

Mr. SEWARD: I move—

That the word "may" be inserted in lieu of the word struck out.

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

Mr. SEWARD: I move an amendment—

That in proposed new Subsection 5C the words "during the pleasure of the Minister" be struck out with a view to inserting other words.

The proposed new subsection sets out that the members of the committee shall hold office during the pleasure of the Minister. I do not desire to impute anything against the present Minister, but as we know, Ministers change. We have had experience of Ministers who have been dogmatic.

The Premier: When was this?

Mr. SEWARD: I am not even referring to Ministers in Western Australia!

The Minister for the North-West: I agree to the amendment.

Amendment (to strike out words) put and passed.

Mr. SEWARD: I move an amendment—

That the words "for a period of three years" be inserted in lieu of the words struck out.

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

Clauses 3 to 7, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 10.2 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 15th October, 1946.

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

QUESTION.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER.

As to Expunging Record from Minutes.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I wish to ask a question without notice. As I was expelled from the sitting last Thursday and, as I claim, wrongfully expelled, is it the intention of the House to apologise to me? The House did not take into consideration Standing Order 415. Is it the intention of the House to rectify the wrong done to me and expunge the record from the minutes? I ask you, Sir, whether I am in order in asking this question? The record is in the minutes and if I were wrongly expelled then I have a right to have the record amended. I leave it to you, Mr. President, and to the members of the House.

The PRESIDENT: I rule that the minute must remain.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: You do wrong. I move—

That the House dissents from the President's ruling.

I am not pleading guilty or not guilty. I was called to order.

The PRESIDENT: Will the hon. member please resume his seat? The only way in which he can achieve his object is to give notice.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Very well; that suits me. If you, Mr. President, decide to allow the wrong to continue, I will speak on it later.

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

Introduced by the Honorary Minister and read a first time.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 10th October.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [4.38]: I feel that I must oppose this measure and I will give my reasons for so doing. Mr. Loton who introduced the Bill informed the House that the Gnowangerup Road Board had made application for permission to erect or to purchase a building

suitable for a hostel for school children and that the application had been refused in consequence of which it was necessary to amend the Act. May I say briefly that the responsibility was first placed on the shoulders of the Minister for Education when he visited Gnowangerup? He was quite adamant; he refused to have anything to do with the provision of a hostel for school children.

Some years ago, when Sir Hal Colebatch was Minister for Education, and also later when Mr. Drew held that portfolio, they were responsible for the erection of high schools in various parts of the State. In my opinion, neither of them went far enough in the work which they undertook. We find that in country towns such as, for instance, Katanning, we have a convent which takes boarders and we also have the Kobeelya Girls School, which also takes boarders. We know that the various colleges in the metropolitan area—Scotch, the Church of England schools, Aquinas and Wesley—make provision for the housing of their pupils. A request was made by Albany for hostel accommodation to be provided, but the Education Department refused to have anything to do with it. As a consequence the children have for years been housed here, there and everywhere, sometimes in homes that were not as satisfactory or congenial as they might have been, but they were the best that the people could offer. The Country Women's Association in Albany purchased a home and provided a hostel for a certain number of boys. The Methodist Church has also provided a home, now known as the Norman Hostel, which makes provision for high school children.

As this small measure has had the blessing of the Deputy Premier, Mr. Hawke, it behoves us carefully to consider where we are drifting. We find that there is an intention here to pass on the responsibility to the local authorities. When Sir Hal Colebatch was Minister for Education he introduced the parents and citizens' association system, and it has given valuable assistance to the Education Department by providing for the schools many amenities that would not otherwise have been available. Therefore we recognise that part and parcel of the duty of parents is to take an interest in the education of their children.

I propose to read one or two extracts from the propaganda that is being spread through-

out the country districts by a representative of the Teachers' Union. I am not saying anything against this man who is doing his job and doing it well, but we find, from what he has to say to the public at the various meetings that are held—and I propose to read a letter which is one of many that I have received from various districts after his visit to them—that the Education Department is, perhaps, getting not as fair a deal as it could expect.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Who is the person?

Hon. A. THOMSON: Mr. Featherstone.

The PRESIDENT: What is the hon. member about to quote from?

Hon. A. THOMSON: A newspaper.

The PRESIDENT: What newspaper?

Hon. A. THOMSON: "The Wagin Argus."

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member should say what he is quoting from.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am not likely to be so foolish as to quote from "Hansard" of this session.

The PRESIDENT: I hope the hon. member does not misunderstand me. It would help other members if a speaker, when quoting from some document, would say what it is.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The following is a report of part of what Mr. Featherstone said at Wagin—

The Minister and Director were making every effort to provide the very best that was possible, but no one could provide an adequate educational system for Western Australia out of an Education vote of only £850,000 per annum or less, plus the limited public works expenditure made available in pre-war years for school buildings.

He later stated—

The general disabilities of the schools included inadequate, dilapidated and unsuitable buildings, which were overcrowded, understaffed and under-equipped. Where new buildings were being built they were overcrowded as soon as opened, and when labour and materials were again available—unless much more money was forthcoming than before the war—the majority of the next two or three generations of children would grow up in the present inadequate buildings. Most equipment was dependent on the efforts of the parents and citizens' associations, and, when these were not forthcoming, teachers had to provide equipment themselves or go without.

Mr. Featherstone went on to say that the classes were unreasonably large, ranging from 40 to 60 in the majority of schools. He then pointed out—

In many areas consolidation was taking place, small schools being closed and the children brought by bus in to a larger school. Unfortunately, in most centres no adequate provision was made either in building, staffing or equipment, and in consequence there was more over-crowding and the classes spilled over into public halls and other unsuitable buildings.

He dealt with the educational aspect and showed how interested he and the union were in it. But he was also careful to place before the people the following point:—

Teachers' salaries, too, had been far below the level of other professions and of many occupations entailing far less study and responsibility. Other States and countries had found it necessary to raise salaries in order to attract and retain a sufficient number of teachers of the required qualifications. If better provision was not made in Western Australia this State would be losing many of its abler young teachers to the Eastern States.

We now come to another point. The report goes on to state—

At the conclusion of the address a number of questions were put to Mr. Featherstone dealing with Children's Hostels and School Consolidation Schemes, and the speaker again mentioned that it was the aim of the W.A. Progressive Education League to have branches throughout the State on which all local governing bodies, public bodies, farmers' organisations, etc., were represented, so that the educational needs of the State could be pressed.

A resolution was carried at all these meetings urging the people to do all in their power to impress upon the Federal and the State members the need for an immediate large-scale increase in their education expenditure and to do all in their power to obtain an annual amount of at least £10,000,000 for primary and secondary education in the States, as applied for by the State Premiers. At a meeting in the Katanning Town Hall I heard Mr. Menzies, in reply to a question as to whether he was in favour of the Commonwealth making a substantial grant to assist the States with regard to education, say that he was. In the circumstances, I am hoping that the Premier will be able to induce the Commonwealth Government to disgorge some of that £10,000,000 and that Western Australia will derive considerable benefit in consequence.

I propose next to read a letter, which indicates that all these statements are inspired and emanate from the same source. In saying that I do not cast any reflection on Mr. Featherstone who is doing his job and doing it well. The letter I shall quote was addressed to me by the Wagin Municipal Council and is as follows:—

At a public meeting held in the Wagin Town Hall on the 30th September, 1946, the following motion was passed:—

This meeting views with grave concern the serious disabilities under which education is being carried on in this State and urges upon Federal and State members the need for an immediate large scale increase in educational expenditure, and to this end, Federal members especially are urged to do all in their power to obtain an annual grant of at least £10,000,000 for primary and secondary education in the States as applied for by the State Premiers.

Now I propose to read the concluding paragraph in the report that I was dealing with previously. It says—

Owing to the small attendance it was impossible to form a local committee at the meeting, but the matter will be discussed at the next meeting of the Parents and Citizens' Association and it is hoped that similar interest will be taken by other district organisations.

Hon. W. J. Mann: How many were present at the meeting?

Hon. A. THOMSON: It does not say.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Not enough to form a committee.

Hon. A. THOMSON: That is what is stated in the report, and I understand that representatives of the local Parents and Citizens' Association were not present. I have quoted those extracts to indicate to members the present-day trend in education. I do not want any member of this House to misunderstand me or to misconstrue my words. I want the children of Western Australia to have the advantage of the best possible system of education we can provide for them. On the other hand, we find that, in effect, this gentleman I have referred to has been going round drawing attention to the dilapidated condition of our schools. While that may be the position, I do not know that there is any member of this Chamber or of another place who has not been worrying the Minister for Education and the Government generally to provide better facilities than have been made available so far. We must remember that

fox six years a war was in progress. In those circumstances a certain amount of consideration and sympathy should be extended to the Education Department in respect of the disabilities with which it has been confronted. Many of the department's teachers were called up for service in one or other of the Fighting Forces. In view of this the course adopted by this gentleman in going around and stressing the existing conditions is rather questionable. In this State there are 20 odd municipalities and, I think, approximately, 130 road boards.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: More than that.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am referring to those outside the metropolitan area. If the Bill now before the House be agreed to, the boards mainly affected will be those in the outer areas, certainly not those in the metropolitan area. Practically all the children who are privileged to attend the Perth Modern School and the secondary schools within the metropolitan boundaries, live within ready access of their homes. The overcrowded conditions that have been referred to have been occasioned by the consolidation system applied to schools in the country areas, due to children being brought in by bus from considerable distances. In the circumstances the statements made by Mr. Featherstone in that respect are perfectly correct. In consequence of the schools being overcrowded the classes have had to overflow into halls and other places.

I am beginning to wonder whether the consolidation scheme is as wise as it was represented to be at the outset. Under existing conditions children leave their homes early in the morning and many have to walk considerable distances to catch the school bus. Immediately their period of education for the day ceases they board their bus again and return home. I am not condemning the consolidated school system but I question whether we shall get as good results from it as we did with the small schools which have been condemned so much. I can truthfully say that some of the children educated at the small schools have achieved excellent results and the teachers in those schools have rendered wonderful service to the young folk concerned. Naturally in some of them a small number of pupils had to be dealt with but on an average the percentage of scholarships

gained by pupils attending the small schools will bear favourable comparison with that gained by children who have been receiving their education at the consolidated institutions.

In placing the Bill before the House Mr. Loton informed members that the people of Gnowangerup propose to purchase a building for the purpose of a hostel at a cost of £2,000. That is not the only cost. The maintenance of the hostel will be a definite responsibility, which will have to be shared by the ratepayers. In Bunbury the Country Women's Association approached the Minister for Education with regard to the purchase of a property for the housing of children, and the Minister—I hope I am not misquoting him—made what seemed to be a most generous offer. I believe he informed the country women that the Government would purchase the building for them and then rent it to the association which would have to make the necessary provision for running the place and to pay interest and sinking fund charges on the amount involved. When the building was paid for, it would belong to the Education Department.

I maintain that as our secondary schools are providing accommodation for children who are compelled to go away from their homes in order to derive the benefit of the educational facilities offered, it would be wrong for this House to pass the Bill which would empower not one road board only to establish a hostel and thereby impose a tax upon the ratepayers. If it were only one road board that was concerned, I would say that the responsibility would belong to that board, but we have other road boards in Western Australia which also have certain responsibilities. I have attended most road board conferences, but I never heard of even a proposal being submitted on any of those occasions that these local authorities should have power to erect hostels for the housing of children for the Education Department. I know I am speaking in direct opposition to the views of some of my electors, because Gnowangerup is in my province, but I feel I have a duty to perform to all road boards.

Before an amendment of this character is inserted in the Act, I maintain that the road board executive should have a thorough knowledge of what it means. To

the best of my belief that executive knows nothing about it and the other road boards have not been approached. If we pass this Bill we shall find that we are, in effect, placing an additional burden upon the rate-payers. As a rule ratepayers are also taxpayers, and taxation has reached a high level. If the people of Western Australia demand, as they are entitled to, better educational facilities and better schools for their children, I can imagine the Minister for Education, who has signified his approval, saying, "We will do our best with the limited funds at our disposal, but if you want hostels you will have to tax your own ratepayers in order to get them." I have a duty to perform to the road boards and municipalities throughout the State. We should not insert in the Act a section which will give such far-reaching powers as will this one. All these local authorities should have been given notice before a Bill of this kind was brought down by a private member, one that will have such far-reaching consequences. I regret I have to oppose the second reading.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan) [5.4]: I shall support the second reading. The Bill imposes no obligation on road boards to carry out this work. It merely confers upon them powers which they may exercise or not as they think best. I would point out that road boards are composed of responsible persons elected by responsible persons. I see no objection to conferring upon them some little additional powers. I do not think I agree altogether with Mr. Tuckey when he says it is a Government responsibility to provide homes, and I suppose food, for children attending central schools. It is not the responsibility of the Education Department.

Hon. G. B. Wood: It is not carrying it out.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: That is largely the responsibility of the local people. We shall not make much progress in our educational system in this country until people themselves take greater interest in the matter, until they are prepared to put their hands in their own pockets and do something for themselves without relying entirely upon the Government. If the Bill is passed, what is likely to happen is that on a suitable request being made, the road board

and the local Parents and Citizens' Association will get together and ascertain how far they are prepared to go, and then perhaps approach the Government for assistance to achieve their object. As a result of co-operative effort the thing will be done. It is difficult to find suitable accommodation for children attending high schools. That difficulty would probably have been lessened a great deal if at the time high schools were established, nearly 30 years ago, local people could then have become interested and been persuaded that it was up to them also to do something.

Hon. A. Thomson: They were never asked to do something.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I shall support the second reading. I cannot see that the Bill will do any harm because no road board will be compelled to do anything. The measure may do a great deal to stimulate local interest in educational questions, to make people feel that it is part of their job and that they cannot expect the Government to do everything for them.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [5.7]: I am astonished at the attitude adopted by Sir Hal Colebatch. People with families should be able to count upon having their children educated. Sir Hal Colebatch would have the whole responsibility and the cost placed on those people who are rearing their families and would have the State contribute nothing. Education is for the whole of the people, and it is for the State in general to provide the necessary facilities, not for those people who have families to find the wherewithal. Any provision made by the Government in this direction is paid for by the people concerned. The people pay for what they get; what is wrong with that?

Road boards are composed of men who carry out their duties as either chairmen or ordinary members without remuneration. They have responsibilities to the ratepayers and devote a great deal of time to the work they do. I speak feelingly because I have been in a similar position myself. Their responsibilities are already great enough without having any additional burden placed upon them by the ratepayers. The

Bill provides for the addition of a new subsection to read as follows:—

Construct or acquire by purchase or otherwise and establish premises within its district for the purpose of providing hostels for school children and maintain and control such premises when so established and join with any other board or municipal council whose district adjoins or is adjacent to the district of the board in constructing or acquiring by purchase or otherwise and establishing in the district of such other board or municipal council premises for the purposes aforesaid and in maintaining and controlling such premises when so established.

Can anyone say that it is right to thrust all that responsibility upon a road board? Did the Government during the war lay aside any funds against the time when necessary work would be done for our schools? We know the condition in which many of our schools are, but what has been done to prepare for the time when they can be improved? I should be surprised to learn that any money had been set aside to meet that position. The Government should have laid aside, year after year, a sum of money for repairs and maintenance so that by the end of the war it would have had funds with which to go ahead and put the schools in order. To extend the responsibilities of road boards, to give power to honorary bodies to establish hostels and carry them on as to maintenance and upkeep generally, is altogether wrong. Surely this House is not prepared to pass such a Bill! We do not want road boards to be responsible for a number of trading concerns. The failures of Government trading concerns are sufficiently well known.

The Honorary Minister: You would not call them trading concerns.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: What else are they? We know the extent to which State trading concerns have failed. Do we want to tax a section of the people more heavily still? If Sir Hal Colebatch is right, an additional burden will be placed upon the ratepayers of the districts concerned and the local authorities will be told, "You will have to provide your own facilities for the housing of your own children." That is quite wrong.

Hon. A. L. Loton: The ratepayers will have the right to refuse to allow the project to go through.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: If the Gnowangerup Road Board is keen upon a project of this kind, let it put up a private Bill.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Why did it not make the approach through the Association?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Road Board Association has not been approached as it should have been. It is wrong that one road board should endeavour to have passed into law something that will also affect every other road board. The whole principle is wrong. I hope members will realise that these local authorities act in an honorary capacity and have already plenty of responsibility under the present ramifications of their jobs, without being called upon to provide and maintain hostels for children. I hope the House will reject the Bill.

HON. W. R. HALL (North-East) [5.12]: I support the Bill, and cannot see anything wrong with it. If this particular road board desires to provide a hostel for the children of the district, why should it not be allowed to do so? One imagines the matter has first been put before the ratepayers. If I were on a road board where such a proposition was mooted, I would probably like to see a referendum taken on the matter so that the ratepayers could express their wishes concerning the establishment of a hostel. As a member of the board, I would be guided by that expression of opinion.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That could be done without this Bill.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I know that. One would desire to be on the safe side. It has been said that the ratepayers would be saddled with certain obligations for which some of them might not desire to be responsible. I refer, of course, to the provision of hostels. There are very few high schools in Western Australia. There is one at Geraldton, one at Kalgoorlie, and two or three others. We find that people from Leonora, Gwalia, Menzies and down the line as far as Southern Cross send their children to Kalgoorlie. Those children have to be accommodated with private families and the parents are forced to pay a fairly large sum for their maintenance while attending the high school.

Hon. A. Thomson: The same would apply to hostels.

Hon. W. R. HALL: If these hostels were erected as a result of the passing of the Bill, surely they would be self-supporting. The local authority concerned would not have to find the whole cost of purchase and upkeep

as well. There would certainly be some income to be derived from the housing of these pupils. If it were the desire of some rate-payers to have a hostel erected in a certain place for the housing of children attending a high school, I would be in favour of the rate-payers being allowed to have their way. In attending the high school at Kalgoorlie, children on the Goldfields have to do a great deal of train travelling, and they have to be domiciled with different families so that they may be looked after during the time the school is in session. I understand that the Cunderdin Hotel was taken over by the local authority. I do not know how it is getting on but, from what I can learn, everything is progressing favourably.

Hon. C. B. Williams: We were in there once or twice.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Yes, and we found that we were served nicely, whereas in times gone by we were occasionally knocked back.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What has that to do with hostels for school children? It is an entirely different matter.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I was replying to the interjection by Mr. Williams. That hotel was taken over by a local authority, and I understand it is a good proposition.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It is a community hotel and has nothing to do with the local authority.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Very well, we will call it a community hotel, if it will make matters easier. I take it that the community was responsible for the purchase of the hotel and the community consists of the rate-payers generally. I cannot see any difference.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It has nothing to do with the road board.

Hon. W. R. HALL: That is all the better. Perhaps the people took the matter in hand before the road board had a chance. If we pick up "The West Australian" any day, we can find the Government calling for tenders for bus services in the South-West, and other places where I have not been, for the purpose of conveying children to certain schools in those areas—some over fairly long distances. If a road board has the foresight to establish a hostel to cater for such children during a certain period whilst a school is in session—

Hon. A. Thomson: The children are taken out nearly every day.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Yes, and it must cost a lot of money for transport. The bus services must represent a fair cost to the Government or the Education Department.

Hon. A. Thomson: They reckon they are saving money.

Hon. W. R. HALL: If the department is saving money in that direction, it is a great pity the money is not spent to provide amenities for those children who are a fair distance away from their school centre. It is a fact that children who are isolated have great difficulty every year in finding accommodation at suitable places during the school period. I refer, of course, to secondary schools. So I cannot see why any member needs to worry about this Bill. It does not matter whether one board is concerned or a dozen boards. Mention has been made of the Road Board Association, but the executive of that body only meets every three months, and many things can happen in the interim. Those road boards that have the foresight to undertake schemes like this I wish well, and I would not be prepared to do anything that would prevent them from carrying on with such projects. Road boards generally do a lot of work which should, perhaps, be shouldered by Parliament and parliamentarians, and they do it in an honorary capacity. At the same time, they derive a certain amount of pleasure from the work. If they have the foresight to undertake the establishment of one of these institutions, they should have our assistance. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East) [5.20]: It is all very well for members to say the Government should establish these hostels. The point is that the Government does not do so. There is a great dearth of hostels to-day throughout the country. In Northam there is a very fine girls' hostel conducted by the C.W.A., and there is one for boys, run by the Church of England; but even in that centre there is room for one or two more hostels for children of the district. There are children housed in from 30 to 50 homes, many of which I know are not very desirable places. But it is the only accommodation they can secure. For a long time there has been an outcry throughout the

country—not only in Gnowangerup—for the Government to establish hostels in various places, but it has not been done.

I can see no harm in giving the right to any road board to provide a hostel where such a building is needed and desired. As Sir Hal Colebatch said, there is nothing compulsory about the measure. Road boards do not have to provide hostels. As a member of a road board, I know that I would not be a party to the establishment of a hostel if one already existed, and I would not be keen to see one established if there were ample accommodation for the children in private homes. But if it is necessary—and I know it is in many places—for a hostel to be erected, that should be done. In some instances, children travel to school over a distance of 35 miles. The regulations prevent their travelling any further. That journey is undertaken five days a week. There are other children who live further away, and it would be desirable to let them go home for the week-end. That would be one trip a week there and back. I do not agree with Mr. Thomson that central schools are not a good thing. I have watched the position fairly closely, and I find that in one or two places—

Hon. A. Thomson: I did not say they were not a good thing!

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I thought the hon. member said he had a doubt.

Hon. A. Thomson: I said I had my doubts.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I would like to resolve the doubts of the hon. member by telling him that in my experience they are quite commendable. In some small schools there are 15 children and only one teacher. That teacher has seven or eight classes. Nobody can tell me that is a good method of teaching. Sometimes a junior teacher is sent to such schools, and she has the responsibility of running from five to seven classes.

Hon. A. Thomson: The children get very much more personal attention.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: That may be so; but they reach a certain stage, beyond which they cannot go. In a central school they are able to proceed to the Junior standard and have a much better opportunity. There is nothing new about this proposal to give a road board the right to do something

along these lines. The Road Districts Act provides that a local authority may—subsidise any district nursing system, or hospital, public or private, for the reception of the sick, established within or without its district, or any duly qualified medical practitioner; erect, on any land vested in the board or acquired for the purpose, or purchase houses to be leased to, and used as homes by, employees of the board, and maintain and make use of such houses and land for the purposes aforesaid....

If a board is empowered to do those things, surely it should have power to erect a hostel for children of the district! I cannot imagine any board doing this without the approval of the people. Very few boards could establish a hostel without asking the people to agree to a loan, and there is generally a referendum before one is raised. At any rate, there can be. I see no harm in the proposal, and I believe it will do a lot of good in certain places where hostels are required. There is nothing compulsory about it. I support the Bill.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [5.25]: I do not think there can be any doubt that the need for these hostels does exist and I find myself unequivocally in support of the Bill. The reasons outlined by Sir Hal Colebatch and Mr. Wood make an unanswerable argument for passing the Bill. The only ground for opposition is that, instead of the local governing bodies undertaking the work if they so desire, it should be left to be done by the Government. I can remember that argument being used many years ago when parents and citizens' associations were formed. Those associations were established; they raised money and spent it in beautifying school grounds and providing equipment. Quite frequently the cry went up, "This should be done by the Government!"

I am one who thinks that that attitude has been too prevalent in our public life in the past. Members of the general public are too inclined to leave everything in the hands of the Government. The board that has asked for this measure to be put through is to be commended. I can quite see that no board will undertake work of this kind unless it is fairly unanimously supported by the local inhabitants. The need does exist. I will not say that the establishment of hostels should not be undertaken by the Government; but the

Government has its hands full and there are plenty of other directions in which the money available to it can be spent.

Hon. H. Tuckey: That applies to local authorities, too.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: It has been very clearly pointed out that this Bill is only an enlargement of the jurisdiction given in the Road Districts Act. It in no way compels local governing bodies to undertake this work, but only gives them the right to do it if they so desire. I cannot see anything wrong with that, and I am going to support the Bill.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

BILL—ANATOMY ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—MILK.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 3rd October.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.30]: There appear to me to be certain essentials in the provision of milk for human consumption, essentials with which nobody could possibly disagree. They are, firstly, that the purity of the milk should be beyond question; secondly, the food value of the milk should be as high as it is possible to have it and, thirdly, the milk should be provided to the consumer at the lowest possible price consistent with an economic return to the producer. I believe those three points are fundamental and should be the basis of our consideration of this measure, because it is not the slightest use our passing a Bill to enforce standards of dairy construction and maintenance unless we give the producer a price for his product that will enable him to build a dairy and maintain it to the standards set down. To compel too high a standard or to give too low a price would simply force the producer out of business.

I was recently in Melbourne and while there made numerous inquiries regarding the production and distribution of milk. I had the opportunity of seeing, with Dr. Hislop, just what happened in various

parts of Melbourne. Let us compare the economies of milk production and distribution in Melbourne with those in Perth. In Perth 13d. per gallon is allowed for distribution, and in Melbourne 10d. per gallon. The difference of 3d. per gallon for distribution, even taking into consideration the difference in the density of population in Melbourne as compared with Perth, is a considerable item, and on the 20,000 gallons per day, which is the consumption in the metropolitan area, it means a sum of £250 per day or £91,250 per year. Here in Perth 2d. per gallon is allowed for brine cooling milk, while in Melbourne 5d. per gallon is allowed for pasteurising, bottling and sealing, so that in Perth and Melbourne the over-all price for processing and distributing milk is the same, 15d. per gallon.

In Perth the 15d. covers brine cooling and distribution, while in Melbourne it covers pasteurisation, bottling, capping and distribution. This suggests that there is some room for inquiry into the costs allowed here, and I make this comment, that since some years before the war, no alteration has been made in the price of milk, in spite of the lower purchasing power of our £. I suggest that either the amount allowed for the production and distribution of milk pre-war was too high or, alternatively, the position should now be reviewed, because it may be necessary to make some alteration in the price if we are to raise the standards of dairies and depots and to improve our distributing methods.

Since the Milk Bill was before us on the last day of the previous session, a good deal of discussion has taken place and I am impressed by the number of trained men who have stated that the introduction of pasteurised milk is in the best interests of the community. I refer to men like the Commissioner of Public Health, Dr. Cook, the Acting Commissioner, Dr. Kingsbury, the Superintendent of Dairying, Mr. Cullity, the head of the agricultural department of the University of Western Australia, Professor Underwood, and let us not forget our own Dr. Hislop, who has played such an important part in endeavouring to improve the milk standards in the metropolitan area. Each of those gentlemen has issued statements upholding the principles of pasteurisation.

My reading leads me to believe that the medical profession is largely in favour of pasteurisation. In a body as large as the medical profession one may find great divergence of opinion on many subjects, but there is almost unanimity of medical opinion as to the value of pasteurisation. Despite all the weight of evidence, there are still laymen in our community who express their lack of conviction as to the value of pasteurisation. I cannot understand their attitude, and it is equally difficult to understand the lengths to which some of the opponents of pasteurisation go and the avidity with which some sections of the public accept as evidence statements that are made by such opponents.

I propose to read some expressions of opinion by Dr. Cook. It will be remembered that last month I asked that the report of Dr. Cook on pasteurisation should be laid on the Table of the House, and that was done last week. I will now give some comments of Dr. Cook on popular objections that are raised against pasteurisation. I will first give the objection and then the answer—

Objection: Pasteurised milk is less nutritious than raw milk.

Answer: Scientific investigation establishes that the effect of pasteurisation on the nutritive value of milk is negligible.

Objection: The consumption of pasteurised milk lowers resistance to disease.

Answer: This is contrary to established fact. A 50 per cent. to 86 per cent. fall in incidence of certain milk-born infections has followed the bulk pasteurisation of London's milk supply.

Objection: The use of pasteurised milk predisposes to decay of the teeth.

Answer: There is no scientific evidence that pasteurised milk is inferior to raw milk in its effect upon the development or the protection of the teeth.

Objection: Pasteurisation by limitation of bovine tuberculosis in childhood would foster an increase in pulmonary tuberculosis in adults.

Answer: This is idle speculation and not well-founded theory. It is definitely belied by practical experience.

Objection: Pasteurised milk has a cooked flavour.

Answer: This is untrue. Large numbers of tests show that a public is unable to distinguish the flavours of raw and pasteurised milk.

Objection: Pasteurisation fails to destroy bacterial toxins in milk.

Answer: Such toxins originate from infection of the milk during the process of production and are to be eliminated by careful con-

trol of conditions of production and transit. It is a confused process of reasoning which objects to a measure, eliminating many other dangers from a milk supply, on the ground that it may in one relatively unimportant phase fail to render milk safer than the raw product. At least it may be said that pasteurisation does not render raw milk more harmful than it is already, and that it will destroy some of the pre-formed toxins.

Objection: Compulsory pasteurisation diminishes the incentive for a clean milk production.

Answer: This statement is contrary to evidence afforded by practice. Pasteurising firms exercise the strictest supervision upon supplies received, and demand the highest standards of cleanliness in the raw milk supplied, such a supply being of prime importance to them. In America and in Great Britain bulk pasteurisation has led to considerable improvement in the quality of raw milk supplied to pasteurisation depots. For the metropolitan area the bulking of milk is inevitable, and a small proportion of dirty milk from one or more dairies will impair the quality of a large volume from clean dairies. It is the practice, therefore, of bulking depots to check the quality of milk delivered by individual dairymen and to demand improvement where necessary. Efficient pasteurisation demands the handling of milk in bulk at central depots. This of itself affords the supervising authority an ideal opportunity to check the quality of milk brought to receiving depots by individual dairymen. Sedimentation, chemical and bacteriological tests may be made which reflect not only the conditions under which the milk is produced but also the quality of the herds from which it is drawn. Supervision under these circumstances, supplemented by regular dairy inspection, is infinitely more perceptive and effective than it can possibly be under the existing haphazard and infrequent dairy inspection by itinerant inspectors.

Dr. Cook deals with another popular statement—

Pasteurisation destroys vitamins and beneficial enzymes.

His answer is—

In respect to vitamins, this statement is untrue. Vitamin B destruction is negligible. The average amount of destruction to vitamin C approximates 20 per cent. and not more. Vitamin D is not affected. The vitamin E content of raw milk is unimportant. The milk, in any case, does not serve as a source of this vitamin at ages when it is necessary in diet.

In respect to enzymes, it may be said that although they are found in milk from diseased udders, they occur only in traces in milk secreted by the perfectly healthy animal during the greater part of the period of lactation. There is no evidence that any of them is of any importance in human nutrition and most of them are, in any case, destroyed during normal digestion.

The last of the objections to pasteurisation is—

Pasteurisation destroys the healthy lactic acid bacteria.

The answer is—

Lactic acid bacteria are not present in pure milk but are derived from contamination. Whilst the proliferation of these bacteria would ultimately render milk sufficiently acid to arrest the growth of pathogenic organisms, the milk would, by this time, have become unfit for human consumption.

I have quoted those objections and answers to dispel some of the erroneous ideas that are prevalent. In my opinion, Dr. Cook has effectively answered many of the objections raised against pasteurisation.

While I was in Melbourne I visited Parliament House and discussed pasteurisation with some of the members there. During the debate on the Victorian Milk Bill, a statement made by Dr. A. H. Macdonald, former Chief Medical Officer of the Dr. Barnardo Homes, received a good deal of publicity and caused much concern, not only amongst members of the Victorian Legislature, but also amongst the general public of that State. This concern continued until it was allayed by the reading of a letter by the Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Martin, who was in charge of the Bill. I propose to read Dr. Macdonald's statement as reported in the Victorian "Hansard".

The PRESIDENT: Will the hon. member quote the volume and the page?

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: It is volume 215, Session 1943, page 1132. Dr. Macdonald said—

We have found that pasteurised milk lowers the children's resistance to tuberculosis. In most of our homes the children are given raw milk, and tuberculosis is practically non-existent. Professor Sprawson, our dental expert, has found that the children's teeth tend to decay with pasteurised milk.

That was an alarming statement and it was made by an opponent of the Milk Bill in Victoria. On page 1142, "Hansard" records the following letter read by the Minister for Agriculture—

The publicity accorded to the views of Dr. A. H. Macdonald, late Chief Medical Officer of Dr. Barnardo's Homes, in your leading article (December 19, page 727 "British Medical Journal") makes it incumbent upon me to point out that the council of Dr. Barnardo's Homes did not share these views. At their meeting on December 2, 1938, while Dr. Macdonald was still Chief Medical Officer, the

council ordered the general use of pasteurised milk throughout the Homes; any departure from this practice would be viewed with grave disquiet.

I am, &c.,

H. Carson Gilmore,

Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Barnardo's Homes,
London, E.1,

During the debate on this Bill, Mr. Craig and Mr. Gibson referred to the small number of cases of typhoid in this State. We all share with them pleasure that the figures given by the Chief Secretary should disclose such a low incidence of typhoid. Mr. Gibson said—

There is no evidence to prove that any one of the cases of typhoid quoted by the Chief Secretary resulted from the consumption of infected milk.

That statement was perfectly true; nobody suggested that our milk supply caused any one of the cases of typhoid. Anyone interested in the bacteriology of milk will not argue that milk causes typhoid.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Do not pose as an authority! You know very little about it.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I am not an expert, but expert opinion is unanimous in the view that one of the most effective means of conveying or transmitting typhoid is through the medium of milk.

Hon. C. B. Williams: There was not much fresh milk in Coolgardie 50 years ago.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: Expert opinion holds that once the typhoid germ enters milk, it thrives and flourishes like the proverbial green bay tree. The thought behind the expert mind, I believe, is that while typhoid is present in our community, as it is, and while its incidence can vary from seven in one year to 26 in the next year, as disclosed in the figures given by the Chief Secretary, it would be possible at any time to have a wide spreading of the disease, particularly when the milk is handled as it is by bulking supplies from all the various dairies into one conglomerate whole and then distributing it. It needs only a typhoid patient in one of the dairies or even a carrier of typhoid to start an epidemic. I intend to support Dr. Hislop's amendments that seek to make pasteurisation compulsory, not today, not tomorrow, but in the reasonable time set out in the amendments. Meanwhile I shall vote for the second reading.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West) [5.37]: This Bill does not in any way guarantee a pure whole milk supply, which is of paramount importance to the consumers. If dairy cattle are so diseased and are the cause of the spread of tuberculosis, as has been reported, something more definite to cope with the problem should be included in the measure. Certain reports by experts are rather conflicting and tend to confuse the matter considerably.

I have in mind a recent report by the departmental committee which included Dr. Kingsbury. It stated that there was no indication that the present milk supply was causing epidemics in humans. On the other hand, pasteurisation is said to be the only way to treat whole milk as a guarantee against the spread of disease. The various clauses relating to licensing and control, in my opinion, are not so important, because they will not remedy the health problem. One excellent provision in the Bill is that which proposes to deal with the testing of dairy herds. No dairyman or person interested in a dairy desires to make use of diseased cows for the purpose of milk production, and, in my opinion, the testing of cows should be made compulsory. Proper facilities have never been provided to permit of the testing of cows. I understand that one veterinary surgeon can test 10,000 cows three times a year, so I cannot see that any great difficulty should be contemplated in having this work done.

I would not permit of a cow being used for the production of whole milk unless it had been certified free from disease. This and pasteurisation are the two best methods of ensuring pure whole milk. I do not think there are many dairies that are not clean and well managed. But dairymen cannot do the impossible and guarantee pure whole milk to consumers. I am of opinion that milking machines cause a deal of trouble in spreading disease because they cannot be efficiently sterilised. I do not consider that the return for milk should be reduced to butterfat prices. The producers earn all they receive for their milk. They work seven days a week, at all hours of the night and in all kinds of weather, and very few people are willing to undertake work in dairies.

Not long ago, by arrangement with the Department of Agriculture in New South Wales, I was able to inspect some of the

large dairies in that State. One of these in particular was able to guarantee pure whole milk without pasteurisation. It was on the Onslow Estate about 50 miles from Sydney. The buildings were 100 per cent. steel and concrete. The cows were tested regularly for T.B., and the whole of the operations were carried on in a most systematic manner. At milking time the cows were driven through a shallow bath into a shed where they were hosed and cleansed. They were then driven through gates into the bails, where they were milked by hand. In this section of the building there were white porcelain basins, clean towels and every provision to ensure cleanliness. The men wore clean overalls, and unlike the dairymen referred to by Mr. Bennetts, they did not fail to keep their hands clean. Although it was a large dairy, those responsible would not have a milking machine on the place, for the simple reason that it could not be properly sterilised. Every milk can was put into a steam retort where any required degree of heat could be turned on. I was told that this dairy received a high price from special customers in Sydney for all the milk it could supply. It was indeed good to see dairying being conducted on such hygienic lines.

Unfortunately, we in Western Australia are not so situated and there is therefore need to adopt other methods. Seeing that it will be some time at least before pasteurisation could be efficiently carried out, I should like to see instituted at once a rigid system of herd-testing for T.B. to discover what improvement, if any, could be brought about in, say, 12 months. This would have to be State-wide. If this system could be introduced, I consider that the matter of pasteurisation could be allowed to stand over for the time being, because I would not favour compulsory pasteurisation for Perth only, leaving the rest of the State to continue as it is. If lack of pasteurisation is bad for the metropolitan area, it must be bad for the rest of the State, and I cannot see how pasteurisation could be applied throughout the State at the present time.

The term "surplus milk" is a burning question with many producers. They object to the word "surplus" and say that it is used chiefly to facilitate the buying and selling of cheap milk. The price fixed by the board for whole milk is the wholesale price. The large milk depots buy at wholesale

prices and manufacturers should pay the same price. Peters Co. originally paid the full prices, 1s. 3d. per gallon for milk and 8s. 6d. per gallon for cream. There seems to be no just reason why that company should not continue to pay the wholesale rates today. Milk vendors would not accept surplus milk even at butterfat rates if they did not have a ready sale for it. This so-called surplus milk was being handled last summer while Perth was 2,000 gallons short per day. When the supply of milk is in excess of the demand the vendors advise the producers to separate the surplus, irrespective of the quantity. It is considered that under the Bill milk could be purchased from unlicensed premises and termed surplus milk and that the board could not prevent it. The producers would prefer to see any milk not required for consumption as whole milk diverted to butterfat manufacture.

In my opinion, there is need for provision in the Bill to prevent persons suffering from T.B. from working in dairies. I know of one man suffering from the complaint who worked in a dairy for some considerable time and then had to go into hospital. That is most undesirable. For my part, I would ensure that men working in dairies should have a clean bill of health and certainly that they should be free from tuberculosis. We are given to understand that tuberculosis has increased considerably in this State, but that the increase is not due entirely to milk. We are also aware that there is very little control over the disease throughout the State.

In my opinion, when a person dies of the disease in a private house, there should be a record made of the death and steps taken to fumigate the house, as well as the wearing apparel and clothing of the deceased person. One medical man I know advised the lady of the house to put the clothing out in the sun. That may be all right, but another medical man told me that once the germs get into a house, particularly into the sub-standard type of building, the only way to eradicate them is to burn the house down. Cases have been quoted where families have been almost wiped out because of the infection in the building—or rather the cause was put down to that fact. More than one medical man has told me that this can and does happen. It would therefore appear that this disease must be attacked from other directions, as well as from our milk supply.

However, the milk supply is getting all the blame at the present time.

Years ago we did not seem to have any trouble with this disease so far as our dairies were concerned. Today we are told that a dirty cowyard may bring about this disease, but that is entirely wrong. Years ago the yards had to be allowed to become dirty because the dairyman used the yard manure for fertilising. In fact, dairymen carted straw, and even seaweed from the coast, into their yards, so that they could conserve the yard manure for use at the right season. As long as dairies are kept clean and cows are free from disease and tested regularly, it does not matter so much about the state of the yards; but when the disease gets into the milking machines, it becomes very easy for it to be spread throughout the community, because at present, in my opinion, the machines cannot, unfortunately, be thoroughly sterilised.

The proper way to attack this problem is to deal with the cattle, and not try to cure the disease after it has become established. We should stop the disease at the source. It is strange indeed that something has not been done in the matter years ago, because the industry has been quite willing to subscribe to the cost. The dairymen contributed £39,000 for the purpose and that money should have been used years ago. It may be that various Governments are somewhat to blame; it is no use asking a dairy board, or indeed any board, to carry out these duties if there are not sufficient inspectors to do the job. I can quote other diseases that should be controlled by the Stock Department, but are not. That is altogether wrong. However, that is my view of the matter. As a beginning, we should try to ensure that all dairy cows throughout the State are tested as soon as possible and then continue testing them from time to time. I have one or two small amendments on the notice paper and will deal with them at a later stage. I support the second reading.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [6.6]: I feel that the Government, in bringing down this Bill, has made an effort to improve the control of dairies; but I am afraid there are many provisions in the Bill which in practice will prove to be extremely difficult to comply with. Many of the ideas as to the production of milk are quite erroneous and this measure will not go any distance

towards improving some of them. I am rather astonished to hear that the present-day conditions of milk production are not a great improvement on the methods of the past. I have seen many hundreds of dairy farms in this State and can say, without fear of successful contradiction, that dairy farms here have improved wonderfully in the past 20 years.

In every walk of life and in every industry we find some people who are misfits, and many people engaged in dairying might be placed in that category, people who regard cleanliness as something foreign to them and who should never be engaged in any phase of food production. I admit that I have found a few such in the country, but I have seen many in the metropolitan area. The only way in which I think we can improve our milk supply hygienically is to tackle the problem as a whole and not endeavour, as was suggested a few minutes ago, to tackle it piecemeal. The question of how far the State should go and how far the individual should go is not clearly defined in the Bill. I would have liked to see the Bill very much more emphatic on the question of the examination and testing of all dairy herds. That is highly essential, but it is only one of the essentials.

We have been told and we realise that no matter how pure the milk may be when drawn from the cow, unless the other considerations are right, then milk as a food becomes dangerous. Dairy herd owners should be continually on the watch to see that their herds are healthy and clean; and the Government, by means of inspectors, should assist the dairy herd owners to the last degree. If that is not done, then many of the provisions of the Bill will be of little use. I believe that on the whole the cattle from which milk is produced in country areas—at any rate in the cooler areas—are generally of a fairly high health standard.

Dairymen today have learnt a lot. Like other men in other walks of life, they have learnt that it is a foolish policy to keep anything in which there may be an element of danger. Consequently the dairyman, so far as he is able, can generally be relied upon to do his best to see that his herd is clean. If that first essential is carefully fostered, and if the Government were courageous enough to say to the owners of some dairies that are known to be in a filthy condition, "You must go out of the

business; you cannot run your dairy on hygienic lines and there is no room for you in the industry," there would be an immediate improvement in the condition of many premises.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I was referring to what I consider to be the most essential requirements in the production of milk, namely, that all possible attention should be directed to seeing that the cows were perfectly healthy, that the dairies were maintained at the highest pitch of cleanliness, and that the persons engaged in dairies were also compelled to observe proper cleanliness. Those are the factors we should insist on. I believe that the Bill, as it is, will go some distance in that direction, but I would like to see greater supervision. I think it would pay handsomely if more inspectors were appointed. We should get men who are thoroughly conversant with the industry and with what is necessary for the production of milk. There are many men who have been in the industry and who have worked in butter factories and other institutions connected with milk production. They are highly skilled men who could, by examination and experience, be selected to perform that work.

The main essentials of the Bill are to ensure that the milk supplied to the people of this State shall be of the highest possible quality, and that there shall be as little risk as possible of disease from the consumption of milk. The question of pasteurisation, which is really only referred to incidentally in the Bill, has been featured. I do not profess to be an authority on pasteurisation and I do not think there are many members of this Parliament who are, but some of us know a little of the process and what has been done in other parts of the world. Dr. Hislop, whom we may accept as an authority on the question, favours pasteurisation. Most of the opposition that has been extended here to pasteurisation has not come from sources that are wholly concerned with the questions of hygiene and good health. They may deny that and maintain that they are, but I would qualify it by saying that they are no more governed in that direction than is the average person.

There is a fear on the part of some people engaged in the distribution of milk that pasteurisation will mean some inconvenience to them and might, to some extent, interfere with their profits. If we pay attention to the statements of men to whom we can look for guidance in matters of this description—for instance, the gentleman whom Mr. Dimmitt quoted earlier in the evening—we can safely say that the consensus of opinion of those people favours pasteurisation. I do not, as I have said, profess to be an expert, but I do say that much of the so-called pasteurisation that has been done in the past has not been pasteurisation at all but a shabby subterfuge. Pasteurisation is one of those operations that have to be carried out by a thoroughly qualified person under certain well defined rules and the very best conditions.

I know, from my own experience, that in this city, milk has been sold as pasteurised, that I am certain had never been anything like properly processed. One member of my family had delivered each day, for a long time, a certain amount of unpasteurised milk and a certain amount of milk alleged to have been pasteurised, in order to make up the quantity required. The variations from day to day in the quality, colour, freshness, taste and general appearance of the so-called pasteurised milk were extraordinary. Where the unpasteurised milk was uniform, the other was often in such condition that it was only usable for cooking. That might be taken by some people as evidence that pasteurisation is not a desirable process. From their knowledge, they might be justified in making that statement, but in a broad way it is a libel on correct pasteurisation and should not be permitted to go unchallenged.

The only other reference I want to make to the Bill is that I am sorry that a great portion of it is to be so much under ministerial control. The powers of the Minister, as set out in a number of instances, are such as to make the board practically a ministerial control board. The board is appointed to control many things, and if members will read Clauses 22, 24, 25 and some others, they will see that practically everything the board does is to be subject to ministerial control. I do not know that that is altogether wise. If we are going to have a milk board worthy of the name, and

composed of men more or less expert in the business, then it is not proper that practically everything they do or say shall be subject to the approval of the Minister. I shall support the second reading of the Bill and watch, with considerable interest, the proposed amendments, one or two of which will improve the Bill, and those I shall support.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading—Defeated.

Debate resumed from the 3rd October.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West—in reply) [7.43]: I have listened with great interest to the second reading debate on this measure and to the speeches of members who have expressed their opposition to the Bill. In my opinion the reasoning was very weak and lacked solid foundation. It is our duty as representatives of the people to pass legislation that will be of benefit to the majority of our citizens. This measure will result in economic savings to society as a whole and to all those who wish to do their insurance business of all kinds with the State Insurance Office. Never before in our history has it been so necessary to pare down all possible unnecessary expenditure on the home front and in cost of production. The experience of the Queensland and New South Wales State Insurance Offices is that the savings achieved and the services rendered make in the aggregate an impressive contribution to the national economy.

The Bill was opposed by Mr. Parker because he was not a socialist and because he did not believe in government trading. Having regard to the hon. member's many years of parliamentary service and his many public utterances, there is no possible chance of anyone making any mistake with regard to his attitude on socialism or State trading.

State trading is not an issue in the Bill. It is not government opposition to private enterprise, as that is already established by the provisions of the Commonwealth Life Assurance Act. What we have to decide is whether the State Government shall be

allowed to enter the general field of insurance in preference to the Commonwealth Government. When the Bill to give the Commonwealth the right to handle every class of insurance was introduced, the Prime Minister stated:—

It was proposed to provide for the establishment of a Commonwealth Government Insurance Office if and when the establishment of such an office was thought to be in the public interest.

It can only be assumed that sooner or later a Commonwealth Insurance Office will be established. The companies may, therefore, have to face governmental opposition, and the whole question is whether this State is to derive any benefits which might accrue from insurance business, or whether such benefits will go to the Commonwealth Government for the benefit of taxpayers throughout the whole of Australia. The main object of the companies is to make profits, but the main object of the State Government Insurance Office is to render service to the public. While the State office must be run on sound business lines, profit making is a secondary consideration.

Where State offices such as those of Queensland and New South Wales have the right to handle every class of insurance, the individual policy holders have directly benefited, apart altogether from the general benefit to those States by virtue of contributions to the State Treasury Department. For the year ended the 30th June, 1946, the following bonuses were declared by the New South Wales office:—

	Per cent. of the premiums paid.
Fire, Householders Comprehensive, and loss of profits	30
Motor Vehicle Comprehensive	15
Plate Glass	20
Personal Accident	10
Fidelity Guarantee	25
Workers' Compensation	12½

So far as I am aware, no such bonuses have ever been paid by private insurance companies. Mr. Parker's comments regarding life assurance, are, of course, without any foundation whatever. On the contrary, there is ample evidence that the public has complete confidence in State offices handling that class of business.

Referring again to New South Wales, in 1942 the scope of the State office there was extended to include life assurance.

Since that date policies have been issued assuring an aggregate sum of over £3,500,000, and the annual income in respect of premiums exceeds £125,000. These figures are a record for any life office in New South Wales for a similar period of its existence. I want members to appreciate that. It is a record in New South Wales insurance business, established by the State office there in competition with the private companies. The premiums charged by that office are comparatively low, and the reversionary bonuses compare more than favourably with those issued by mutual companies.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: No percentages there!

THE HONORARY MINISTER: Notwithstanding payments made in respect of death claims and replacements, 95 per cent. of the business written by the New South Wales office was still in force at the 30th June last. It is very doubtful whether any mutual company could show such a percentage. In New Zealand the Government Insurance Office has issued life assurance policies for many years, and it is now second only to the A.M.P. in respect of life assurance business in the Dominion. The annual aggregate of premiums of that office for life assurance business only is approximately £1,000,000. The total sum assured at the 31st December, 1945, was £40,838,000, to which reversionary bonuses of £4,126,000 have been added.

The facts that I have quoted, which cannot be successfully challenged, are an effective answer to Mr. Parker when he stated that nobody could truly advise a young man to assure his life in a Government controlled office. While dealing with this subject I might mention that it is somewhat astounding that the Chamber of Manufactures should raise any objection to the proposed extension of the scope of our office. Manufacturers in this State are in keen competition with those operating in other parts of the Commonwealth, and surely it is of vital interest to such manufacturers that their production costs should be reduced to an absolute minimum.

Many manufacturers have placed their workers' compensation business with the State office because they have been able to obtain cover at substantially reduced premiums, and the same would, of course, ap-

ply if the office were able to accept their insurance in respect of fire, public risk and other classes of general insurance. One manufacturer who transferred his workers' compensation business to the State office in October last is saving approximately £200 per annum in premium payments. A vicious attack was made by Mr. Parker upon the Public Trust Office. It was quite uncalled for and totally out of place in connection with this Bill.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Then why refer to it?

The HONORARY MINISTER: This organisation is in its infancy and will, I believe, prove of great assistance to the people of this State. Already it has filled a long-felt want in doing business that lawyers do not wish to transact. Of course, it will eventually take on more and more business that legal men themselves would like to do. In the circumstances it is natural that legal practitioners should be in opposition to the Public Trustee and his organisation.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Do you suggest the organisation is doing legal business?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Public Trustee and his officers will do increased business in handling the affairs of people that are now dealt with by the legal profession. Because of the efficient organisation made available by the State, they will be able to do the work at less cost than is incurred by those who transact their business through lawyers today. Being a lawyer Mr. Parker resents the possible encroachment of that office on what was hitherto the close preserve of the legal profession and the trustee companies. I can see no possible objection to the advertisements he so soundly condemned. The Public Trustee was instituted for the benefit of the majority of the people. The hon. member should be big enough in outlook to bow to the inevitable.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I am looking after the interests of the people.

The HONORARY MINISTER: In his remarks Mr. Loton quite overlooked the fact, as I have previously stated, that this Bill does not raise the question of private enterprise versus the Government as the Commonwealth Government has the legal right to create such opposition. Referring to his

statement regarding the creation of a monopoly which may result in the undercutting of premiums to such an extent that private enterprise will be put out of business, I would quote the following statement made by Mr. Dunstan, who is now the Leader of the Opposition in the Victorian House and was then Premier, a man who may be regarded as somewhat conservative. I am quoting from page 1721 of the May, 1946, issue of "Hansard":

I believe that healthy competition between the State Insurance office and private insurance companies—vested interests, as some people call them—is for the good of the community, because any insurance office that cannot stand competition has no right to survive.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Does that apply to timber mills and so on?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The timber mills have nothing to do with this class of insurance; they are quite a different proposition altogether. The State office is out to give public service and to save money for the people, not to make profits. In his statement, Mr. Loton infers that the State office would deliberately underent premiums even to the extent of running its business at a loss and that, having squeezed out the private companies, the premiums would then have to be increased.

Hon. C. B. Williams: He represents free trade, but he is a primary producer.

The HONORARY MINISTER: This is, of course, an absurd statement as any office must be run on sound business lines. So far no logical argument has been advanced by any member in opposing the Bill. The only point really made is that members are against an extension of State trading.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You would not absorb any arguments that were made.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Comparisons have been made with other State trading concerns, that have no relation whatever to the activities of this office. It is fortunate for the employers in this State that the State Government Insurance Office was established, even if its primary object was to insure workers against Third Schedule diseases. Under the Act insurance is compulsory and other insurers frequently refuse to issue policies in respect of general accident insurance where the employer has had a bad experience or if they consider the risk unduly high. As insurance is compul-

sory, it is perfectly obvious that in such cases insurers would charge exorbitant rates, which the employer would have to pay if he desired to continue in business. Such employers now come to the State office and obtain their cover for a reasonable premium.

Regarding Dr. Hislop's reference to the Workers' Compensation Bill introduced by him, both the State office and the Underwriters' Association gave very careful consideration to his suggestions. The main difficulty in giving effect to them is that approximately seventy insurance offices are catering for workers' compensation business and I am quite satisfied that until the State office can have a monopoly of workers' compensation insurance, it would not be possible to carry out some of the suggestions made.

If Dr. Hislop can persuade the Legislative Council to pass such a measure, he can rest assured that the State Government Insurance Office will be able to render a most efficient service in every direction, both to the employer and the employee. It is not right to say that all the office requires is the business and that it is not prepared to render the service. Actually the converse applies. The primary desire is to render a service to the community and the question of profits is quite a secondary one.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: I did not criticise the State office; I criticised the Government.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Possibly the hon. member did not mean to criticise the office but in criticising the Government he criticised the office.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Not necessarily.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Regarding the comments by Mr. Thomson, in view of the experience of the State Insurance Office and the enormous benefit it has been to the Treasury Department, and incidentally, which is of far greater importance to the taxpayers of this State, it is somewhat surprising that such a comparison should have been made with other trading concerns, more particularly with the Railway Department. As a matter of fact, there is no comparable basis on which such a comparison could reasonably be made. He appears to have laid great stress on the fact that the Bill gives the State office the right to handle life assurance business. That is only one aspect of the Bill and perhaps not the most important one.

If the State office did undertake life assurance business it would pay to the State Treasury, an amount equal to the taxation paid to the Commissioner of Taxation by the private companies, the difference being that the State and not the Commonwealth would reap the direct benefit. Before members decide to vote against this measure, they should carefully consider those words. If they reject the Bill it means they will divert the business to the Commonwealth Insurance Office when it is established, as it assuredly will be.

As it has so often been explained that the State Office does, in fact, pay taxation and will, if this Bill becomes law, pay the same amount as if it were a company, it can only be assumed that members are deliberately misrepresenting the position. It is surely a great commendation for the merits of the Bill that members can find no faults therein, but use as arguments unfair and unjust comparisons. Mr. Dimmitt in the course of his remarks made the following statement:—

The extension of any existing Government enterprise can be justified only if it will provide greater benefits than are being made available and at comparable cost or alternatively seeks to set up opposition to a monopoly.

There is a convincing answer to this challenge. There is no doubt whatever that the State Government Insurance Office can provide the same benefits as are now made available by insurance companies, but at a considerable reduction in cost to the public. This applies particularly to fire insurance. From the latest information published in the Insurance Directory and Year Book, the commission and expenses of management in regard to fire insurance for the whole of the English companies represent 46 per cent. of the premium income. Of that percentage, 20 per cent. is paid by way of commission and 26 per cent. as management expenses. There is no doubt whatever that the State office could render a service at a considerably lower cost and at the same time pay full taxation and other charges which would normally be paid by insurance competitors.

Regarding Mr. Dimmitt's comments in respect of the New South Wales office, the moneys advanced were purely temporary advances pending the first actuarial valuation of the Life Assurance Fund. All bonuses paid represent a distribution of surplus

moneys on an actuarial valuation, and there is little doubt that when the valuation is made, any amount advanced will be refunded from the declared surplus. Admittedly, life assurance has to be sold; but I think it can be taken for granted that with the lower administration costs, any Government office should be able to make available larger bonuses than those paid by private companies. I think that is a reasonable statement to make in view of the successful operations of the New South Wales and Queensland State Offices.

Throughout the whole of the debate great stress has been laid upon the provision of the Bill with regard to life assurance; but this is only a portion of the measure; and, from their silence on the proposed extension to other forms of insurance, members may be favourable to them and may desire when the Bill is in Committee to exclude the life assurance proposal. I sincerely trust they will not do that; but practically nothing has been said with regard to the other forms of insurance, all the criticism having been directed to the life assurance proposals.

Summing up the opposition to this measure, it can be truly said that it is practically the same old argument used by opponents when the New South Wales State insurance legislation was before that Parliament. History has proved the criticism baseless with regard to New South Wales; and members are continually stressing the need for benefiting by experience. I have quoted figures demonstrating the remarkable success of that office in all branches of the insurance field. Given the same opportunity, the State Insurance Office in Western Australia could be of the same assistance to secondary and primary industries, employers and employees, and to every activity in this State.

The State Insurance Office receives numerous inquiries from the public for these facilities. The popular demand for this Bill cannot be denied, and it will be in the best interests of our State and its people if the measure is passed. The success of its operations in the past justifies the extension of the functions of the State office. It has achieved in the workers' compensation business a very substantial reduction in the premium rates charged to industry. Notwithstanding this fact, the business has proved most profitable. At the 30th June last the

accumulated reserves totalled £851,000 which represents a general reserve of £466,000 and specific reserves of £385,000. Of the general reserve, £785,000 represents liquid assets of which £716,000 is invested in Commonwealth loans and £69,000 in Australian consolidated stocks. In addition to the reserves created, very substantial profits have, by transfer to the Treasury, been credited to Consolidated Revenue Account.

In 1943, the Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act was passed and the State Insurance Office received by legislation authority to do this class of business. For 1944, 11,000 motor vehicle owners insured with the State office. This number was increased to 18,000 for the year ended the 30th June, 1946. During the last two years, 600 comprehensive policies have been issued.

Last session the State office was authorised to handle all classes of insurance for local government authorities by way of an insurance pool. I think the activities of the local authorities can be taken as a barometer of the popularity or otherwise of the State office or any other governmental concern, and as an indication of the feelings of the people towards that special organisation. That pool came into operation on the 1st July of this year and 66 local authorities, representing nearly 50 per cent. of the number in this State, are participating in the pool. So the local authorities, the members of which are all practical men rendering honorary service to the people of this country, realise the benefits that can accrue to their people and the reduction in administrative costs as a result of the forming of a pool operating under the State office, which proves that the public have confidence in the State office.

It is a reasonable request and a good sound business proposition for the people that the Bill be agreed to by Parliament. I earnestly desire to push this Bill forward. I believe that over the years the State office has proved its worth to the people and proved to Parliament that it is a sound, solid, business proposition run on business lines and organised to do public service to the people. The time is overdue for its activities to be widened, and I hope members will agree to the second reading and pass the Bill through Committee without amendment.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	..	13
				—
Majority against	..			3
				—

AYES.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. E. H. Hall (Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. J. A. Dilmitt	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. R. M. Forrest	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. A. L. Loton	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. J. G. Hialop (Teller.)
Hon. H. S. W. Parker	

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Hon. G. W. Miles	Hon. F. E. Gibson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. L. B. Bolton

Question thus negatived; Bill defeated.

BILL—LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL REFERENDUM.

Second Reading—Defeated.

Debate resumed from the 10th October.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [8.13]: I rise to support the measure. For many years I have considered that a two-Chamber Parliament, elected as it is in this State—or in any other State, for that matter—is a waste of time. I think we should ask the electors to give their judgment as to whether they wish 50 representatives to be elected to another place on boundaries fixed, I understand—I am open to correction—by a judge of the Supreme Court, and then that the activities of those 50 should be stultified more or less by the efforts of 30 representatives in this place, who are elected by a smaller number of electors situated mainly in the metropolitan area. I can agree with Mr. Parker on the number of electors that he said he represented, compared with those represented by all the Ministers in the Assembly. If ever there was a House due for a redistribution of seats, it is this. Fifty per cent. of the members in this House represent the metropolitan portion of the State and metropolitan interests. Six represent the Eastern Goldfields, three the Central Province, three the South-East Province, and three the North Province.

Fifteen members represent metropolitan interests.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Who told you that? I do not represent metropolitan interests.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Mr. Mann represents metropolitan interests.

Hon. W. J. Mann: I ask for a withdrawal of that statement. I distinctly said I did not represent the metropolitan area. I stand by that statement, and ask the hon. member to withdraw his remark.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I must not be asked to tell a lie.

The PRESIDENT: Will Mr. Williams please resume his seat. What is it that Mr. Williams is asked to withdraw?

Hon. W. J. Mann: The statement that I represent the metropolitan area.

The PRESIDENT: I take it Mr. Williams will withdraw that statement.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: If I am not able to prove it, I will withdraw it.

The PRESIDENT: Mr. Williams will resume his seat. The Standing Orders provide that if one member asks another to withdraw a certain statement, he shall do so.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I will withdraw my statement, but I am still going to make my speech.

The PRESIDENT: There is nothing to prevent the hon. member from doing that.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Then I withdraw the statement. The fact is that the boundaries of Mr. Mann's electorate come right down into the suburbs of the metropolitan area.

Hon. W. J. Mann: That is not so.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Mr. Mann already has my apology. We will look up the boundaries later.

Hon. W. J. Mann: They are over 20 miles away.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Where is North Beach? Is that 20 miles away?

Hon. G. B. Wood: That is in the East Province.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I know it is.

Hon. G. B. Wood: North Beach is only a very small portion of the province.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Yes, but it still represents the outer areas of the Metropolitan-Suburban Province.

Hon. G. B. Wood: I will not agree with that.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I will accept the hon. member's assurance that he does not represent that area. Let that be qualified. He says he does not represent it, but it is in his area and he should represent it. If ever a redistribution of seats was due in this House, and if ever a referendum was overdue, it was after the attitude adopted by this House last Thursday night. Mr. Parker was then talking of democracy. I agree with what he said, as we all love democracy. It is better for us to be as we are here than to have Communism or any Europeanism. Let us have our own Western Australianism, or Australianism. Tonight I have to challenge my leader and my colleagues in the Labour movement, because they are not sincere, and I challenge them on the vote that was taken and decided against me last Thursday night. Mr. Parker said he stood for democracy, and so does everyone of us here. Yet was there one hand raised in protest when democracy was travestied on Thursday night—when I was asked to leave this House? Not one member, not my own Leader, who moved that I be suspended, upheld democracy. They knew they did wrong.

The PRESIDENT: Order! What has that to do with the Bill?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Simply that I say a referendum should be taken in order that this House might be abolished. I find the tactics of Judge Jeffreys, 200 or 300 years ago, being adopted in this House in 1946, and my colleagues—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member must not reflect on any vote taken in this House.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Have it your own way, Mr. President! I am only referring to what Mr. Parker said. I ask him and other members: Are we to speak of democracy and believe in it as it exists today in the Commonwealth Parliament where one party controls 33 seats out of 36? Is that democracy? Do we believe in it? Of course we do not. I ask that what I am saying here be published; I was turned out of this House the other night.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I have already told the hon. member that he must not reflect on the proceedings of this House, and he is doing so. On Thursday night the House decided that he should be suspended for the remainder of the sitting.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I did not say anything about that. There will be a notice of motion before this House tomorrow night asking the House to disagree with what happened. The Standing Order did not say that the matter should be put forthwith. I refer to Standing Order 415.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member will resume his seat. Would it not be much better and more proper to defer those remarks until the proposed notice of motion?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Yes, if you, Mr. President, would not mislead this House.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member must not reflect on the Chamber.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: You said that the motion should be put forthwith.

The PRESIDENT: I have not the slightest objection to anything the hon. member may say disparaging me personally, but I have a job to do here and it is the office and the members of the House that I must protect. The hon. member must not proceed along those lines.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: You just said that the motion should be put forthwith!

The PRESIDENT: I mentioned the Standing Order.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Where is it?

The PRESIDENT: It is the one the hon. member quoted.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I did not quote that Standing Order. When a member sees his own colleagues, who are supposed to wish for the abolition of this House and who were elected and pledged to do that—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member has already given the Chamber his word that he would postpone his remarks on that subject until a later date.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Do not let us quarrel!

The PRESIDENT: We must not.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I do not think it would be wise. If any House should be

abolished, it is this. When members of this House are supposed to stand for privilege and to represent the people that own homes in this State, if ever privilege was done an ill turn, it was done last Thursday night. I hope members will pass the measure in order that the referendum may be put before the people.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [8.28]: I listened to the debate on this measure in another place, and when a point of order was raised—

The **PRESIDENT**: Order! I have already reminded members of the provisions of the Standing Orders.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Very well, Mr. President. Some members of another place, with all arrogance and intolerance, wanted to limit the age of members of the Council and, in effect, indicated that age hath no honour with that particular section of youthful members who overlooked the fact that today they are enjoying the result of the labours of their elder brethren, who worked and prepared the way for them to enjoy the privileges that they now possess. I wish to congratulate Mr. Williams on the questions that he asked in this House, dealing with pertinent matters raised in another place.

True democracy is tolerance of the other fellow's view, but the intolerant section of the Labour movement seems to want to pull down and destroy anything appertaining to the old-time method that has enabled them to enjoy the freedom of speech and right to live that we have exercised for so many years. I hope that method will long continue. Today there is a section of the community which, while boasting of freedom, absolutely denies the right to other people to hold any opinion unless that opinion is subservient to union rules and regulations. The freedom our citizens are supposed to enjoy is really a myth and a delusion. No man may earn a living in Australia today unless he holds a union ticket.

Hon. G. Fraser: That is not true.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Then I will qualify my remark by saying there are hundreds of thousands of men in Australia today who are not permitted to earn a living unless they hold a union ticket.

Hon. G. Fraser: Only if they want to engage in a particular industry.

Hon. A. THOMSON: But they may not transfer to any particular industry, no matter how much they may desire to do so. Those who object to the elder brethren overlook the fact that it is mainly from these men that the present generation have any hope of learning a trade or profession. The accumulated knowledge is improved upon and passed on from generation to generation. I claim that the Legislative Council is more truly democratic than is the average Labour Government, whose members must first submit to pre-selection by the various unions. Democracy ceases when outside bodies dictate the policy they must support.

Hon. G. Fraser: They are not selected by a little coterie.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The Government having received its orders in this way, we have the present Bill before us for our consideration. I was particularly interested in the figures quoted by Mr. Heenan. He said that at the last Assembly elections there were 274,856 names on the roll; but all of those people were enrolled under compulsion and were required to vote or suffer a penalty of £2. Mr. Heenan quoted the number on the Legislative Council roll, the total being only 87,883. There is neither compulsory enrolment nor compulsory voting for the Council. From those figures, it would appear that only one-third of the people on the Assembly roll would be entitled to vote for the Legislative Council. It is interesting to recall a reply given by the Chief Secretary to a question I asked on the 7th August. I asked the question with a view to ascertaining facts for the information of the public on account of the statements so frequently made, not only in this House but also outside. I asked—

As regards plural voting at Legislative Council elections, will the Minister inform the House as to the number of electors who have more than one vote, and the number of such votes, and for which provinces?

The reply of the Chief Secretary was—

To obtain the information requested would entail an exhaustive search by two clerks of the whole of the State electoral index, containing approximately 380,000 cards, and it is estimated would take from 10 to 14 days.

Seeing that these charges have been made against the Council so frequently, one would have thought that such information would

have been available at the Electoral Office to substantiate or disprove the charges. Would I be justified in assuming that the 380,000 people represented by the index cards were possibly eligible to vote for the Council? If we are to conclude that there is no record of the electors who have more than one vote and that the department would have to go through the whole of the index cards to ascertain the number, it should be safe to assume that there is something very wrong with the department's indexing system. Presumably the 380,000 cards would refer only to those persons who are entitled to vote for the Assembly. In view of the many charges levelled against this House on the ground of the small number on the roll and the plural voting that is alleged to occur, one would expect such information to be available. In the circumstances, I can only conclude that the charges levelled against this House are not in strict accord with the truth.

Hon. G. Fraser: More than 10 per cent. of those on the West Province roll are plural voters.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Then why did not the Chief Secretary supply that information?

The Chief Secretary: I think the hon. member is begging the question. He knows the reason.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I do not know the reason.

The Chief Secretary: Then I will give it to you shortly.

Hon. G. Fraser: It would be necessary to check the rolls to find out.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am merely quoting the reply given to my question by the Chief Secretary and commenting on it. In the "Pocket Year Book" issued by the Government, it is stated that there are approximately 130,000 dwellings in this State. According to a statement made by Mr. Heenan in a previous session that a man as the occupier and his wife as the owner of a home on the Goldfields would each have a vote, there should be at least 260,000 on the roll if enrolment were compulsory. If there are 130,000 dwellings in the State, one may reasonably assume that more than 87,883 persons were entitled to be on the Council roll.

The Chief Secretary: That is admitted.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The trouble is that so much is made of the big difference between the big number enrolled for the Assembly and the number enrolled for the Council. If the Government were sincere in the desire to ensure that everyone who was eligible to be on the Council roll was enrolled, it would have done as it did for the Assembly—prescribed compulsory enrolment.

The Chief Secretary: You would be the first to object to that.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I differ.

The Chief Secretary: I say you would be the first to object.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I have advocated compulsory enrolment for quite a number of years.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: The qualification would be too high.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I defy Mr. Heenan to mention a house in any part of the State to be had for a rental of less than 7s. a week, and there are 130,000 dwellings in this State. Owing to the high rentals prevailing, I venture to say that the occupier of each of those dwellings would be entitled to a vote for this House.

The Chief Secretary: That is not right.

Hon. A. THOMSON: If the Government is so anxious to have the Legislative Council abolished—

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Or provide for election on the adult franchise.

Hon. A. THOMSON: That is where I differ from the hon. member. One of the charges levelled against the Council is that this House interferes with the Government's money Bills that are sent to us. If members look at the notice paper, they will see some very interesting amendments that are to be proposed by the Chief Secretary to Sir Hal Colebatch's Bill. I consider it opportune to direct the attention of the House and of the people to the fact that for 19 years and four months Labour Governments have been in charge of the finances of this State. Mr. Collier was in office for six years and eight days on the first occasion and on the second, three years, four months, 27 days. Mr. Willcock was in office eight years, 11 months, 12 days; and Mr. Wise, if he continues in office to the end of his term, will have been in office one

year and eight months. That is a total of 19 years and four months. I would direct the attention of members to the Return No. 5 submitted with the Estimates. They will find that during that period of Labour administration the sum of £7,500,000 was added to the deficit of Western Australia. This shows how seriously the Labour Administration interfered with finance. True, Mr. Willcock showed the following surpluses—

	£
1940-41	11,111
1941-42	1,768
1942-43	24,436
1943-44	38,021
1944-45	4,490

These may be regarded as paper surpluses, as they really represent delayed maintenance and repairs, which must now be undertaken. I have quoted the figures to prove how false is the charge made that this House has interfered with money Bills. I have been a member of Parliament for many years in another place and for a number of years in this House; and not on one occasion have I known the Legislative Council to interfere with or take exception to, money Bills. True, we reserve the right to criticise the methods of the Legislative Assembly. We are justified in doing so; it is our duty, but as to interfering with the rights and privileges of the Legislative Assembly—about which we have heard so much—that is part and parcel of the propaganda that has been used against this House for so many years.

Hon. G. Fraser: You forgot to mention the financial emergency taxation measure.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Did that apply to Western Australia or to the whole of Australia?

Hon. G. Fraser: This House refused to pass it. It applied to this State.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Answer my question! Did it apply to the whole of Australia?

Hon. G. Fraser: No.

Hon. A. THOMSON: What States were exempt?

Hon. G. Fraser: It was a taxation measure of this State which the Legislative Council refused to pass. A special session had to be held later in order to introduce

it. That happened in the hon. member's time.

Hon. W. J. Mann: It was passed.

Hon. G. Fraser: The hon. member said he knew of no instance.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I do not. I know of no instance when the Government in power was ever refused its Appropriation Bill.

Hon. G. Fraser: There is one instance I can remember.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Bill Mr. Fraser referred to was lost in a conference.

Hon. G. Fraser: Tweedledee, Tweedledum!

Hon. A. THOMSON: Personally, I resent very much the charges that are levelled against what might be termed people of experience. Those who make the charges will some day realise, like yourself, Mr. President, that they also have grown old. I am not going to vote for the measure.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West—in reply) [8.50]: Mr. Thomson's contribution to the debate did not deal with the real point at issue. It is well known that young people have no time for old people; that is the usual attitude of youth to age, but it has nothing to do with the Bill. Young people take the attitude that what older people do is wrong, and we can afford to laugh at that attitude. As to interference with money Bills by this House, Mr. Thomson knows that for many years there have been arguments between the two Houses over such Bills. The measure before us, however, seeks permission to obtain the opinion of the people on two questions, and we should confine our discussion and examination to the actual points contained in the Bill.

The contribution to the debate by Mr. Baxter was not very helpful. It was distinctly unfair to the State Electoral Department and its staff. The statement that under the Electoral Districts Act every three electors in the metropolitan area counted as one is incorrect. The number of electors for that area is reduced by half, which means that two electors count as one. The allegation that Government members in the Assembly take very fine care that the rolls of this House are kept on

the basis of an extremely low minority is untrue. The Government has not at any time restricted the efforts of the Electoral Department to secure a larger enrolment for the Legislative Council.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Have you spent any money on enlarging the rolls?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The staff of the department is busily engaged throughout the year in looking after the two sets of rolls. Last year—Mr. Mann and other members who went up for election know this to be true—a determined effort was made to improve the Council rolls.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Not in my province.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Nor in mine, unfortunately. Approximately 50,000 claim cards, with a short letter addressed to the occupier and a leaflet stating the qualifications necessary for enrolment, accompanied by an addressed envelope for reply, were despatched, and resulted in the addition of nearly 10,000 names to the rolls.

Hon. H. Seddon: None was sent to the freeholders.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The effort was made. Owing to the proximity of the general elections for the Legislative Assembly, this work has been discontinued temporarily but will be resumed when those elections are over. The department has concentrated on the Assembly rolls and this means that the Chief Electoral Officer has a long-range plan for keeping his staff actively engaged in making the rolls as perfect as possible. Mr. Baxter's statement that the Chief Electoral Officer informed the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on Electoral Reform in 1944 that time and again he had approached the Government for funds to try to bring about a better state of the Council rolls and had received a point blank refusal each time, is an exaggeration.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That is not the statement I referred to. There is another statement.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member was distinctly unfair to the department.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I was not.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It would be all right for the hon. member to attack

me or other hon. members, but I hate to see anybody giving a side kick to an officer of a department who cannot defend himself.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I ask the Honorary Minister to withdraw the remark that the department got a side kick from me. I quoted the evidence given before me as a member of the Select Committee.

The PRESIDENT: To what particular remark does the hon. member refer?

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The Minister said I was giving the department a side kick, whatever he means by that. I object to the remark.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I withdraw the remark. I hate to see a side kick being given—

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You are repeating the words.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I did not refer to the hon. member.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Of course you did.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not think there is any necessity to get cross about this matter. Further, the department made every endeavour to secure a larger enrolment.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What can the department do without funds?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The department has the staff, which is working. It is not sitting down doing nothing. As I said, some 50,000 claim cards are sent out every year, with a covering letter and leaflet advising as to the qualifications and with an envelope for return; but approximately only 20 per cent. of the cards are returned to the department. There is a reason for that, Mr. President, and we must be perfectly fair. It is impossible to get men on the Legislative Council roll in the day time. The head of the family, who in the great majority of cases is the one possessing the qualification, is absent during the day. Therefore, a canvass would not yield satisfactory results. It is necessary for the canvasser to get in touch with the person qualified for enrolment and explain the qualifications, which very few understand. If cards are left at a house, they are rarely attended to.

The complaint by Mr. Baxter as to the refusal to reprint the Council rolls about the middle of last year is correct, but when

they were reprinted about the end of the year he still had three months in which to make an effort to improve the East Province roll. The hon. member's roll was out before mine was.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Mine was out on the 2nd January, but I did not receive it until long afterwards, when it was of no use.

The HONORARY MINISTER: A typically conservative expression of opposition to the Bill was made by Mr. Hamersley. He is conscientiously opposed to any progressive change and by his remarks indicated a decided objection to any responsibility being entrusted to young people. The hon. member forgot, unintentionally perhaps, that there are many thousands of mature men and women who are shut out from the franchise under our present Constitution. Time marches on, but the hon. member resolutely holds fast to conditions of the past that by experience have been proven to be unsuitable to modern requirements.

I was disappointed with Mr. Mann's opposition to the Bill and the reasons he gave. One remark the hon. member made caught my attention. It was that he was of the opinion we could do with fewer members of Parliament. The answer to that is that the referendum would give the people an opportunity to express by ballot the same opinion. By voting against the Bill he denies the electors that opportunity.

In his opposition to the measure, Mr. Parker paid a great deal of attention to the large number of informal votes cast at the recent Federal Referendum. Although this is to be regretted, it is surely not a sound reason for preventing the big majority of the people from expressing their opinion. The hon. member stated that he believed in democracy, but by his expressions of disapproval of this Bill he is determined to keep the present Constitution inviolate and shut out large numbers of first class citizens. This attitude is not consistent on the part of anyone who claims to believe in democratic government. These are the two questions electors will be asked to vote upon—

(a) Are you in favour of the abolition of the Legislative Council as a constituent part of the Parliament of the State?

(b) Are you in favour of the franchise for the election of members of the Legislative

Council being the same as the franchise for the election of members of the Legislative Assembly?

Since 1902 some 23 attempts by Bills and motions have been made to modernise this Chamber and bring it closer to the people. Very little progress has been made. In his speech Mr. Simpson stated—

I have come to the conclusion that the measure bears an air of unreality and that it has been submitted to us with no real thought or desire for its acceptance by us.

I can assure the hon. member that the Government is sincere and the Bill is introduced to give an opportunity to the citizens of this State to express an opinion on the Legislative Council and to say, (1) whether it should be continued, or (2) whether the franchise should be widened. Mr. Simpson has expressed himself very clearly in favour of the bicameral system. Then why not give the electors an opportunity to express an opinion through a referendum? The two questions proposed to be submitted by the Bill before this Chamber should be considered as two distinct propositions.

The Labour movement in this State, through its affiliated organisations comprising many thousands of men and women who live and work in all parts of the State, is of the opinion that whatever virtue the bicameral system had in our early history has completely disappeared and that this Chamber is now both an unnecessary expense and an irritating bar to progressive government. That is the view of thousands of people affiliated with the various Labour organisations throughout the State. They have every right to express their opinion. They have debated this question for many years. It is not the opinion of a few hotheads, but of people who live in the country, in the bush and in the towns. They are strengthened in this belief by the drastic reduction of the powers of the House of Lords in the Mother Parliament.

Coming nearer home we have a splendid example in Queensland. Did chaos, confusion and ill-considered legislation result when the Legislative Council was abolished in our sister State? The contrary has been the result. Queensland has set a splendid example to all States of the Commonwealth both in administration and legislation. She is making wonderful progress.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Why are there strikes there?

The HONORARY MINISTER: All over the world there are strikes. The prophecy of the stouthearted believers in the necessity of the continuance of the bicameral system for the future safety and development of Queensland has been proved all wrong. During the critical years of war when our very existence was threatened, did the Queensland Government and the Queensland people suffer any disability because of the absence of the bicameral system of government in that State? The contrary is the case. Close co-operation was established and maintained at all times with the Commonwealth Government. Actually the Queensland Government was able to implement the necessary complementary legislation urgently required for effective action much quicker than in this State.

It is a fact that cannot be disputed that the necessary State legislation agreed upon as a result of conferences between the Commonwealth and the State Governments has been brought to finality far more quickly in Queensland because of the absence of irksome delays in implementing these resolutions through an unnecessary Legislative Council than in States where weeks of tedious delay and cumbersome procedure required the legislation to run the gauntlet of the Upper Houses. Every member will agree with that. Now that the war is won and the difficult problems of the peace have to be solved, our plans for rehabilitation and progress for the people will be far more quickly accomplished without legislative measures having to be submitted, argued, amended and finally decided by the Legislative Council.

Furthermore, facts have to be faced. The war has got to be paid for. The taxation burden is very heavy and, therefore, wherever possible unnecessary expenditure must be cut out. There is a large body of public opinion in this State that believes the abolition of the Legislative Council would save a considerable sum annually to the State and thus be a decided contribution to our social economy. This is not the opinion of a few fanatics but of the Labour movement in this State plus the unknown members of other political parties, and the large number of citizens here who belong to no political

party but who have the right as citizens to express their opinions.

The No. 1 question for submission to the people contained in this Bill will clearly ascertain the correct number of our people who have this belief. This request is reasonable and just. If members who spoke against the Bill are sincere in their opinions with regard to the necessity for the retention of this Chamber, then they should not be afraid of testing their views. If they are right there will be an overwhelming vote in favour of the question and the atmosphere will be very definitely cleared. If we had a tremendous majority against us, we would have to admit that we had made a mistake, and battle on.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: As was done in Queensland?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The second question to be submitted to the people, as contained in this Bill, is of the utmost importance. It seeks an opinion with regard to the extension of the franchise. On the 1st November, 1830, an order in Council was issued in England and was published in Western Australia on the 29th December, 1831—

for the establishment of a Legislative Council to make all necessary laws and to constitute all necessary courts for the peace, order and good government of the settlement.

It was then a nominee Council. In 1888 the Council was dissolved and the first general election took place in January, 1889. The qualification for an elected member was the possession of £1,000 freehold property. The qualification of the elector was £50 freehold or £10 household, or the lease of Crown lands to the same amount of annual rental. Very little progress has been made in broadening the franchise since 1889. For over half a century writers, journalists, organisations and speakers have pleaded in vain for the franchise for the Legislative Council to be made compatible with democratic ideas of the people's rights.

The widening of the franchise does not affect in any way the principle of the bicameral system of government. Whatever virtue was in the principle of owning property as a measure of citizenship and a right to vote has long since vanished. The progress of education, the varied professions and occupations of our citizens as compared with conditions of living of over

a century ago, have made the property qualification for the franchise both grotesque and extremely unjust.

How can it be argued that it is just that any professional man or woman should be denied the franchise because he or she does not own land to the value of £50 or live in a rented house worth 7s. 6d. a week? Many professional men and women rendering specialised services to the community are too busily occupied in their work to bother about owning land or renting a house or paying the requisite amount of rates to qualify for the present franchise.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: What would they know about politics? They are too busy to pay their rent.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I have allowed members a lot of latitude. It is the practice of the Honorary Minister to read his speech, and I hope members will refrain from interjecting.

The HONORARY MINISTER: A professional man might be living in a hotel and he would not have a vote unless he owned land. Can an argument be successfully used that these people should be excluded from the franchise for the Legislative Council? Next comes the question of the women. A century ago women took no part in society other than their household duties as dutiful servants of men, or the more fortunate ones as social butterflies. They had no vote for anything and took practically no part in public affairs.

But great progress has been made over the years in the emancipation of women. They have the vote for both Houses in the Commonwealth Parliament and for the Assembly in the State Parliaments. Will any member dare to state in this House that a bachelor living luxuriously in a club and owning a house or block of land, rendering no social service to the community, should have the right to vote for this Chamber and that married women rearing families, whose husbands may rent their homes and have the vote, should be denied the franchise?

Members may be inclined to smile, but this is not a matter to be laughed at. I do not think members would dare to laugh if they were present at a meeting of women and this question were raised. A wealthy man might do nothing for the public and yet have a vote, whereas thousands of

women have not the right to vote. I am trying to give a sincere reply to the opposition put forward by members to the Bill. The present franchise qualifications are an insult to the women of our State which should be atoned for as quickly as possible, and the only way of atonement is to pass the Bill. The marvel to me is that the women's organisations of all parties have submitted so long to this injustice.

The greatest argument that can be used today against this antiquated franchise is the disfranchisement of thousands of married Servicemen and women through the acute housing shortage. The depression and the six years of war have precipitated this position. The fortunate married couples who have managed to rent or buy a house can be enrolled. The big majority, numbering many thousands, particularly in the metropolitan area and the Goldfields, are either living in rooms or are with their parents and are denied the franchise because they do not either own land or rent a house.

This is unjust and should not be tolerated. Over 5,000 married couples have applied for homes in the metropolitan area alone, and thousands of others are living at home with their parents. I think members will agree that parents of children are more valuable to the country than owners of land or leaseholders. Without them the nation would perish.

Members: Hear, hear!

The HONORARY MINISTER: Then there are the members of the nursing profession. Large numbers of nurses, keen on their jobs, living in public or private hospitals throughout the State, are deprived of the franchise. They do not work to own land, and have no desire to meddle in business of any kind. Their work for the State entitles them to full citizenship.

Hon. H. L. Roche: How many would there be?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Probably a thousand or more.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Have you had any request to be enrolled from them?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The trouble is that the matter is so complicated that very few understand what they have to do to be enrolled. These girls do not own any land and they want to do their

job. Their grand work entitles them to the franchise. Last but not least, the outstanding service rendered by both married and single women throughout the war years in an honorary capacity by manning the various war organisations for our Service men and women, entitles them to full citizenship. There are hundreds of young women who after their day's work in shops, factories or offices took their places on the roster and rendered honorary service in hostels and in other directions. Notwithstanding that great work, because they do not own a block of land or pay a certain amount in rent, they are not entitled to a vote for this House. Is that right or just? Then there are thousands of men and women who belong to the Red Cross Society and did great work during the war period. Surely those people are entitled to full citizenship!

Hon. G. B. Wood: They would not vote if they were enrolled.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Surely the work all these people did entitles them to a vote for this Chamber. Dr. Hislop is in the Chamber and I am sure he will be able to correct me if I am wrong in the statements I make when I contrast our attitude with that experienced in the early days of the advancement of hygiene.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: That is the spirit!

The HONORARY MINISTER: I procured some information from an informative book written by Dr. Heiser. From what I read in the book it appears that 12 years after the Legislative Council in Western Australia was gazetted and our Constitution framed, Adam Thompson patented the first known bath tub in the United States of America. The people there did not wash in those days.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What is this to do with the Bill?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I will make that clear as I proceed. In fact, in those days a campaign was instituted against "this most dangerous practice of bathing the body." The medical profession was foremost in the attack and it was predicted that rheumatism and inflammation and other ills would befall the venturesome individual who would take this serious risk.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Only in recent months a doctor in Tasmania said the same

thing. He told the people they must not bath.

The HONORARY MINISTER: In Boston, U.S.A., no-one was allowed to take a bath without a doctor's approval. In some States a bath was forbidden between the months of October and March. In Virginia a tax of 30 dollars was imposed on every bath installed in that State.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: You want everyone who has a bath to have a vote!

The HONORARY MINISTER: What I have quoted furnishes a startling comparison between the attitude of members of this Chamber and what happened 40 years ago when our Constitution was framed.

The PRESIDENT: It occurs to me that the same thing could be said about bathing costumes.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Do I understand that the Honorary Minister wants to wash us up?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I want members to appreciate the lesson that is to be drawn from this comparison. Knowledge and precept have altered throughout the years. Medical science has marched on. It is time that our outlook on human rights, as expressed in the present Constitution, was brought up to date and given expression as indicated in the Bill. That is the course we should adopt rather than insist upon the argument used in this Chamber that we must stick to the present arrangement and no matter how worthy the social work men and women have done may be, unless they own a block of land or pay 7s. 6d. a week in rent or comply with other obligations such people should not be entitled to a vote for this Chamber.

I listened with great interest to Mr. Seddon's contribution to the debate. His remarks with regard to the effect of the uniform tax on the relationship of the Commonwealth and the State Government were utterly irrelevant to the Bill before the Chamber. Mr. Seddon attempted to make a comparison between the referendum proposals in the Bill and similar provisions governing the liquor industry. The provisions for a three-fifths majority was provided for in order to obtain an alteration. He was on very unsafe ground in that contention. In the liquor trade the people who are in favour of restricting the trade as much as possible

can, by their vote, put their neighbours to very great inconvenience and loss. An extension of the franchise as proposed in this Bill will be of great benefit to the State and the citizens thereof without injuring any single individual, whereas with the local option poll we might injure the feelings of people.

Hon. H. Seddon: That was not an argument put up against the three-fifths majority.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I take the strongest objection to Mr. Seddon's extravagant statement that he wondered if the people of this State realised that by voting in favour of the proposals they would be committing themselves to a totalitarian form of government, because he said, that is what they would be doing. This is totally untrue and no vestige of evidence can be found to substantiate such an outrageous assertion. The policy of this Government and its administrative officers is totally opposed to any form of totalitarian government.

Hon. H. Seddon: Thanks to the Legislative Council!

The HONORARY MINISTER: For the reasons I have expressed, I cannot see any member, with the exception of those who are ultra conservative in outlook, voting against the second reading of the Bill. It is a perfectly fair and just proposal and gives all citizens an equal opportunity of expressing their opinions respecting this Chamber and the restricted franchise at present set out in the Constitution.

I hope I have dispelled the idea that the measure is just a joke. The Government is perfectly sincere in placing it before Parliament. There are between 70,000 and 80,000 adherents of the Labour movement and at their meetings, both large and small, organisations have continually asked that the referendum shall be held to give the people an opportunity to express their desires regarding the proposals outlined. The Government is carrying out the desires of the people it represents in addition to those of thousands of other citizens of the State who also desire to have a similar opportunity.

The PRESIDENT: Last session a similar Bill came before the House and the question was raised whether it was in order in as much as it was not accompanied by a certificate from another place to the effect that it had been passed there by an absolute

majority. My predecessor, Sir John Kirwan, ruled that the Bill did not require any such certificate. That ruling was upset by a very large majority, members holding that the Bill did require such a certificate, with the result that the Bill was laid aside. This time the Bill now before the House has been accompanied by the necessary certificate. I rule that such a certificate is necessary and the affirmative votes of 16 members of this House are required before the Bill can pass the second reading stage here. In the circumstances I shall divide the House in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 243.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	7
Noes	..	..	..	16

Majority against .. 9

AYES.	
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. W. H. Kitchin
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. G. Bennetts
Hon. W. R. Hall	(Teller.)

NOES.	
Hon. O. F. Baxter	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. R. M. Forrist	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. A. L. Loton	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
	(Teller.)

PAIRS.	
AYES.	NOES.
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. C. E. Williams	Hon. L. B. Bolton

Question thus negatived; Bill defeated.

House adjourned at 9.31 p.m.