Department of Agriculture, instead of tying it down to the limited scope of a certain office. We should widen the scope so that the department can place on the board the most experienced officers who are likely to do the most good.

Do not get the idea that there is any intention to depose the present two officers; there is not. They are doing too good a job for them to be moved; but I felt, and this committee feels, that there is a weakness in tying the legislation down in a manner that specifically refers to a certain office instead of leaving the matter wide open through the whole department. I cannot explain any more than I have done. That is my point of view, and not only mine, but also that of those who were appointed to examine the situation. I do not think members should have anything to complain about in this legislation, which I feel is warranted in every way.

Sitting suspended from 3.46 to 4.10 p.m.

Mr. Owen: Have you had any trouble with the present board?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No. It is a most satisfactory board in every way; and I do not say that simply as a result of reports that come to me once a month, but because I have sat in with the board, and I know its members are a fine lot of chaps who are doing an excellent job.

Mr. Owen: That is our opinion.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. There is no intention to alter that position. The Bill merely seeks to alter the sequence of control so that on the one hand the present chairman of the Agriculture Protection Board will be the chief executive officer and will be able really to get busy; and, on the other hand, so that the heads of the Department of Agriculture shall have some control over their officers who are appointed to this board. In addition, it will enable the Minister to be in a proper position to refer technical details, on which he has little or no knowledge, to the proper authorities. That sequence is broken under the present Act. If we follow the lines suggested in the Bill, we should find it satisfactory in every respect.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 5 amended:

Mr. OWEN: Without going over the ground I covered during the second reading debate, I ask the Committee to vote against this clause.

Mr. ACKLAND: The Minister knows that the people who come into close contact with the board, and for whom the board functions, are thoroughly satisfied with the present set-up. I give him an assurance that there is no political significance in our objection to the suggested alteration to the composition of the board. I earnestly ask him to take the advice of those who have to work under the board rather than that of some civil servants who believe it is not quite satisfactory. In taking the action that we have, I can assure the Minister that we are actuated with the kindest feelings and we believe that we are far better qualified than he is to determine the composition of the board. I hope he agrees to the deletion of this paragraph.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I can appreciate the views expressed by members of the Country and Democratic League, but in view of the difficulties of carrying on the job successfully under the present set-up, I consider that the suggested amendment is the only way I know to improve the present situation.

Mr. Ackland: You have already said that the present situation is entirely satisfactory.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I said that all members of the board are excellent officers, but I consider that if the chairman could be relieved of his administrative duties he would be able to do far more work than he is now. If Country and Democratic League members feel that the selection of the Director of Agriculture is not in the best interests of the board, I would suggest that an amendment moved by any one of them should take the form of naming someone who can act in his stead. I cannot think of a better administrative officer than the present Director of Agriculture, and unless the member for Moore can offer an alternative I oppose the suggestion that the paragraph should be deleted. I have one or two consequential amendments which I propose to move in order to rectify some error in draftsmanship.

On motions by the Minister for Agriculture clause amended by inserting "paragraph (a) of" after the word "after" in line 1 of paragraph (c) by striking out the word "subsection" in line 2 of paragraph (c) and inserting the word "paragraph" in lieu; and by striking out the number and letter in brackets "(3a)" and inserting "(3b)" in lieu.

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

Ayes	...	...	18
Noes	...	...	15
Majority for	...	...	3

Ayes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Brady	Mr. Norton
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Heal	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Styants
Mr. Lapham	Mr. May

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. North
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Court	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hill	Mr. Watts
Mr. Mann	Mr. Wild
Mr. Nalder	Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Nimmo	

(Teller.)

Clause, as amended, thus passed.

Clauses 3 and 4, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [4.28] in moving the second reading said: If members will look at the Bill, which is on the file, they will notice that it proposes to make a

slight amendment to the Land Act, 1933-50. At present the Act provides that the Governor may resume any part of a pastoral lease for agricultural or horticultural purposes or for mining or for any other purpose that is in the public interest.

The Act also provides that before that can be done sufficient notice must be given to the lessee concerned. Section 55 provides that a lessee of a pastoral lease situated in the South-West Land Division may apply for land within his lease under conditional purchase conditions provided the land does not extend through the separate selections adjoining the homestead nor through 20 per cent. of the land held on lease. He must also give notice, within three months, of his intention to apply for a section of land in the South-West Land Division.

Under Section 56 pastoralists with leases in the North-West, Eastern Goldfields and Eucla Divisions who have 10 sheep or livestock to each 1,000 acres may apply to purchase land within their own leases covering one or more blocks, provided that the area does not exceed one per cent. of the total and does not come under the goldfield or mineral field conditions. The difference between those divisions and the South-West Land Division is that three months' notice must be given in the latter, and 12 months in the former. This Bill seeks to bring the areas into line with each other for the purpose of serving notices.

When that part of the Act was agreed to, transport facilities in those days were nothing like what they are today. With the advent of air travel, it is quite ridiculous to hold up action for 12 months in any part of the State where a resumption is desired. Consequently the Bill seeks to make the period uniform throughout the State so that three months' notice shall be given. It may be of passing interest to say that the Government is very interested in developing the northern and Kimberley areas. The holdings of those large pastoral leases can well provide a good standard of living for a far greater number of people than are living there today.

Hon. L. Thorn: The idea is to make provision for some intense culture there.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so, and to further the development of those areas. If the Government, in conformity with this Act, has to give 12 months' notice before resumption of a lease, the development of the area could be delayed for that period. I hope the Bill will receive the approval of the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. L. Thorn, debate adjourned.

BILL—GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS
(Hon. H. H. Styants—Kalgoorlie) [4.34]
in moving the second reading said: There are four amendments to this Bill, which all deal with the direction and management of the Government railways. The first amendment deals with Section 8, which has reference to the constitution of the commission. Subsection (5) of that section is amended to provide for one Assistant Commissioner to represent the employees of the commission, and to carry out such other functions as are resolved by the commission and approved by the Minister.

Actually these functions were carried out by the late Mr. Raynor. He was appointed under the existing Act and was known as Assistant Commissioner, Commercial. Soon after taking over the post as Minister for Railways, I approached the commission and suggested that some arrangement could be made so that the employees could get representation or have their views represented at meetings of the commission. It was decided that, in addition to his duties as Assistant Commissioner, Commercial, Mr. Raynor would also represent the employees on the commission. That arrangement was carried out until his lamentable and untimely death.

Employee representation on governing bodies is fast becoming recognised as a distinct advantage in attaining harmonious industrial conditions in any organisation, and if this amendment is agreed to, I feel that it will considerably assist in the rehabilitation of our railways, by bringing about a greater degree of co-operation between the employees and their various union organisations and the commission.

In making that statement I am not inferring in any way that there is a lack of co-operation between them. As a matter of fact, the running unions—the W.A.S.R.E., the Loco Drivers' and the Railway Officers—have been very co-operative and recently agreed to forgo their annual leave and to work overtime to handle the harvest during the months of January, February and March. With direct representation on the commission there is no doubt that the employees will have a better appreciation of the difficulties and problems which at times confront the commission in the management of the railways.

As an instance of that, last week the unions representing employees in the Midland Junction workshops were complaining because the commission found it necessary to let a contract to an outside firm for the repair and rehabilitation of 100 wagons. They claimed that work was going outside the department which could conveniently and efficiently be done in the workshops. After hearing the commission's side of the case, I called a conference of the parties,

at which I presided. After one hour's explanation of the position, when the commission pointed out to union officials that the workshops were working to 100 per cent. capacity, the officials went away quite satisfied that there was no danger of retrenchment. It was absolutely essential for the speedy rehabilitation of the railways to let out that contract, and sometimes it is necessary to call on private firms to carry out work. The consequent improvement in industrial relations between employer and employee by such procedure should bring about a greater degree of efficiency which is so necessary if the railways are to be completely rehabilitated.

Subsection (9) of Section 8 is amended to provide that the term of appointment of the Chief Commissioner, should the position become vacant at any time, will in future be seven years, with the right of re-appointment for further terms. Similarly, the term applying to the two positions of Assistant Commissioners are to be amended to provide that future appointments will be for a term of five years, with the right of reappointment. It is generally agreed that the provisions under the present Act are undesirable because they give the commissioners a life tenure of office.

Since Mr. Rayner's death I have received from most countries which form the British Commonwealth of Nations, and from every State in Australia, information regarding the set-up of railway management. In nowhere else in the British Commonwealth of Nations are the management commissions set up with life tenure.

In Victoria there are three commissioners, the chairman of which is appointed for seven years and the other two for five, with the right of renewal. In Tasmania railways and road transport are supervised by a transport commission. In New South Wales there is one commissioner and he is appointed for a term of seven years, and similar conditions apply in Queensland and South Australia.

In my opinion the appointment of a commission of three with life tenure is very undesirable; it was very indiscreet and unwise. It means that two of the commissioners out of the original three will be appointed for life in that job. If it was deemed expedient to alter the constitution of the commission, or to dispense with the services of the remaining two commissioners, there will only be one way to carry that out—to compensate them or buy them out.

Because the new appointee may be a man of 45 years of age, the Government does not consider it wise to appoint him with a life tenure in that office to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Mr. Raynor. He will hold office for 20 years until

he reaches 65. Assuming he behaves himself and commits no misdemeanour, as set out in the Act, which would make him liable for dismissal, he will have a tenure of 20 years. This amendment will eventually bring the terms of appointment of the Railways Commission on to a similar basis to that applying to the members of similar commissions and boards in other States, which is more desirable than the present system of permanent appointment. Nowhere in Australia is a term of appointment in excess of seven years.

Should an employee of the department be appointed a member of the commission, he would, in effect, cease to become a permanent employee of the department, and take up a position with an appointment of seven or five years. Section 11 is therefore amended to cover this contingency and provide that in such case, the employee shall be entitled, on the expiration of his service on the commission, to reinstatement in employment in the Railway Department, at the classification and with the rights which would have applied if no interruption had occurred to his normal permanent employment in the department.

That is only fair because it is almost certain that the appointee to the vacant position will be an employee of the department. So that it will not be a discouragement to those in the higher classifications of the service, men possibly aged 40 to 50, to make application for this post, we inserted this provision to enable him to go back into the department after a term of five years. That is fair and equitable.

Section 12 of the principal Act proposes the abolition of the body corporate by the name of the commissioner and the transfer of functions, powers, etc. Subsection (2) of the section provides that on the appointed day, the exercise of certain functions shall be transferred to the Minister and others to the commission. By this Bill, we propose to amend Section 12 by making the definition of "appointed day" read "the day fixed for the coming into operation of the Government Railways Act, 1948," which was the 1st July, 1949, instead of a day to be fixed by proclamation. We also propose to confirm as lawful and validate everything which has been done, or which purports to have been done, by the Minister and the commission since the 30th June, 1949, in the exercise of the respective functions transferred to them.

The section should have been amended years ago. It provides that an appointed day shall be proclaimed upon which the Minister and the commission shall assume their respective responsibilities, but, through an oversight or omission by the previous Government, the appointed day was never proclaimed. The Crown Law Department has advised us that the body corporate, known as the single Commis-

sioner of Railways, has never been abolished; neither have the duties of the Minister and the commissioners as defined in the new Act been proclaimed.

Therefore, we propose to amend Section 12 to provide, as set out in the Bill, for the jurisdiction of the Minister as to policy and to define the jurisdiction of the commission in the matter of the administration and working of the railways. The body corporate—the one-man commissionership—that existed for so many years will be dissolved and action taken on behalf of the Minister or the commission since the 1st July, 1949, the date when the three-man commission came into operation, will be validated. I regret that the Bill has been delayed till such a late stage of the session, but this has been due entirely to my desire to obtain information from various parts of the British Commonwealth about the set-up for railways management in those places. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. F. Watts, debate adjourned.

BILL—ABORIGINES WELFARE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [4.50]: My contribution to this debate will not be lengthy because the House spent much time yesterday afternoon and evening in discussing the subject. It was very interesting to hear the various points debated, but I feel that not many practical suggestions were put forward that would lead to the uplifting of the coloured people.

When we look back over the years and consider our treatment of the aboriginal population, there is nothing that we as Australians have reason to be proud of. We have left these people on the very bottom rung of the ladder and, as a State, have done very little to uplift them to a position of equality with the whites, to which, I think we all agree, they are entitled. They are flesh and blood and have been given souls, just as we have, and on that account alone we should be doing more than has been done in the past. During the last few years, public opinion has been aroused, and there is now a definite feeling in the community that very much more should be done for the native population than has been done in the past.

I wish to offer one or two suggestions to the Minister in charge of the Bill to which I hope he will give consideration. I cannot say that I regard the measure with much enthusiasm. I cannot see how by its passing these people can be uplifted. The responsibility of the Government is greater today than ever before because of the awakening of public opinion, but

I cannot believe that this measure will in any way tend to raise the natives from their present standard to one very much higher.

Again, I suggest that, instead of extending through this measure citizenship rights to all these people—the danger of so doing has been emphasised by various speakers—those rights should be granted on an entirely different basis. Here is an aspect that I should like the Minister to consider. This granting of citizenship rights should be carried out progressively. I suggest that those rights be immediately conceded to children up to the age of 16 or 18 years, and then, by progressive steps, we could proceed and assist in keeping down to a minimum the tragedy that would occur if the Bill were passed in its present form.

Mr. Hutchinson: You would allow the others to continue?

Mr. NALDER: I intend to suggest further measures. The work of the missions should occupy a much higher place than it has done in the efforts to further the welfare of the natives. I think no member would be prepared to deny that the missions have done a really wonderful work. I have met natives who had passed through mission schools, and they conducted themselves in a manner that would be no discredit to a white person. This affords sufficient proof of the value of the work being done by the mission people. How has that happened? We are well aware of the lack of success that attended the work of the departmental settlements that existed a few years ago. The member for Moore gave a very vivid description of the conditions that prevailed at Mogumber, and to a degree, though not quite as bad, similar conditions existed at Carrolup.

What has caused the change? The people in charge of the settlements were appointed by the Government. I have no intention of decrying the work that they were trying to do. Probably they carried it out to the best of their ability, but they did not reach the hearts of the natives. The success of the missions is due to the fact that the people in charge dealt sympathetically with the natives. These mission workers were actuated by kindly feelings; they treated the natives decently, encouraged them, and endeavoured to uplift them.

The mission people have accepted a call to this work; they are not paid for their services. They have undertaken the work because of the love they bear for their fellowmen. I believe that that is the secret of the missions' success in this field. Therefore, I say that all the support the Government can give the missions will be recouped to the State in greater measure than any money that might be devoted to administration. This is one of the best ways in which we can strive to uplift the native people.

I should like to make brief reference to the dangers that admittedly would be the outcome of the passing of this Bill. The granting of the rights envisaged in the Bill would enable the natives to obtain liquor at their own free will. The other night, in front of my home, two natives having citizenship rights sat under a light at the street corner. They were very much under the influence of liquor. One of them decided to undress himself and removed every stitch of his clothing. Then he went into a dance under the street light for about five minutes. That is only one instance of how liquor affects these people. On Saturday night last, a function was held by native people in a reserve, and the noise created round about 10 p.m. resembled the din of a battle in progress.

The Premier: Have you ever heard Johnny Ray on the radio?

Mr. NALDER: That may be an apt description, too. However, I feel that we should have a further investigation into this question before passing the Bill. We are asked with a stroke of the pen, as the member for Roe said last night, to put these unfortunate people even further back than they are now. I trust the Minister will give thought to the suggestion of the Leader of the Country Party, that further consideration should be given to this matter before the measure is passed. For those reasons I cannot support the Bill as presented to the House.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [5.1]: I feel that one has a duty to declare one's attitude towards a measure such as this and that the Minister is entitled to know one's reaction to legislation so far-reaching and so grave in its effect on human lives. I say that particularly as I feel I cannot support the Bill in its present form.

The Minister for Health: Have you any natives in Nedlands?

Mr. COURT: I have there a lot of people who are deeply interested in natives and during the election campaign I was asked a number of questions on the subject. I do not know whether those people singled me out particularly for this questioning but it was necessary for me to declare myself during that campaign as to how I stood in relation to this problem. I was careful to record the answers I gave at that time because during a campaign of that nature one is asked to state one's views and I think there is a moral obligation to adhere to what one promises to do in those circumstances unless one is later convinced that there has been some considerable change.

Mr. Ackland: I wonder if the Premier promised these things in his policy speech.

The Premier: The member for Moore should not be facetious.

Mr. COURT: At that time the predominating thought in my mind was the necessity for patience and I went further

and said that houses of modest size provided for these people would be a much greater contribution to their welfare than hours of talk and considerable changes in the legislation, and I still think that is so. We have heard a great deal of debate on this measure, some of it informed but a lot of a highly emotional nature and divorced from practical suggestions for the benefit of the natives.

I should think the Minister has accumulated in the recorded report of the debate innumerable promises from members of this House to support the natives, as members have gone to great limits to stress their sympathy towards these people. If and when the Government introduces legislation for the greater expenditure of money on behalf of the coloured people of this State, I think practically every member of the House will have committed himself to support it, because where they have not supported the Bill in its present form, they have gone to great pains to say that they are anxious to enhance the welfare of the native people.

My dominant impressions from a study of this legislation are, firstly, that it attempts to exclude a large body of people from the operations of the principal Act and, secondly, that it attempts to bring about a major change in the terminology in respect of the native people. I would not profess to know whether the latter change is for their good or otherwise but as regards the former—the release of this large body from the provisions of the legislation—I have a strong feeling that the Bill is premature and could, in fact, set back the position of the natives by many years.

The Minister for Housing: About the only people who seem concerned on that point are Liberal and Country Party politicians.

Mr. COURT: It may be that they are right. Unfortunately, the whole of this debate seems to have divided itself into two distinct camps.

The Minister for Housing: I am speaking of the public attitude.

Mr. COURT: Those that support the Bill in its present form and those that desire to support the natives but not in the way suggested in this legislation—they are the two camps.

The Premier: Some members on your side support the Bill.

Mr. COURT: If that is their view they are entitled to maintain that support. It cannot be denied that in the last few years this problem has decreased greatly. It may be said that there has been a breaking down of the barrier between the coloured people and the rest of the population. It is not so long ago that the average child—I am speaking of metropolitan children—was frightened at sight of a native, but today they are not frightened

and mix with them freely. I feel that good work has been done by the various welfare organisations and has had a marked effect.

Many people have come out and spoken strongly in favour of the natives and have helped to break down the barriers. A large number are sympathetic towards them and that in turn has helped to break down some of these stupid barriers that have existed in the minds of many people. No longer does the average citizen revolt at being in the company of these people. They have been greatly uplifted, and there is no reason why that process should not continue without this legislation. The mere passing of an Act will not overcome the difficulties and the main problem is still spiritual on the one side and material on the other.

Tolerance and commonsense must be exercised by the main body of our people and the time for the exercising of those virtues is now. However, that approach alone is not sufficient because material assistance is vital and can best be supplied in the form of housing and education. No matter how well-intentioned we are, if we do not give these people material help they will get nowhere at all. It has been noticeable in the Press comments made by many people who have the interests of the natives at heart, that since this legislation was introduced those who were keen advocates of the granting of citizenship rights to natives have been asking what the Government intends to do to look after the coloured people during the immediate period after the protection of the Native Welfare Department has been removed from them.

That is a most pertinent question. Some of these people are asking, now that the Minister has attempted to do precisely what they wanted, what the outcome might be. They were keen advocates of immediate granting of citizenship rights but I do not think they gave the question sufficient thought before advocating that course so strongly, and they are now beginning to ask what is proposed to be done to protect the natives. It is obvious that they cannot have protection and freedom at the same time and I cannot see how the field officers can be made available under the present legislation if this Bill is passed. When replying, the Minister may be able to give the House some idea of what he has in mind to help these people during the transitory period.

Mr. Rhatigan: Do you not think the old Act afforded more protection?

Mr. COURT: No, but I believe that in the last few years there has been a marked change in the attitude of the department. I still feel that the progressive assimilation of this section of the community could best be achieved over the

next few years by an intensification of our efforts to house and educate them. I know there will be disappointments and that members will be able to come along and tell how a family of natives in a new house have abused it but, by the same token, the Housing Commission has records of where white people are doing the same thing.

It was my hope that the Government would accelerate the welfare work and particularly the housing and education of these people because if that were done I believe there would be a strong group of native people that would become self-reliant and who would be prepared to lead the rest of their community. When the time came for them all to receive citizenship rights they would see that they had the necessary leaders in their own ranks to ensure that there was no harsh upset when the rights were actually given them. I would be grateful if the Minister, when replying, could give some information on several points clarification of which I have failed to find in his second reading speech. The first is the matter of persons being reclassified as aborigines within the meaning of the amended Act if the Bill becomes law.

The Minister for Native Welfare: That is in the Act now, and has been there for years.

Mr. COURT: Yes, but I want some clarification of it. As I see it at the moment, the provision is that if some of these people who are to be released automatically by the Bill are to be reclassified and made aborigines within the meaning of the Act, there is provision for an order by the magistrate on an application made under the regulations by the Commissioner or on an order made by the Minister on an application made under the regulations by the person.

Is not that too restrictive in view of what the Bill seeks to achieve, and should there not be some quicker and easier machinery to achieve that purpose, in view of the widespread nature of the automatic release of a large body of people under the provisions of the Bill—approximately 7,000, if I understand the Minister's original submission properly? The second point is the reference to the Land Act and summarised it means that where there is any conflict between the regulations under the Aborigines Act and those under the Land Act the former shall prevail.

I cannot follow the exact significance of why the provisions under this measure should override the existing provisions of the Land Act. There may be some technical difficulty related to the actual classification or status of the person but I cannot find the reason for the inclusion of this provision in the Bill.

Next there is the matter of the native medical fund and I notice there is an amendment on the notice paper dealing with this question. It has always been my understanding that this medical benefit has extended to all the natives on a particular station where some of them were employed. As an example, if there were 100 natives in the vicinity of a certain station, with certain male and female members being employed but some of the younger and female members not employed there, the medical benefit fund would cover them all.

Under the measure as printed I cannot see that there is adequate provision made for replacing the medical benefit fund after the repeal of the existing provisions of the Act. Admittedly some of these people will immediately come under the Workers' Compensation Act but that would cover only the actual workers. As the Minister knows, these are often only some of the natives cared for by the station. Only those actually employed could be brought under the Workers' Compensation Act. At the moment, if a native goes into a local hospital there is no trouble about his treatment because the hospital account is assured.

But as I see it, under this legislation, there will be some doubt and I would not like the local hospital to start to get niggled about the treatment of these people because they could not see any guarantee of the payment of their account. That point may be well covered by the Minister in his examination of the problem. If he has an answer to it, I would very much like to know as it will remove a grave doubt in my mind.

The last point I raise is that I cannot reconcile the situation of these aborigines who remain under the Act, and those natives who are released from the Act, with the present licensing laws. It may be that the Minister has in mind some manner of overcoming the anomaly that appears to exist. Under the Licensing Act, certain definitions appear but under this amending legislation the restrictions in the Licensing Act will be out of harmony with the provisions in this measure. For the reasons I have outlined I oppose the Bill.

MR. OLDFIELD (Maylands) [5.16]: I did not intend to speak to this Bill, but I feel it incumbent upon me to do so in order to correct an erroneous statement made last night by the member for Hannans. The member for Hannans, when speaking to the Bill, quoted the case of a native who had been evicted from some premises and camped on a block of land at Maylands. The hon. member said that this person had been removed from the block of land because of pressure brought to bear by the neighbours and the local authority. Such is not the case.

This person was residing in a house in Lord-st., East Perth and was considerably in arrears with his rent. The owner of the premises took legal action against him for the recovery of the back rent and an eviction order was awarded. However, it was suspended on condition that the tenant continued to pay the rent of 15s. a week plus 10s. a week to clear up the arrears, making a total payment of 25s. a week. After a period of two or three months, no further payment was made and the owner approached the court again to see what could be done. This time the court saw fit to carry out the order that had been previously suspended and the person was evicted and put out into the street. The person concerned is dark but he holds citizenship rights.

Mr. Heal: Whereabouts in Lord-st. was he? Near the Perth Oval?

Mr. OLDFIELD: Yes. Both this man and his wife hold full citizenship rights and he was employed as a carpenter's assistant by the Public Works Department. At the time the eviction was being put into effect a certain gentleman was driving past; he saw the plight of the evictees and loaned him a tent and offered him the use of his block of land which overlooks the river in Maylands. The evictee accepted the offer and shifted his furniture and family to the block of land and set up the tent.

One of the persons living near this block loaned him another tent; he did not try to get the person removed. The people living next door to the block reported the matter to the local authority and to me to see if we could get the family housed decently. They did not try to get the person removed; they even went so far as to supply some citrus fruit from their own garden and endeavoured to assist in every way.

The local authorities did not try to do anything about getting this man removed; they tried to obtain a house for him and, in fact, they condoned his living there by providing him with a sanitary service. This was at a time when local authorities were not granting permits to white people to live in tents on their land until such time as plans for their houses had been submitted and passed and the foundations laid. So every person did his best to alleviate the position of this dark-skinned person who held citizenship rights.

Unfortunately the Housing Commission officers took the view that he had been evicted because of the non-payment of rent and said they could not assist him. The fact that he was dark in colour had nothing to do with it. He was a citizen of this country and those officers said that they would have done the same thing irrespective of his colour. The then Minister for Housing, who is now the member for Dale, was approached by the local

authority and myself to see if something could be done. The Minister was sympathetic and even went so far as to discuss the matter with his departmental officers, whereupon they decided to take a more sympathetic attitude, and provided him with a home. They took the view that because of his dark skin, some people would have a certain amount of prejudice as regards providing accommodation.

Mr. McCulloch: You know nothing about it.

Mr. OLDFIELD: The unfortunate feature of the case is that they moved on to the block of land at Maylands at 6 o'clock one wet winter's night in the middle of July, and at 9 o'clock in the morning I contacted Mr. Middleton of the Native Affairs Department. He said that his hands were tied and that he could do nothing to assist this person because he had citizenship rights and therefore did not come under the Act. If this person had not held citizenship rights, Mr. Middleton would have been able to do something for him immediately. Instead the family spent several months in rather distressing circumstances.

The Minister for Health: You would not deprive a man of citizenship rights because of that, would you?

Mr. OLDFIELD: No. I am merely trying to correct an erroneous statement made by the member for Hannans last evening. He tried to give the impression in this House that the people in Maylands and the local authority tried to exert pressure to have this person removed from the block of land. He was removed all right; he was shifted into a five-roomed house at Welshpool, provided by the State Housing Commission.

Mr. McCulloch: Did not the people round about complain of his being there?

Mr. OLDFIELD: One of the neighbours loaned him a tent, and the person living next door to the block of land provided him with fruit.

Mr. McCulloch: But many of them complained about him.

Mr. OLDFIELD: You and one or two of your friends complained; he was not far away from the hon. member's house.

Mr. McCulloch: No. He came to see me because he said he could not talk to you.

Mr. OLDFIELD: The hon. member was one of those who complained and I wanted to correct the several erroneous statements that have been made.

Mr. McCulloch: No fear!

Mr. OLDFIELD: Everything possible was done to help that chap who was evicted from a house in East Perth because he refused to accept the obligations of a citizen.

Mr. McCulloch: I was talking about Maylands.

Mr. OLDFIELD: He moved on to a block of land in Maylands.

Mr. McCulloch: That is not the same thing.

Mr. OLDFIELD: He was not evicted from Maylands. He was shifted from that block to a Housing Commission home.

Mr. McCulloch: Do you know who owns the block of land?

Mr. OLDFIELD: At one time I was living on a verandah. I was not removed or evicted from it; I shifted from there to a home of my own. The Housing Commission removed this chap but they gave him a house at Welshpool.

Mr. McCulloch: Do you know who owned the block?

Mr. OLDFIELD: Yes.

Mr. McCulloch: Who?

Mr. OLDFIELD: I do not know who owned the first block but he shifted from there to another block of land for convenience sake. That block was owned by Snowden and Willson Ltd.

Mr. McCulloch: Who owned the first block?

Mr. OLDFIELD: What does it matter who owned the first block or who owned the second block? That is only another red herring. I wanted to correct any false impression that may have been gained about the citizens of Maylands and the people in the neighbourhood, and the local authority too, not treating this chap sympathetically. He got a lot more consideration than many white people would have got under the same circumstances. Many whites are forced to live in tents and caravans, but they do not get the same assistance as this person received.

As I am on my feet, I would like to point out that I intend to support the second reading of the Bill because I believe there are some good clauses in it. I am rather impressed with that clause which will give the Minister the right to acquire land, improve it and dispose of it to an aboriginal. As has been said earlier, it is rather anomalous because a full-blooded native, if this measure is passed, will be entitled to the benefit of this provision, but the native who, through lack of opportunity and lack of education will be classed as a citizen, will not be able to reap the benefit of this clause.

I often wonder whether it is fair, by the stroke of a pen, to cut these unfortunate people adrift from a department which will look after them, and throw them out in the world to stand on their own two feet. Are all these people ready to accept that and are they capable of standing up to it? In his speech the Minister pointed out that this measure would provide them with the opportunity of taking employment

anywhere. That is true but are they to be given the opportunity of taking that employment?

It has been said in this debate that these people are not ready to accept full citizenship rights and its attendant obligations. There is one important aspect that has not been mentioned, but we do not want to forget it in debating this serious matter. Are we, the people of Australia, ready and are we far enough advanced to accept these people as citizens? I say we are not. The people of Australia are not sufficiently tolerant of colour and are not sufficiently tolerant of these people to assimilate them. There may be some, but the vast majority are not.

The Minister for Native Welfare: Are you one of them.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I say the vast majority are not.

The Minister for Native Welfare: But are you one of them?

Mr. OLDFIELD: That has nothing to do with the question whatever.

Mr. Hutchinson: Is the Minister one of them?

Mr. OLDFIELD: These people are going to be thrown into society, and will be expected to accept the obligations which we accept. If they go along for employment and there happens to be a white man offering for the job as well, what chance would these natives have of securing that job? They would be handicapped by their colour to start with, and that cannot be denied. That is why I say we, as Australians, are not ready to accept these natives into our society. There is not one employer in the metropolitan area who would employ a dark-skinned person in preference to a man with a white skin.

Mr. J. Hegney: They will all be employed now that oil has been found.

Mr. OLDFIELD: Is there any member in this Chamber who would be prepared to carry this matter of assimilation to the nth degree? Would members be prepared to carry this matter of assimilation to the nth degree? Would members be prepared to take them into their homes and accept them as friends? There are some people who are prepared to do this; there are neighbours of mine who are interested in mission work and they often have teenage girls for the Christmas holidays.

Mr. Hutchinson: The Minister might.

Mr. OLDFIELD: We must first reach the stage where the great majority of people will have a complete understanding of this problem.

The Minister for Housing: Why prejudice the dark man because of the prejudice of the white man?

Mr. OLDFIELD: The dark man is entitled to full protection by the Department of Native Affairs.

Mr. Rhatigan: What about the example you quoted a while ago about the man living in a tent in Maylands? He did not have much protection.

Mr. OLDFIELD: That person spent a lot of time in that tent in Maylands.

Mr. Rhatigan: And nobody cared very much.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I was working for this fellow and all the neighbours were working to assist him only because he had a dark skin.

Mr. Heal: That is the attitude we should all adopt.

Mr. OLDFIELD: Of course it is, but will we? If this Bill becomes law in its present form, these people will be thrown to the mercy of a civilised life as we know it; where rugged individualism is required. These people have not received the education or training to enable them to compete on the labour market with their more fortunate white brethren.

The Minister for Health: Have you ever read any of the debates on the emancipation of slaves?

Mr. OLDFIELD: It is almost 100 years since the American Civil War ended, and those black people in America were released from slavery. If what we read is correct they had a very hard time. When the Civil War ended they were told they were free to go where they pleased. What did they do? They had nowhere to go and consequently returned to their old masters at the plantations. They did this because they had to have some shelter and food. Where the plantations were devastated by the war and the families who owned them had been killed or scattered far and wide there was no one left to provide them with food and shelter. With the result these poor unfortunate black people were left to scavenge on the streets and look for food.

The Minister for Health: Today they are doctors and lawyers.

Mr. OLDFIELD: America also has a "Jim Crow" regulation.

The Minister for Housing: Shame on the white man!

Mr. OLDFIELD: That is precisely my point. The white man is not ready to accept these people. Eventually they will be able to be trained to take their place in society, but they cannot do that until we as a nation are prepared and ready to accept them.

The Minister for Housing: It is the white man who needs training.

Mr. OLDFIELD: Of course it is, but does this Bill say anything about training the white man to a point where he will accept the black man as a brother? There is one very fine provision in the Bill and that is the one that permits the Minister to acquire land, improve it, and dispose

of it to aborigines as classified under this measure. But a three-quarter caste will not come under that provision; he will have to fend for himself. He will be wiped off by the stroke of a pen. To my mind, this measure is nothing but political camouflage; it has been designed and brought down for the purpose of removing from the Government the financial responsibility it should accept for these people.

The Premier: Drivel.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I do not think it is drivel; it is certainly the easy way out.

Mr. May: Only a man with a mind like yours would think of that.

The Premier: What mind? It is concentrated drivel.

Mr. OLDFIELD: The Minister asked a member on this side of the House who happens to be interested in missionary work whether any interested party from the mission had approached him about this Bill. I have been approached by people interested in mission work. I have been approached by a man who for something like 60 years has devoted his life, his energy and his own money to the welfare of these people. He is 80 years of age and he is continuing with that work. He is very wealthy and he is devoting all he can afford to mission work to try and alleviate the suffering of these people and to try and fit them for their place in life.

What is to become of the missions if this Bill goes through in its present form. Overnight all the children of these people of less than full blood who are not going to be called natives or aborigines any longer can be removed by their parents because they will have full citizenship rights. These people constitute the bulk of the inmates of the mission. One particular mission does not have a single full-blood in it.

These people are concerned as to what is going to happen to the 22s. 6d. now paid by the department. They will no longer be eligible for it under the Act. The missionary people are most concerned about the children who have been taken from their parents and placed in the mission because the parents of these children will no longer be natives; overnight they will be citizens and will be able to claim their children from the missions.

Mr. Rhatigan: Do not you know that children of natives with citizenship rights are still under the Act?

Mr. OLDFIELD: If this Bill becomes law these children will be citizens just as my children are.

The Minister for Native Welfare: That would be terrible.

Mr. OLDFIELD: We are not dealing with the present Act at the moment; this Bill proposes to amend it.

Mr. Rhatigan: To the benefit of the native.

Mr. OLDFIELD: We on this side of the House doubt that. There is a provision which will assist them by providing land to help the full-blood native, but there is no proposal in the Bill to do anything for the native who is not a full-blood, except to give him the right to vote and have a drink. That is all the Bill proposes for a native of less than full blood. Amongst these poor unfortunate people are some who are not far removed from the tribal natives, and I daresay amongst them are natives with some white blood who would be hardpressed to speak intelligible English. The present system of granting citizenship rights has been described as obnoxious. Perhaps it is. It might also be obnoxious for an alien who, after working here for 20 years, has to go to the court and seek naturalisation.

The Minister for Native Welfare: But he would be a citizen of another country; the natives are not foreigners or aliens.

Mr. OLDFIELD: We do not deny a foreigner the right to citizenship provided he can speak English. The fullblood native will still come under the existing Act, and if he desires citizenship rights, he will have to comply with conditions that have been termed obnoxious by going before a magistrate and applying for those rights. If it is good enough to give a three-quarter caste native citizenship rights automatically, why not the full-blood. There are some fullbloods in the metropolitan area who have not applied for citizenship rights. Why not extend similar rights to them? Members have been told of the work done by fullbloods on stations in the North.

The Minister for Health: One who went to the war returned with the rank of captain.

Mr. OLDFIELD: Yes. Such a man is as worthy of citizenship rights as is any white man, but this measure will not confer such rights in those cases. Many of the people to whom this measure will extend citizenship rights are of much lower type than fullbloods who will be denied the privilege.

Mr. Hutchinson: It is purely a theoretical business.

Mr. OLDFIELD: That is so. The authorities of one group of missions belonging to a certain denomination feel greatly perturbed about this legislation. They are also concerned as to what will happen in the camps when these people are able to get drink. I do not wish to flog that aspect of the question, which has formed the main theme of the remarks of various speakers, but the danger is a real one. Some awful happenings have occurred in the camps where the

natives have managed to get drink. The member for Guildford-Midland is well aware of what has happened in his electorate on more than one occasion when the natives have been drinking cheap wine.

Mr. J. Hegney: They succeed in getting it now.

Mr. OLDFIELD: The member for Middle Swan is also aware of happenings in his electorate; in fact, he was delighted when the authorities took steps to move the natives from his area into that of Guildford-Midland. He was pleased indeed to get rid of the problem in his district. The member for Guildford-Midland has suffered quite a lot of headaches through the behaviour of natives in his district. The only time when trouble has occurred has been when they have indulged in drinking orgies at weekends.

The Premier: That happens with white people too.

Mr. OLDFIELD: Perhaps so, but not to the same degree.

Mr. Brady: Where is all the cheap wine made?

The Premier: Toodyay.

Mr. OLDFIELD: Some of it is made in the Guildford-Midland electorate. I intend to support the second reading because certain provisions of the Bill might prove to be beneficial. In Committee, however, I shall oppose the provision to give complete citizenship rights to the people I have indicated. To do so willy-nilly would not be in their best interests. I agree with the statement made by the Minister in 1944 that he would never favour any legislation that would indiscriminately confer citizenship rights on the black man.

On motion by Mr. Nimmo, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.47 p.m.