and reach the stage, being sensible people, of deciding that they are never likely to resume their married relationship, and the wife says that she has met someone else with whom she would like to live, the two can stage a fictitious adultery if they have the cash to do it. Does the member for Subiaco believe when she reads the story of John Brown being seen in his pyjamas with the blinds down in some hotel——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I do not think that has anything to do with the matter.

Mr. HUGHES: Does the member for Subiaco believe that is "fair dinkum?" Of course she does not! Anybody who is willing to resort to those means can today get a divorce, and how can they be stopped? It cannot be proved that it is not a genuine case of adultery. It has all the appearance of such on the surface, and is uncontested. Who is to prove that it is not so? But many people, particularly those in a position to judge, have grave doubts about the matter. But such a course takes money. I suggest that all we are doing in this Bill is allowing the decent man to be placed on the same basis as the one who does not decently discharge his matrimonial obligations. We are allowing to be done honestly what is at present being done dishonestly, and permitting the poor man to have the same privileges as the rich man. I hope the second reading will be carried.

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

Ayes	7
Noes	26
Majority against ..	19

AYES.

Mr. Hughes	Mr. Triat
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Withers
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Doney
Mr. Sampson	*(Teller.)*

NOES

Mr. Boyle	Mr. Nulsen
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Panton
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Cross	Mr. Seward
Mr. Fox	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Hawke	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Warner
Mr. Hill	Mr. Watts
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Needham	Mr. Wise
Mr. North	Mr. Wilson
	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

House adjourned at 6.1 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 28th January, 1943.

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

QUESTIONS (7).

APPLE AND PEAR ACQUISITION BOARD.

As to Marketing, etc.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Would the Department, under acquisition, support an added free marketing period for apples? 2, Were Bartlett pears exported from Western Australia prior to acquisition and, if so, for how many years prior to acquisition? 3, Is it realised that acquisition of Bartlett pears means added expense to the Commonwealth, greater cost to the consumer, and reduced returns to the grower? 4, In the circumstances will he urge that Bartlett pears be exempt from the operations of the Apple and Pear Acquisition Board?

The MINISTER replied: 1, The import of the question is not quite clear but it is quite obvious that much more information is necessary. It seems that the subject-matter is one for decision under the jurisdiction of the Apple and Pear Board. 2, Bartlett pears have never been exported in quantity from Western Australia. Some consignments about fifteen to twenty years ago yielded very varied returns to the growers, and in general were not profitable owing to wastage. 3, No. 4, The omission of selected varieties might mean the abandonment of the scheme as a whole and is a matter for decision of the board.

INTEREST CONTROL.

As to Legislation.

Mr. DONEY asked the Minister for Lands: Has he yet anything to report in regard to requests (submitted by deputation in July last and, later, through a question by me in this House), that there should be reductions, cancellations, or other adjustments according to circumstances in the interest obligations of farmers upon the basis suggested at the deputation, or otherwise upon some other basis, in respect of which he intimated that investigations had been instituted with a view to a report?

The MINISTER replied: This matter is a very involved one and is being inquired into. At this stage I have nothing to report.

VERMIN DESTRUCTION.

Rabbits on Crown Lands.

Mr. DONEY asked the Minister for Lands: Will he advise, having regard to—(a) the fast increasing gravity of the rabbit menace; and (b) the inability of vermin boards and of individual farmers, through lack of manpower, to accept responsibility for the destruction of rabbits on properties outside their jurisdiction; 1, What steps, if any, have been taken to assure that the Agricultural Bank (in respect of abandoned and repossessed properties); the Railway Department (in respect of its reserves); and the Lands Department (in respect of reserves and Crown lands), accept obligation at once to set about destroying rabbits thereon? 2, What success, if any, has attended his efforts to free strychnine for rabbit destruction purposes?

The MINISTER replied: I am tabling a recent report in connection with this matter.

GRASS FIRES.

As to Outbreaks Caused by Locomotives.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Railways: 1, How many claims have been received by the Commissioner of Railways during the past three years from farmers who claim to have suffered damage as the result of fires started by sparks from railway engines? 2, Have any claims been paid? 3, If the answer is yes, how many claims have been paid and what is the total amount?

The MINISTER replied: 1, 101. 2, Yes. 3, Five. £150. In addition, without accepting liability, the department in eighteen cases made ex gratia payments totalling £234 5s. in all as a contribution towards replacements of fence posts destroyed.

MILK.

As to Price Increase.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Agriculture: Will he make representations to the Commonwealth Prices Commissioner to allow an equalised price increase to producers of milk products who will not benefit from the subsidy for the dairying industry, made available by the Commonwealth Government?

The MINISTER replied: The Commonwealth Prices Commissioner may not be the appropriate person to approach, and arrangements will be made to have this matter discussed at the forthcoming meeting of the Agricultural Council.

PERTH TRAMWAYS.

Routes, Distances and Fares.

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What is the distance from the Weld Club (the new starting place for the Inglewood tram) to Salisbury-street, Inglewood? 2, What is the distance from the Barrack-street jetty to the Weld Club? 3, What is the distance from the Weld Club to the terminus at Grand-parade? 4, What is the distance of the tram route from Barrack-street to Mint-street, Victoria Park? 5, What is the distance from Barrack-street to Tate-street, South Perth? 6, What is the section fare charged over the distance mentioned in each case?

The MINISTER replied: 1, 3 miles 31 chains 36 links. 2, 16 chains 12 links, 3, 3 miles 42 chains 63 links. 4, 3 miles 40 chains 76 links. 5, 3 miles 69 chains 27 links. 6 (1) 3d., (2) 1d., (3) 4d., (4) 3d., (5) 3d.

FISHERIES.

As to Perth Herring.

Mr. McDONALD asked the Minister for the North-West: 1, Is the fish, known as "the Perth herring," being caught at a length of five inches in large quantities for canning and other purposes? 2, Is it a fact that this fish cannot reproduce its species until nearly twice that length? 3, If

so, does he not consider that measures should be taken to avoid the depletion of this source of our fish supplies?

The MINISTER replied: 1, No. The usual length is from seven inches upwards. 2, No. These fish, in roe, have been captured at 6½ to 7½ inches. 3, Answered by No. 2.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for one month granted to Mr. F. C. L. Smith (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) on the ground of urgent national business, and to Mr. Rodoreda (Roebourne) on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council notifying that it insisted on its amendment No. 1, and that it had agreed to return its amendment No. 3 with an alternative amendment thereto, in which alternative amendment it desired the concurrence of the Assembly now considered.

In Committee.

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

No. 1. Clause 2, paragraph (a):—Add after the word "practitioners" in last line, page 1, the words "the seventh member shall not be a member of the public service."

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The proposed new Subsection (1), which the Council seeks to amend, deals with the proposed medical board and its membership. The provision sets out that the board shall "consist of not more than seven members appointed by the Governor, six of whom shall be medical practitioners." The Council seeks to provide further that the seventh member shall not be a member of the public service. I do not know exactly what is behind the Council's intention, but the Government is not prepared to accept an innovation of such a description, which would debar civil servants from the right of appointment to such a board. The Government is not prepared to set up such a precedent. I move—

That the Assembly continues to disagree to the amendment made by the Council.

Question put and passed.

No. 3. Clause 13: Proposed new Section 25A:—Insert before the word "treatment" in line 14, page 8, the words "diagnosis, examination, and the"

Council's alternative amendment—Amend the words proposed to be inserted to read "diagnosis, or examination, or the."

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The alternative amendment is similar to one previously moved in this Chamber and defeated, and therefore the Government cannot accept it. I move—

That the alternative amendment be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's alternative amendment not agreed to.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

Assembly's Request for Conference.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move—

That the Council be requested to grant a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Council, and that the managers for the Assembly be Mr. Patrick, Mr. Withers and the mover.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I find that the member for Bunbury has already been appointed one of the managers for this House on another conference. I ask leave to withdraw his name with a view to substituting that of the member for Mt. Magnet.

Leave given.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move—

That the name of the member for Mt. Magnet be substituted for that of the member for Bunbury.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of three amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; Mr. Seward in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 2: Delete the word "such" in line 14.

Mr. SEWARD: The Bill as introduced permitted an owner to enclose portion of his holding with wire netting and obtain exemption from vermin rates for that part of

his property. Under the Act the whole of the holding must be enclosed with rabbit-proof fencing before exemption could be obtained. In this Chamber the Bill was so amended as to make it necessary for the part enclosed to represent the whole of the title to a portion of land. If that amendment were carried, it would nullify the Bill. In some instances a fairly large holding, say 1,000 acres, may be comprised in one or two titles. Under the Bill as it left this Chamber, in order that exemption can be claimed the whole area must be enclosed in a rabbit-proof fence. But the area may include portions incapable of cultivation; and therefore the owner of the property if he rabbit-proofs the cultivable portion only, should be entitled to claim exemption for this. Again, a property may be composed of a dozen holdings, and the owner might enclose all those holdings, say of 100 acres each, with rabbit-proof fencing, and thus totally escape payment of vermin rates. As regards inspectors, the more land is enclosed the less need will there be for vermin inspection. The owner who has enclosed and is granted exemption, is still under the obligation to keep down rabbits. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: A much wider range of discussion must be permitted so that the meaning of these amendments may be explained. Most vermin boards levy on unimproved capital value at a rate under 1d. in the pound. Many of them are on 1/10th of 1d., or even less. The highest rate in the State is levied in the Greenough district, 2d. in the pound on unimproved capital value. The Pingelly district levies at the rate of ¼d. in the pound, and if all the rates collectable were collected, the total amount received would be £165. Gingin, one of the best vermin boards, always has inspectors, and represents a collection of several hundred pounds annually. The Manjimup board, whose district has recently been invaded by rabbits, has spent as much as £1,250 in one year on rabbit destruction, with results that are an absolute credit to the members of that board. The amendment now under consideration is in direct conflict with Section 104 of the Act, which section provides for release from payment of vermin rates if on inspection a property has been found to be effectively fenced. The usual rate charged by vermin boards for inspection of a fence, on which a certificate of exemption is granted to the owner of the property, is £2 2s. So that Section 104 provides very definitely for the making of such inspections.

The amendment suggests that if part of a property is rabbit-netted, the owner shall be entitled to claim, in respect of that portion, exemption from payment of vermin rates. I would ask the hon. member whether arrangements have been made for vermin boards to accept part of an area comprised within a certificate of title when that area can only be guessed at. If it is not surveyed, who is to decide what the area is? Who is to bear the cost of the survey and of the inspection? Looking at it from that angle, we find a tremendous responsibility would be placed on a vermin board to enable an exemption of 10s. to be made to the person claiming exemption. The whole suggestion is out of step with the desires of road boards and vermin boards. The matter has been decided at several annual conferences of road boards. For the benefit of the Committee, I shall mention some of the decisions of road board conferences. Bear in mind that these are amalgamated decisions, that is, decisions made by several boards. We find Bruce Rock, Moora and Mingenew forwarding to road board conferences for their consideration resolutions as follows:—

Bruce Rock—ten years ago—that no exemption from vermin rates be granted to owners of vermin-proof fences.

Moora—in 1934—that no land be exempted from vermin rates when enclosed by a rabbit-proof fence.

Mingenew—as recently as 1940—that exemption from payment of vermin rates to holders of netted property be abolished.

The reasons are obvious. The member for Pingelly said that the netting of properties in a district resulted in a corresponding diminution of the responsibility of the vermin board. That is not so. Even were all properties in a district fenced, the vermin board would be still concerned in preventing the spread of rabbits to other districts. The Bruce Rock Vermin Board has done an excellent job. I could state the amount of its income and its expenditure on rabbit destruction per annum. If the whole of that district were rabbit-netted, and the board collected no rates at all because of that, I suggest it would still wish to control all parts of the district to ensure that the pest did not get a foothold there.

I would refer the member for Pingelly to the Statistical Registers of 1939-40 and previous years, which give in detail the valuations, the rates levied and the revenue and expenditure of all vermin boards. He will find very conclusively that there was adequate argument to support the contentions of road boards constituted as vermin boards in various parts of the State, that properties, in spite of being netted, should still be liable to vermin rates. As for the proposition that part of a property should be exempted from rates if it is netted, I am afraid that would have a very bad effect on the control of rabbits in a district, as well as a bad effect on vermin boards themselves. Section 104 does not provide for the inspection and the giving of a certificate in respect of part of a holding netted. Summing up, I think it very doubtful whether the vermin boards would accept an undefined area, and there is the fact that road boards, at their annual conferences, have expressed an entirely opposite view. If the amendment is agreed to, very little benefit would accrue to anybody, but it would occasion much greater cost to vermin boards. I therefore oppose the amendment.

Mr. WATTS: I cannot agree with the Minister's attitude, nor can I altogether subscribe to what the member for Pingelly has said. Somewhere between the two lies the solution of this problem. I understand the Minister supported the measure as it left this House to go to another place. It then provided that exemption for rating might be granted for portion of a holding that was rabbit-netted, provided that the portion comprised the whole of the land in one or more titles. The titles referred to are, of course, the certificates of title issued by the Land Titles Office. I am aware of one holding of some 6,000 acres which is comprised in two certificates of title, 5,000 acres being comprised in one title. I am sure the Minister does not intend that if the owner were to rabbit-net 4,500 acres of land, comprising 10 or a dozen locations, all of which had been surveyed and, we will assume, fenced along the boundary, he should not reap the benefit simply because the whole of the land was not in a certificate of title.

In its present form, the Bill would deprive such a holder of exemption, whereas another man, with a smaller area, and holding ten certificates of title, who netted one location comprised in one certificate of title, could claim exemption. The Minister seems to be aiming at this: That he does not want parts of lots or locations which are netted to be the subject of claims for exemption from rates. I admit that in such instances the local authority would be placed in a difficult position. We will imagine that, say, Location 650 contains 1,000 acres and that the holder rabbit-netted half of it and then told the road board that the area so netted comprised 600 acres. A survey would be necessary to verify such a statement. I do not altogether agree with the member for Pingelly that there should be no restriction of any kind. However, I disagree with the Minister for Lands when he wants to make it a question of netting the land comprised in a certificate of title.

It is difficult to suggest offhand an alternative amendment to submit to the Legislative Council in lieu of the three which are before us, but I am wondering whether the member for Pingelly and the Minister would agree to postpone further consideration of the matter in Committee until a later stage of the sitting, with a view to arriving at some amendment which will ensure that exemption will be granted only where the whole of the surveyed block has been netted and, at the same time, not prevent a man who happens to hold a large area in a certificate of title which comprises a number of locations from rabbit netting a great portion of it, and then being told that because 100, 200 or 300 acres are left out of the same certificate of title he cannot claim the exemption his neighbour can claim because the survey of his allotment of land has been made on a different basis.

Progress reported and leave given to sit again at a later stage of the sitting.

BILL—COAL MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 26th January.

MR. WARNER (Mt. Marshall) [2.53]: This Bill was introduced in December, and we have had fairly ample time to study it and make ourselves acquainted with its provisions. Since its introduction, we have heard some very fine speeches, not only from the Minister but also from other members, including the member for Collie, whose contribution was outstanding. It is only right that time should be given to members

to make a study of a Bill like this, because a certain amount of consideration and discussion will be necessary before members are likely to agree to it. I believe it should be made possible for all classes of workers in all avocations of life to have some security against old age better than that provided by the old age pension which at present is all they can hope for, apart from any provision they have made for themselves. It is quite possible that if the national insurance scheme which was mentioned in the Commonwealth Parliament some time ago had come into being, this piecemeal legislation, as it might be termed, would not have been necessary, because the Commonwealth legislation would probably have covered the majority of workers.

I think the main reason why that measure was thrown out was the attaching to it of different strings, apart from the main object of bringing about a reform for the workers. If the Bill had been left as it was without the addition of medical and other clauses, a measure would have been introduced which would probably have obviated the necessity for this one. I favour this Bill, and all such legislation. I am inclined to give what support I can to the establishment of pensions such as are mentioned in the Bill. I hope the measure will be properly discussed with a view to our ascertaining the thoughts of various members on the subject, and securing a Bill that will be of reasonable value to workers in the industry. I admit that I have very little knowledge of the mining industry—either coalmining or goldmining.

The Minister for Mines: You are lucky.

Mr. WARNER: But I have listened to the speeches and read the statements of many practical miners, or men who claim to have been practical miners in the past. Having listened to arguments put forward from time to time both inside and outside this House, and heard discussions on mining in general, I am quite satisfied in my own mind that coalminers, like goldminers, definitely earn all the reward they receive for their labour, and moreover that they work in a dangerous occupation; and when they reach the time of retirement from a life of danger and hard work, they are justly entitled to something more than the amount they can expect to save from their wages, or the amount provided by the Commonwealth Government by way of old age pension. There may be a good deal of debate concerning the contributions to be paid by the companies and others contributing to the scheme. That is a matter that can be discussed at length and agreement reached. Some may definitely be against the proposals and others agreeable to them, but if the discussion is honest we shall be able to reach a decision on that point. Further discussion may take place as to the definition of a mine worker, and as to the position of clerks and others employed in the industry, but all those little matters can be smoothed out.

The fixing of the retiring age at 60 instead of the usual 65 may be debated, but I think we can all agree that if a man has been a hard worker in a mine or in any avocation of that sort, when he reaches the age of 60 it is very nearly time he was called upon no longer to do any more hard work, whether or not he desires to do so himself. It may be found sooner than we believe likely that it will be necessary for such men to make room for those who are coming on, and we may be only too ready to fix the retiring age at 60 instead of 65. At all events, we should make every effort to see that provision is made for these men in the days of their retirement. I imagine the Bill is the outcome of the endeavours of the member for Collie. I know that the matter has been exercising his mind for a considerable time, and I commend him for his determined efforts to persuade the Government to introduce a measure of this kind.

The Premier: It is because it is the privilege of coalminers all over Australia, and ours have a better industrial record than many of those who, today, come under pension schemes.

Mr. WARNER: That is so, and the member for Collie drew attention to that aspect on page 1863 of "Hansard" of this year, from which, of course, I cannot read. We cannot get away from the fact that, I think, all members here favour this class of legislation—superannuation. It is not so long since we endeavoured to bring down a superannuation scheme for ourselves, but we were too modest. We wanted to do it without involving anyone else in any cost. The whole scheme was to be financed by the individual members of Parliament, so that when their term of Parliamentary life ceased and they were too old to return to their previous occupations they would have something over and above the Commonwealth old

age pension. Had we been more audacious and forced the hand of the Government we might have had something now to fall back on at the end of our Parliamentary careers. However, possibly the reason for not doing it is because members thought that the old-age pension—

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

Mr. WARNER: I am dealing with superannuation. We showed on that occasion that we believed, generally, in superannuation. I trust that we will do nothing to prevent this Bill from going into Committee, and that when it leaves the Committee stage it will be such that we will be able to get another place to agree with it so that something can be done for these men who desire to help themselves. As I previously stated, had we had a proper Bill brought down from the Federal House on that occasion, we might not now have to be dealing piece-meal with the position. Another point is this: We might not be too sure as to what will be the position of the workers of this State after the war. It is possible that a few years after the close of the war we will be pleased to retire our workers—not only those in the coalmining industry but those in other occupations as well—at 60 years of age instead of 65, so as to enable the younger men to occupy those positions. I approve of the Bill and hope it will have sufficient supporters to prevent its being rejected.

MR. PERKINS (York): I do not profess to have any particular knowledge of the coal industry, but I do agree with the principle of superannuation generally, as applied to any industry or group of workers. A great many people throughout the community—more particularly those getting on in years—are afraid of insecurity in their old age. One of the worst spectres that can face anyone is the realisation that after a life of hard work, and perhaps the raising of a large family, he has no prospects other than receiving the old-age pension or becoming a burden on his family. That spectre often raises its head because of the circumstances in which individuals and members of their families are placed.

The Premier: That is not worse than the fear of want.

Mr. PERKINS: The two are linked together. Superannuation schemes go a long way towards relieving that fear. They also help to increase satisfaction within industry, and anything that tends to bring about a better relationship between employer and employee in industry is desirable. This particular Bill appears to me to savour of greasing the fat pig. The Collie Miners' Union, apparently, is an extremely powerful body and is in the position that it is able to force the hand of the Government to a greater or lesser extent. If the Government does not meet with its wishes it apparently is able to bring about a certain set of circumstances and cause embarrassment to the Government. It, therefore, gains its ends.

Mr. Patrick: It has only one little man to speak for it.

Mr. PERKINS: I was not referring to its representative.

Mr. Wilson: If you had I would be on to you!

Mr. PERKINS: If we are going to introduce superannuation schemes, why not commence with the groups of workers that most need such schemes? Take, for instance, the casual worker in industry! He is the individual most in need of superannuation because during his working life he has very poor opportunities to lay anything aside for a rainy day, whereas the Collie miners have worked under something better than Arbitration Court awards, or rather the basic wage, during the course of their working lives. If it is possible for any workers to put something by for a rainy day and secure their old age, surely those who have worked under something better than basic wage conditions should be the ones to do it. Therefore, if the Government is going to permit money to be taken from general revenue for a superannuation scheme it should not start with the better paid sections of the workers. As a matter of fact, the Bill has been brought down at a most inappropriate time. I entirely agree with the principles of superannuation, and I think the proper thing to do is to bring them into effect and make them available to all sections irrespective of their financial positions at the present time. The correct way to do that is through a national insurance scheme. The vast majority of people in Australia agree with that principle, and I have very little doubt indeed that early in the post-war period we will see a national insurance scheme brought into being to cover all classes of people in the community.

If something additional to the benefits that may accrue under such a scheme are necessary to any body of workers, then, by all means, let it subscribe to obtain those benefits. To start at this stage with the appropriation of public funds to help one of the best paid sections of the workers is, in my opinion, entirely wrong. During the course of the debate one Minister, by interjection, asked whether similar privileges should not be granted to coalminers as civil servants enjoyed. I regard civil servants as in an entirely different category to other bodies of workers, seeing that they are an integral part of the machinery of Government. That being so, it is desirable, from the point of view of good government, that civil servants should be as free as possible from fear of want in their old age.

Mr. W. Hegney: If the coalmines were to close down, you would quickly discover that the miners also constitute an integral part of government.

Mr. PERKINS: To no greater extent than any other section of the community. I do not believe the coalminer is more important to the economic life of the community than is any other worker. Each section has its responsibility and is a cog in the machine of our economic life. Therefore, from the standpoint of pure justice no particular section should receive special treatment. The only reason I oppose the Bill is that other sections of the community require this form of assistance much more than do coalminers.

Mr. Warner: If they were organised they might get it.

Mr. PERKINS: I claim that civil servants are in quite a different category and, in view of the increasing responsibilities of government in this changing world, it is more than ever desirable to build up the efficiency of the Public Service. The whole point of my remarks is that the time is not opportune for this particular Bill, especially with the prospect of a national insurance scheme in the offing under which all workers will be covered.

MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet): I thought, when he commenced his speech, that the member for York intended to support the Bill.

The Minister for Mines: He spoilt a good speech.

The Premier: He gave you a surprise.

Mr. TRIAT: I was surprised at his attitude, which took all the wind out of my sails.

The Minister for Mines: Someone has led him astray.

Mr. TRIAT: As time goes on I hope that effect will be given to the views he expressed in favour of the provision of superannuation for all workers. That is decidedly a laudable objective. Consideration should be given to that point by the Minister, for undoubtedly pensions should be paid to all workers in their old age. Until that time arrives it is essential that certain sections who during their working life suffer disabilities, in which respect the miner is possibly more unfortunate than are other workers, shall be afforded some protection in their later years, beyond that provided by the old age pension. When comparing the position of the coalminer with other workers, the member for Pingelly referred to the farmers. He asked why should not the farmers have the benefit of some such pension scheme. If we compare the relative positions of the farmer and the miner, any sensible person would at once agree that, in view of their respective circumstances, the coalminer was certainly more entitled to this consideration. It will be agreed that when a farmer goes on the land he takes up his holding with the intention of providing for his old age and, during his working life, build up a competency for himself.

Mr. Withers: Many of them have mortgages.

Mr. TRIAT: Unforunately that is so, but at the same time there are many farmers who are wealthy men and certainly are not burdened with mortgages. If one listened to speeches delivered by some members of this House and accepted their views, one would be led to believe that farming represented the lowest of all occupations, and amounted to servitude for life. I claim that is not the position at all. Some members of this House are today wealthy men as a result of farming operations. Most decidedly they are not starving; they are men of standing and substance. Whenever farming is discussed mortgages are mentioned. Certainly there are many people who own farms that are heavily mortgaged, but that does not apply to everyone. When he takes on agricultural work and obtains his farm, such a man strives to secure his own home and to provide for his future.

Mr. J. Hegney: He aims at independence.

Mr. TRIAT: All the time he is developing his holding he is creating an asset. If he is successful he becomes a man of substance with no fear of want in his old age. But take the position of the coalminer! His sole asset is his ability to labour with musele and brawn. He has to show intelligence as well, for intelligence is required when a man has to work underground. As the member for Collie pointed out, many of them remain in the industry for upwards of 50 years or more during which time they work in total darkness. Without the aid of artificial light, they cannot see a foot ahead of them down below. They have to breathe in an atmosphere of dirt, dust and filth.

Mr. J. Hegney: Possibly with foul air.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. The air may be contaminated with explosive gases. We know that in many mines explosions have occurred. Frequently the miner has to work in water up to his knees. To cut the seam of coal he often has to lie down on the moist ground so that the greater part of his body is in water, as a result of which he contracts various ailments to which I shall allude later on.

Mr. J. Hegney: Danger lurks around him every hour.

Mr. TRIAT: There is no comparison between the conditions under which the coalminer works and those enjoyed by the civil servant. If the position of the two classes were to be considered, the verdict of anyone would be in favour of the coalminer and the necessity for provision being made for him. I do not suggest that the farmer does not work very hard, but in all he does he creates for himself an asset.

Mr. Warner: And he has to work double the hours of the miner.

Mr. TRIAT: I do not know about that. I have worked on a very large farm. I worked eight hours for five days a week with four hours on Saturday—a 44-hour week.

Mr. Warner: Lead me to it!

Mr. TRIAT: That farm comprised an area of 20,000 acres. Although the work was hard, it did not extend beyond 44 hours a week. There is nothing wrong with that.

Mr. J. Hegney: The farm work was properly organised.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes, and the holding was properly worked by one of the best farmers in Western Australia.

Mr. J. Hegney: That is something for others to emulate.

Mr. North: An example of organised farming.

Mr. TRIAT: During the course of his remarks in advocacy of superannuation for all, the member for York said the civil servants were entitled to consideration along those lines because they formed part of the machinery of government and as such should enjoy reasonably good conditions. Let us consider that phase! In the first place the civil servant enters his employment in early youth, generally just after he has left school. Throughout his working life he has assured employment at a good salary. There is no catch-as-catch-can element regarding his salary or conditions.

Mr. J. Hegney: And he has opportunities for promotion.

Mr. TRIAT: The civil servant enjoys good working conditions in a room that is warm in winter and cool in summer; he has morning and afternoon tea; he enjoys annual leave and long service leave; all the time he draws a good salary.

The Minister for Mines: To which department are you referring?

Mr. TRIAT: Had I been sensible in my youth, I would have joined the Public Service.

The Premier: Looking for a life of ease!

Mr. TRIAT: I do not suggest that that is quite so. However, civil servants do enjoy good working conditions and pay. When they reach their retiring age, after having drawn a fixed salary all the time—some have been in receipt of very high salaries, much higher than those paid to members of Parliament, and at times exceeding £1,000 a year—they are entitled to superannuation. I have no objection to that. It is a good idea and that system should be extended to every worker. According to the statement of public accounts the total amount of pensions paid last year was £147,614.

The Premier: That relates to one branch.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes, and there were 602 participants. The average amount of pension for each of those persons was £245 per annum. That represents quite a decent income. Let us consider some of the individual payments enjoyed by civil servants! One retired on a pension of £551 a year; another £498 16s. 7d.; another £748 8s. 11d.; another £655 6s. 4d.; another £706 2s., and yet another £667. Is there any coalminer

at Collie who, in his life, has received £800 a year even if he was employed on piecework? Of course there is not.

Mr. Boyle: How many ex-civil servants would get £800 a year?

The Premier: The system of pensions was wiped out 40 years ago.

Mr. TRIAT: But payments are still being made. I have no grudge against the people who draw those pensions, but can we compare men who enjoy such excellent conditions with the men at Collie who are endeavouring to get a system of pensions? Their pensions, too, will be provided partly by their own contributions. I grant that they will not find the whole of the money but they will pay part of it.

Men who work in coalmines suffer from many complaints contracted in the industry. They are affected by what is known as nystagmus, which is blindness caused by working day after day in the blackness. At any rate, they suffer from this eyesight affection, which is found only amongst coalminers. Then they also suffer from elbow, knee and hand beat. Look at the hands and knees of men who have worked any time in a coalmine and see how crippled they are! In addition to their having to work hard and in bad places, they suffer these disabilities and are entitled to consideration. The coalminers at Collie are the only ones in the industry in Australia who do not enjoy a pension. Every other State in the Commonwealth has considered it advisable to grant them the benefit of a pension. Actually the Collie coalminers have to contribute to the pension rights of coalminers in other States, and theirs is not a very powerful organisation, as the member for York would have us believe. It is only a small body of workers, who have combined for the purpose of getting reasonably good conditions for themselves.

During the war period the coalminers of Collie have shown themselves the most loyal Australians, because not once have they ceased work. Yet in other States, where the miners enjoy very good conditions as well as pension rights, there have been many stoppages. The reason for these stoppages may be good or bad; I do not know. But the Collie coalminers have continued their work from daylight to dark seven days a week and, I am informed, have broken down conditions of employment that have existed there for years, such as Saturday work. When the war required extra effort on their part, they agreed to work on Saturdays; and they have departed from other conditions that the organisation had built up over the years. To do this meant sacrificing their principles, but they did so in order to increase the production of coal. Yet some members say they are not agreeable to giving these men a pension. This being so, I cannot but think there is some cause for their attitude. An honest man never refuses to admit the rights of others unless there is a cause, and the only cause I can imagine in this instance has regard to the provision of the money. If the Collie coal owners could pass on the whole of the cost, I do not think there would be much objection, but under this Bill they will not be able to pass on the whole of the cost to the public.

The Bill will permit the mineowners to pass on 50 per cent. of the cost of the pensions. If the cost to them is 4d. per ton of coal, as is expected, they will be permitted to pass on 2d. per ton to the public. Surely that is a fair and reasonable amount! In my opinion industry should be compelled to provide for employees in their old age. Actually the coalowners are being let off lightly because of their being permitted to pass on 50 per cent. of the cost to consumers. This will not impose any great hardship on the owner as the price of Collie coal is fixed by a tribunal that takes into consideration all the circumstances. As members are aware, the Commonwealth some time ago imposed a pay-roll tax of 2½ per cent. and Collie coalowners, in common with other employers, were obliged to pay the tax. But we find that they did not pay the tax; it was passed on to the public. In the report on the working of the Government Railways, Tramways, Ferries and Electricity Supply for the year ended the 30th June, 1942, the following appears on page 12:—

> The increase of 1s. 4.6d. in the average price of native coal is attributable mainly to the new contracts with the coal companies, which operated retrospectively from the 1st March, 1941. In addition pay-roll tax represented an extra cost of 3d. per ton from the 1st July, 1941.

Thus the 1s. 4d. increase in the price of Collie coal includes 3d. to cover the pay-roll tax, so that the people of Western Australia, and not the coal proprietors, pay that tax.

Mr. Patrick: Every business that can pass it on does so.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes, but the passing on of the pay-roll tax by the coal companies is permitted by law. I am pointing out that there are provisions to protect the coal companies, and I do not know of any other industry in which the profits are protected by law. The Collie coalowners have a tribunal to fix the price of coal and a variation is made when costs become excessive.

The Minister for Justice: And the Railway Department has to pay the extra.

Mr. TRIAT: Which means that the extra is paid in turn by the people of Western Australia.

The Premier: We have not put up the rates to the community.

Mr. TRIAT: That is so, and there is not much possibility of increasing the rates because the public are so ready to object to any increase. In fact, I am one of the first to object. The cost of imported coal increased from 44s. 11d. per ton in July, 1941, to 49s. 10¾d. per ton in December, 1942, an advance of 4s. 11¾d. That was for large coal delivered at Fremantle. In the same period the increase in the price of Collie coal was 1s. 4.6d. per ton, so that the increase in the price of the local coal is low compared with the increase of the price of that imported from New South Wales. Shipping Newcastle coal by oversea vessels increases the cost by a further 2s. 8d. per ton.

Thus it is plain that Collie is a wonderful asset to Western Australia. In the case of Newcastle coal brought to Western Australia, an amount of 5d. per ton is paid towards the pensions of Eastern States miners. We were told that by the member for Canning. I hope there will be no difficulty in getting the provisions of the Bill approved. I also hope that more than the Collie miners will benefit from similar pension schemes. People in all walks of life should at the end of their working time receive some consideration to ease the period of old age. I trust that in the future not only civil servants but all classes of workers will enjoy the privilege of superannuation. The same remark applies to farmers who have proved unsuccessful. Let me point out that a coalminer would have to be working under exceptionally good conditions to be able to continue to labour at 70 years of age. An old man should certainly not be called upon to toil in dungeons and water. I support the second reading, and sincerely hope it will be carried.

MR. PATRICK (Greenough): The Bill proposes, in effect, a superannuation scheme for Collie miners. The member for West Perth and other members have said that this is a sectional pension scheme, and that sectional schemes are a mistake. Nevertheless, the House unanimously adopted a superannuation scheme for all permanent Government employees. Thus, if the Collie mines had been State-owned, State superannuation would have applied to the miners there. As regards arduousness of conditions there is, of course, no comparison between coalminers and civil servants. The Premier interjected something about freedom from want. Government employees have the safest jobs in the community, jobs without any broken time or unemployment, jobs that continue all the year. The Commonwealth Government promises a superannuation scheme for the whole community. Presumably, when that scheme comes into operation, sectional schemes will be terminated. I hold that the Commonwealth Government is making a big mistake in introducing non-contributory pension schemes, which will have to be financed by taxation. There seems to be a spirit abroad today that one can get something for nothing. But all schemes, national or otherwise, have to be paid for by somebody; and they cost a great deal more on a non-contributory than on a contributory basis. In the case of coal a direct tax has been imposed, and that tax will be passed on. Again, the cost of the Commonwealth superannuation scheme will be passed on to the consumer by way of taxation, and the ordinary citizen will not know what he is paying.

New Zealand's Government has been more far-seeing that Australian Governments. The New Zealand Government instituted a contributory scheme for all members of the community, and everybody reaps the benefit of that scheme. The contributory charge in New Zealand is considerable—I think, 2s. in the pound on all salaries and wages. On the other hand, the benefits receivable are very liberal. I repeat, the idea of getting something for nothing is the merest delusion; and therefore a non-contributory scheme seems to me merely a trap to catch the votes of unwary electors. I support the Collie scheme because it is a contributory one. Some people say that the cost will be passed on to the railways, and that the railways will pass it on to the public through

increased freights. The Premier said the cost could not be passed on thus.

The Premier: I did not say that.

Mr. PATRICK: The Premier said the public would object to the cost being passed on by the Railway Department in that manner. The practice of passing on costs to rural industries is depopulating the country districts. The only way to improve the railway system and make it pay is to increase the population along the lines. The Premier knows we have a larger mileage of railways relatively to population than any other Australian State has. Our railways carry no provision for the depreciating asset. My belief is that in the near future our railways will be out of date, especially as regards passenger traffic. The member for West Perth mentioned some agreement governing prices and profits which had been made in respect of the Collie coalmines. Such an agreement seems to me ridiculous, because it leaves no incentive whatever to increase production or to modernise plant. Thus we have the extraordinary state of affairs mentioned by the Minister for Mines recently—

> The Government purchased the bulk of the coal at Collie; but when improved methods were suggested to speed up production, the management of the companies asked who was to pay for them. If the Government ordered the companies to adopt them, the price of coal would be increased automatically.

That seems to me a strange procedure. The usual reason for the introduction of modern machinery is to reduce costs and so be enabled to reduce prices. In this case, however, if the mining companies are asked to introduce modern machinery they want to be permitted to increase the price of their coal. Take the position of the Kalgoorlie goldmines! We know that some years ago those mines were in a very bad way. Their profits had shrunk so much that it was almost impossible for the mines to carry on. They made an intense scientific investigation, with the result that hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of valuable plant was scrapped. A modern plant was substituted and the companies adopted more modern processes of treating ore, with the result that they were able to reduce costs, make larger profits and give a much longer life to their mines than would otherwise have been possible. In the case of the Collie fields we are told that, if modern machinery were installed, costs would be increased and these would have to be passed on. I want to know whether the Collie coalmines are to keep on working forever with an out-of-date plant. Every company should be expected to earn a reasonable return on the capital invested in it, but it should also be able to provide sufficient reserves for plant replacements. It is no wonder to me that the production of coal at Collie appears to be slipping. This is apparent from statements that have appeared in the Press.

The Minister for Mines: All the young men have been taken from the Collie mines and put in the Army. Give us back the young men and the output will increase!

Mr. PATRICK: If the companies had modern machinery, production would not be slipping. The Minister himself said that the plant at Collie was out of date, and that if he ordered the companies to put in new plant the Government would be called upon to pay for it.

The Minister for Mines: I said more modern plant.

Mr. PATRICK: That seems to me to be the height of absurdity. I was very interested to hear yesterday the reply given by the Minister for Railways to a question regarding the briquetting of coal.

The Premier: The output of coal last year was 20,000 tons more than in the preceding year, so it would appear that the mines are not slipping so badly.

Mr. PATRICK: This was the answer, which was given in a very self-satisfied manner—

> Tests were conducted in this State with the object of finding an efficient binder. A binder was found and proved. It was not only an excellent binder but it greatly improved the calorific value of the coal. He had a briquette in his office made in 1916 which showed no deterioration whatever. The briquetting of Collie coal would be an advantage to the State because the briquettes would store for an indefinite period without deterioration. Briquetted coal had not the same tendency to spark as did the coal during use under forced draught and should be a great benefit when travelling through the agricultural country.

Of course, that would be a great benefit. It would probably save farmers and landholders thousands of pounds they now lose through fires caused by engines using Collie coal. The Minister pointed out the advantages of using these briquettes. His answer continued—

> It was estimated that there would be from 12 to 15 per cent. less weight in transport, in that the moisture was greatly reduced and almost eliminated. It would also curtail importation and tend to increase consumption.

That was evidently proved in 1916, but apparently nothing more was done about the matter. Is it because, under the agreement with the mineowners, it does not matter to them whether they improve their methods or not? Where has the Minister for Industrial Development been in this connection? Here is something that will save the importation of coal from the other States, cut down transport costs and obviate fires throughout the country districts, yet after 27 years nothing further seems to have been done in the matter.

The Premier: Do not say that. Ask what has been done.

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

Mr. PATRICK: It might be held that I am getting away from the Bill; but it must be understood that, if this proposed scheme is to be a success, the industry must be established on a permanent basis. If it is to be carried on in the present fashion, there will be no permanency about it.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is nothing in the Bill about briquetting.

The Minister for Labour: That briquette was never out in the weather.

Mr. PATRICK: If an alteration in the method of obtaining Collie coal will put the industry on a firm foundation, the industry will probably continue many years longer.

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

Mr. PATRICK: I shall leave that point, although it has been argued by other members. There has also been talk of opening up other coalfields. That matter is rather unconnected with the Bill, but the Minister for Mines talked sound commonsense when he said that we should open up some of the mines in the northern areas. Still, the stupid agreement with the Collie companies that has been referred to cannot be used against the principles of this Bill, and I shall not use it. I would give the men who delve under the earth for coal all the consideration possible. If the coalminers of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland have earned similar benefits, surely the miners in the Collie district are equally entitled to them. I applaud the great-hearted little man who represents Collie for the persistency he has shown in this regard.

The Premier: Fellow-countrymen stick together, do they not? These Scotsmen!

Mr. PATRICK: I have more sympathy with the Collie miners in this respect than I have with the civil servants. It has been said that the day will come when underground stores of energy will be exhausted and the war is certainly hastening that today. We are tearing out hundreds of thousands of tons of energy from underground which in normal times would have lasted scores of years; but when the time arrives the ingenuity of man will utilise other sources of power, such as the sun, the winds and the tide, as well as vegetation of all kinds. We shall then have such slogans as "Peanuts for Power." Then man will be able to stand erect and work in God's sunlight, instead of grovelling underground in artificial light. This may sound Utopian, but we have heard a lot lately about the new order and it may come sooner than we expect. Anyway, I approve of the principle of the Bill, but possibly not of all the details. I support the second reading.

Members: Hear, hear!

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (in reply): The main reason for the introduction of this Bill is that coalminers in the other coalmining States of Australia either enjoy a superannuation allowance or a pension, or are in process of obtaining that privilege. Western Australia is the last coalmining State of Australia to make the attempt to grant pensions to its coalminers. I think that is a sufficient answer to the contention of the member for York that this Bill was introduced because of some ulterior use of their great power by the miners of Collie. I would remind the member for York that if he were a Country Party member in the Victorian Parliament, instead of a Country Party member in this Parliament, he would a few days ago have voted in favour of a similar Bill which the Country Party Government of Victoria introduced and which was passed through the Parliament of that State.

Mr. Perkins: You have no details of that Bill. You do not know what it contains.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: That Bill is practically on the same lines as the Acts passed in Queensland and New South Wales, and therefore practically on the same lines as the Bill this Assembly is now considering. It has been suggested that the

Bill provides for superannuation or pension benefits for only one section of the community. It has been argued further that this is wrong in principle and undesirable. The point has also been made that no sectional benefits of this kind should be given to anyone, and that if superannuation is to be given at all it must be given to everyone at the same time. I think a second's consideration of that argument will prove just how impossible it is. Every member will realise that if we had to wait until we could at the one time give this benefit to everyone in the community, nobody would ever get it. The same argument applies to almost every reform one can think of.

If we are to wait before granting any reform in a community until we can give it to everyone, there will be no reform. Reform seldom comes in complete form to everyone. It is something which has to be fought for and gained piece by piece and step by step. That applies very much to this principle of superannuation or pension benefits. This is a step along the way. It is not the first step in this State, but it is another step along the way of achieving for the working people of Western Australia superannuation or retirement benefits. I would emphasise the point made by the member for Greenough that this is a contributory pension scheme. One would believe, listening to one or two of the speeches against the Bill, that the taxpayers of Western Australia were going to be called upon to find a very large sum of money to enable the benefits in this Bill to be conferred upon retired coalminers of Collie.

Mr. Doney: What proportion of the whole amount required for each year would be payable by the Treasury.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The amount to be found by the taxpayers each year is set out in the Bill, and, after the scheme is fully launched and completely operating, the maximum contribution by the Government will be £4,500 per annum.

Mr. Doney: Yes, I know; but what proportion of the whole amount required each year will that £4,500 represent? What percentage?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: It would be about one-third of the total amount required as estimated at this time. So the taxpayer is not being called upon to find a very big proportion and the proportion he is being called upon to find is in actual cash a very small amount.

Mr. Perkins: If that were applied to every industry it would amount to a tremendous sum.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The time will probably come when the Commonwealth and State Governments together will establish a complete scheme along the basis suggested by the member for York.

Mr. Doney: A lot more taxation will have to be gathered in to finance it.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The point I make is that this House is quite in order in making this additional small step forward in establishing in Western Australia the benefits of pensions on retirement for an additional section of the workers of this State. It has been suggested that we should wait until the Commonwealth Government introduces social legislation which it has foreshadowed. We might postpone this measure until that happens and might easily find then that the Commonwealth social legislation did not cover these men at all. Then I suppose we could make another attempt here in this House. In the meantime the Commonwealth might propose some additional social legislation, and the same argument would crop up that we should wait and see what the Commonwealth did. I think with the member for Greenough that we should go ahead with this proposal and establish it and operate it. Then if the Commonwealth Government introduced legislation to provide for the coalminers of Collie and other sections of the community that which this Bill will give to them the Commonwealth scheme would incorporate the scheme which we had previously established.

I want now to refer to that portion of the speech of the member for West Perth which dealt with the financial position of the company as established under the provisions of the Davidson award. There appears to be a fair amount of misunderstanding and confusion as to what the Davidson award really is, and what it really provides for. The award covers that portion of coal sold by the Amalgamated Collieries Company Ltd. to the Railway Department. The award does not in any way cover coal which the company sells to private consumers. The award does not provide any fixed profit for the company nor does it provide for a fixed price in respect of coal sold by the company

to the railways. The award, in fact, determines the allowances to be made in the price of coal sold by the company to the railways in respect of certain overhead costs such as depreciation, taxation, the cost of generating electric power at Collie and profit.

The production costs of coal and other items of overhead costs were ascertained by an investigation carried out by the company and the Railway Department together, and the cost of production and the allowances in respect of those other items of expenditure were agreed upon by the Railway Department and the company, and were submitted to Commissioner Davidson in the form of an agreement prior to his being called upon to ascertain reasonable allowances to be made in respect of taxation, depreciation, cost of generating electric power and profit. It will clearly be seen, I think, that the Davidson award does not provide for all of the things some of us have been under the impression it did provide for. It will also be seen that Commissioner Davidson did not carry out an investigation into the cost of the production of coal at all. The cost of coal production in respect of wages and the like was ascertained by an investigation carried out by the Railway Department and the company. Commissioner Davidson was not called upon to make any investigation or decision in respect of that matter.

In the award he issued Commissioner Davidson gave a direction that the profit on coal to be sold to the Railway Department by the company was to be at the rate of £18,625 per annum on the gross output and sale of coal to the railways. He added a proviso to that direction to the effect that the real effective capital employed by the company in the business was to be equal to or in excess of £269,000. The company, in addition, had to deliver to the Railway Department coal of a certain calorific standard in order to receive the maximum allowed under the agreement and under the award. I mentioned that the maximum profit allowed to the company in respect to the sale of its coal to the railways was £18.625, provided it made this profit subject to the provisions which Commissioner Davidson laid down. That amount was made up of £16,000 per annum to the preference shareholders giving them a dividend of eight per cent., and of £2,625 per annum for the ordinary shareholders, providing them with a dividend at the rate of 5¼ per cent. per annum. During the last two completed years the company has not received the maximum profit possible under Commissioner Davidson's direction. It has failed to receive that maximum profit because the real effective capital employed in the business was not at the maximum figure of £269,000, and also because the coal delivered to the Railway Department was not of the required calorific standard.

The member for West Perth said that if the company doubled its production, it would not be allowed to make any profit beyond the maximum prescribed by Commissioner Davidson, namely, approximately £18,000 per annum. That statement is not correct, because if the company doubled its production it is certain that the Railway Department would not take the whole of the increase. The department would be likely to take only a small amount of such increase and the company would dispose of the balance to private consumers, and would not, of course, in that respect be covered by the provisions of the Davidson award. The company's total profit, therefore, from the railways and private consumers can certainly go above the £18,000 provided by Commissioner Davidson in respect of the coal sold only to the Railway Department. Mr. Justice Davidson was asked, when he was dealing with this question, whether he did not consider a profit of eight per cent. for preference shareholders to be too high. He admitted that the allowance of an eight per cent. dividend to shareholders, especially in time of war, was undoubtedly high, but pointed out that the company was obliged to pay that rate of dividend to the preference shareholders or get itself into terrific difficulties.

The words "terrific difficulties" were the actual ones used by Commissioner Davidson. He further said at the time that the proper way to overcome this position of such a high rate of dividend being paid to the preference shareholders of Amalgamated Collieries Ltd., was for the Government to pass legislation to enable the company, legally, to reduce the rate payable to those shareholders. He went further and said that it would be quite a proper thing for the Government to do in the circumstances. Therefore, the argument that this Bill, by limiting the company in the proportion of its contribution which it can include in the price of coal, will deal

unfairly with the shareholders, is one that cannot be reasonably supported. It is certainly not supported by the observations of Mr. Justice Davidson when he carried out that inquiry.

Mr. McLarty: Many of the preference shares were probably sold at a substantial premium.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: They may have been. The fact is that this measure, to some extent, at any rate, is doing just what Mr. Justice Davidson said should be done. It will reduce the high rate of dividend of eight per cent. now being received by the preference shareholders. Therefore that principle, to which objection has been raised, is one that can be fully justified. I thank members, generally, for the reception they have given the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 18—agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: No marginal note appears alongside of Clause 2, the interpretation clause. That matter will be attended to. There is an error in the marginal note to Clause 5. The words "sixty-five" should read "sixty." That will be corrected. The clerks will see that the necessary correction is made to Clause 6. None of these corrections will make any alteration to the subject matter of any clause, or the Bill in general.

Clause 19—Contributions:

Mr. McDONALD: I move an amendment—

That in lines 1 to 9 of Subclause (6) the following words be struck out:—"Notwithstanding the provisions of any Act, award, or agreement to the contrary, not more than one-half of the payments by the owners to the Fund may be or be deemed to be included in the cost of production of the coal, insofar as consumers (including the Government or any State instrumentality) are concerned. No owner shall, in consequence of any payment to the Fund, increase the price of any coal supplied to any consumer by more than twopence per ton."

During my second reading speech I criticised this part of the Bill, which will enable the company to pass on to the consumer a charge of 2d. per ton—and no more—in respect of the company's contribution to the pensions scheme. On the figures supplied to me, this would mean that the company would contribute about £6,500 towards the cost of the scheme. As the capital earnings of the company permitted under Mr. Justice Davidson's award have been restricted to £16,000 annually during the last two years, this means that the return to the shareholders, if the Bill be agreed to, will be reduced by £6,500 from £16,000 to £9,500 per annum. During the course of his reply, the Minister mentioned that the earnings had been fixed by an agreement, confirmed by Mr. Justice Davidson, at £18,625, subject to deductions if the actual capital of the company fell below £269,000, and subject also to a further reduction if the calorific value of the coal fell below a certain point. I do not propose to discuss whether the return of £16,000, which would provide 8 per cent. interest on preference shares, is fair or otherwise. The Minister said that Mr. Justice Davidson seemed to think that return was too much. Those who have had experience in connection with mining will agree that an equitable return is expected.

Mr. Fox: There is a difference between goldmining and coalmining.

Mr. McDONALD: I agree. But the fact remains that both are commercial ventures associated with which are aspects of possible loss that have to be taken into account. Unless there is a satisfactory return, capital will not be available for investment in such a venture. Although the Minister said that agreement had been reached providing for a return of £18,600 a year on the capitalisation of the company, owing to various deductions over which the company has probably no control that amount has been reduced to £16,000 for the last two years; and that, from a hasty calculation, represents a return of a little over 6 per cent. on the capital involved. The proposal in the Bill will mean a further reduction from £16,000 to £9,500 per year, which will represent a reduction of interest to something under 4 per cent. I do not propose to argue the case for the shareholders, but to deal with it as a matter of principle. If there is to be a reduction in the fixed profit, and that is what it is, then that reduction should be determined by the proper tribunal, whether it be the Price Fixing Commissioner, the Arbitration Court or an arbitrator, such as Mr. Justice Davidson. On the other hand, Parliament is being turned into a tribunal to review the profit that is proper for the company to earn. We have not the award

before us and I know very little of the facts such as were placed before the arbitrator.

Nevertheless, members are called upon to review the profit that has been fixed either by an agreement confirmed by a judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, after hearing the parties and looking at the facts, or else under an agreement after consultation with both parties. We are called upon to sit as a court of appeal or grant a new trial from the arbitrator's decision without having the relevant facts before us. I am not satisfied that we would be acting fairly in wiping out five-eighths of the companies' profits. The Minister said the profits might be increased if the sales were doubled, which would mean selling the extra coal to the outside public. The railways take 90 per cent. of the present production and outside sales represent 10 per cent. On present prospects there is very little hope of doubling the output because the sales to the railways would remain stationary and, if the sales to the public were doubled, it would mean a difference of only 10 per cent. The more coal the companies sell, which means employing more men to produce the coal, then the larger the contribution to the pension fund.

The Minister for Labour: And the larger the profit.

Mr. McDONALD: The profit might be somewhat larger, but the contribution to the fund would be greater. It is not good to impose a limitation on the companies' earnings and possibly, therefore, on the incentive to increase production. We are asked to determine something which is outside our function, and we have not the material on which to arrive at a just decision. The principle has been established that the return to the coalowners shall be determined by agreement between the parties or by the decision of an independent tribunal having all the facts before it, but now we are asked to step in and make a determination varying the decision of the arbitrator without having any of the relevant facts before us.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Naturally I oppose the amendment. This provision was not inserted in the Bill without careful consideration. If the amendment is agreed to, the miners will receive pensions that will not cost the employers a farthing. The effect will be that the taxpayers will be called upon to pay more than they would if the Bill were passed in its present form. The amendment actually proposes to relieve the companies and their preference shareholders from finding any money to provide pensions for the workers and to cast the additional burden on the taxpayers. Very few members would favour a change along those lines. The companies, and particularly the preference shareholders, are in duty bound to pay some contribution to the pensions. The dividends payable to preference shareholders have first of all to be earned by the mines, and I need not enlarge upon the conditions under which the miners have to work. It would be altogether unreasonable if the companies and their specially protected shareholders escaped entirely from contributing something to the pensions. The miners themselves have to contribute, the taxpayers have to contribute; and surely the third important party, namely, the preference shareholders in Amalgamated Collieries and other companies, should contribute some reasonable amount.

The dividend to the preference shareholders might, as the result, be reduced from eight per cent. to 6¼, the latter rate perhaps being better than the rate likely to be obtainable when the new order has been introduced. I am inclined to believe that most of the preference shareholders in these companies will agree that 6¼ per cent. is an acceptable return. The claim of the miners in this matter is much more deserving of consideration than is the claim of the preference shareholders. Mr. Justice Davidson, when making his award, specifically asked Parliament to bring about a reduction of the dividends being received by the preference shareholders. Therefore the companies are asked not to pass on to consumers in this State the whole of the contributions of all the companies under the Bill. I hope the amendment will be rejected.

Mr. McDONALD: In no other State that has passed similar legislation to this, has the suggested provision been introduced. In Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria where the Railway Departments consume a large proportion of the local coal output this provision does not appear. No other State so far has thought it just or proper that such a provision should appear in its legislation of this nature. Moreover, the preference shareholders have not been consulted as to whether they agree to yearly contributions of £6,500, out of total profits of £16,000 on the experience of the last two

years, being paid under this measure. I am told that some preference shares were bought at 40s. per share, the nominal price being £1. On the present falling market the price of the shares is 25s. The dividend of eight per cent. actually represents a dividend of a little over six per cent. on shares bought at 25s. This Committee is not in a position to determine what is a fair contribution for the coal companies to make. We are asked to take a step in the dark. They guessed at the matter, which was so important that it had to be dealt with by a Supreme Court judge and by other important persons, such as Dr. Herman, who came from the Eastern States. Are we to step in and over-ride those awards and arrive at a figure for a new determination without hearing anybody, not even the persons affected, the shareholders? I say the principle is wrong.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The statement of the member for West Perth reminds me of the great ridicule poured upon the head of the Minister for Justice by the member for Nedlands when the Minister was trying to get the Companies Bill through Committee. I think we can leave entirely out of account the point put forward by the member for West Perth that this provision does not appear in the legislation of New South Wales and Queensland. If I were asked to give the reason why, I would say that it is because probably this is the only State where shareholders in a coalmining company have the advantage and protection of awards such as the Davidson award. Were similar awards operating in New South Wales and Queensland, no doubt the Acts of those States would have contained this provision.

Mr. McDonald: That is the reason why it should go into the Bill—because we have these special awards.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The member for West Perth put forward the position of poor men and poor women holding preference shares in the Amalgamated Collieries. That may be so, but what does it prove? Nothing! The men who work in the mines and produce the coal which makes the payment of dividends possible are the persons entitled to consideration, much more so than are the poor man and the poor woman who might hold a bundle of preference shares in the Amalgamated Collieries. The poor man and the poor woman referred to who have done nothing in respect of the production of coal are nevertheless receiving a dividend of eight per cent. The member for West Perth has adduced very little in support of his case.

Amendment put and negatived.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I move an amendment—

That the following provisoes to Subclause 6 be struck out:—

> Provided further, that notwithstanding any provision of the memorandum or articles of association of any company which is an owner within the meaning of the Act, or any agreement between any such company and the shareholders thereof, or any rights in that regard which any shareholder or other person may have, and notwithstanding any resolution of any meeting of shareholders to the contrary, the company may in any year decrease the dividends payable on its ordinary or preference shares by an amount proportionate to one-half of the total payments made by the company to the Fund in that year: Provided that, if no dividend is payable with respect to the ordinary shares, the company may decrease the dividend payable on the preference shares and vice versa. The provisions of this subsection may be pleaded as an absolute bar to any action, claim, or demand made by any shareholder or other person with respect to any dividend decreased as aforesaid. In the event of any decrease of dividend in any year under the provisions of this subsection, the amount of the deduction shall not in any manner whatsoever be added to the dividend lawfully payable in any succeeding year.

The main alteration is to substitute for the word "deduct" the word "decrease." As worded, the Bill provides that the dividend payable shall be decreased. The amendment says that payment shall be deducted from dividends payable. The amendment assures that the companies and the shareholders concerned shall contribute to the pension scheme some portion of the dividends which would otherwise be payable to them.

Mr. McDONALD: This is a machinery provision. I do not know whether the Minister has consulted the companies as to whether this is possible.

The Minister for Labour: The companies agree.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be inserted in lieu of the provisoes struck out:—

> Provided further, that notwithstanding any provision of the memorandum or articles of association of any company which is an owner within the meaning of the Act, or any agreement between any such company and the shareholders thereof, or any rights in that

regard which any shareholder or other person may have, and notwithstanding any resolution of any meeting of shareholders to the contrary, the company may in any year deduct from the dividends otherwise payable on its ordinary or preference shares amounts bearing the same proportion to one-half of the total payments made by the company to the Fund in that year as the dividends otherwise payable to the class bears to the total dividends otherwise payable. The provisions of this subsection may be pleaded as an absolute bar to any action, claim, or demands made by any shareholder or other person with respect to any dividend decreased as aforesaid. In the event of any deduction from any dividend in any year under the provisions of this subsection, the amount of the deduction shall not in any manner whatsoever be added to the dividend lawfully payable in any succeeding year.

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

Clauses 20 to 31—agreed to.

New clause:

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I move—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—

Tribunal may Award Pension in Certain Cases.

20. Notwithstanding that the commencement of Part II. of this Act may not have been proclaimed and subject as hereinafter provided the tribunal may award a pension to any mine worker who having attained the age of sixty years ceases to be engaged in the coalmining industry after the commencement of this Act and before the commencement of Part II. of this Act.

The tribunal shall not award a pension under this section to any mine worker unless in its opinion the cessation of employment of such mine worker was bona fide and was not arranged or did not arise solely or mainly for the purpose of enabling such mine worker to become eligible for a pension pursuant to this section. Subject to the foregoing the tribunal may award a pension under this section in accordance with the same privileges and on similar terms and conditions as are prescribed by Part II. of this Act.

This new clause is desirable because of the fact that there are at present working in the mines of Collie men of 70 years of age, and even over. The intention in respect of the Bill when it becomes an Act is not to proclaim Part II during the period of the war. Part II provides for the compulsory retirement of miners on reaching the age of 60 years. Naturally, during the war period, we want to have working at Collie producing coal every experienced coalminer, irrespective of whether he is under or over 60 years of age. So the compulsory retirement at 60 years of age will not come into operation until after the war. At the same time, we do not desire to impose an injustice upon very old men now working in the industry who might find it absolutely necessary, from a physical point of view, to withdraw from the industry. It can be understood that men of 70 years of age and over now working hard in the industry may not be able to continue standing up to the great strain imposed upon them. We want to be in a position to pay a pension to any of those men if they retire because of physical inability to carry on.

New clause put and passed.

New clause:

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I move—

That a new clause be inserted, as follows:—

Funds Established under Provisions of Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1902-1940.

21. From and after the commencement of this Act, the Aged and Infirm Coal Miners' Superannuation Fund established under the provisions of section sixty-eight of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1902-1940, and the liability to contribute with respect to such fund aforesaid, are hereby abolished. The Trustees of the Aged and Infirm Coal Miners' Superannuation Fund shall pay to the tribunal any balance of the said Fund so that such balance shall form part of the funds of the Coal Mine Workers Pensions Fund established under this Act.

The contributions of owners of mines and employees to the Coal Mines Accident Relief Fund under the provisions of section sixty-seven of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1902-1940, shall be reduced by one-eighth, and section sixty-seven aforesaid shall be deemed to be amended accordingly as from the commencement of this Act.

Any miner within the meaning of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1902-1940, who is at the date of the commencement of this Part in receipt of any benefits from the Aged and Infirm Coal Miners' Superannuation Fund shall be eligible as from the date of commencement of this Part to payment by the tribunal out of the Coal Mine Workers Pensions Fund of a pension of twelve shillings and sixpence per week, without any deduction, whether under the provisions of Part II. of this Act when proclaimed or otherwise. If any miner receives a pension under the provisions of this section and subsequently becomes eligible for a pension pursuant to section six, section seven, or section eight of this Act the tribunal shall thereupon discontinue the payment of the pension under this section.

This has to do with an existing fund established under the provisions of the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1902-40. This fund provides a small pension for aged and infirm miners. The coalminers and the com-

panies have contributed to it and are still contributing to it. Under the proposed new clause, that fund will be wound up. The amount still to the credit of the fund will be paid into the new pensions fund, and the companies and the miners will no longer contribute to the old fund which, of course, will not be in existence. Out of the new fund proposed to be established payments will be made weekly to the aged and infirm miners. Members will see from the clause that the amount of pension to be paid is 12s. 6d. a week which, although not very large, is much greater than the amount received weekly from the existing fund. Most of these men are very old and, in addition to the 12s. 6d. which they will receive, they also have the old age pension of 26s. a week. The wives of those who are married are, in most cases, over 60 years of age, and would also be in receipt of the old age pension. I do not want members to think that these aged and infirm miners will receive only 12s. 6d. a week.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Are they allowed to work?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: They are too old to work, or too sick.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Old age pensioners do work today.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Not these.

The Premier: If they earned any more, they would be ineligible for the old age pension.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: If we paid them more out of this fund their old age pension would be reduced accordingly, so it would be unwise for us to make a larger payment.

New clause put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

MOTION—NATIVE ADMINISTRATION ACT.

As to Recommendations of Royal Commissioner.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by Mr. Seward:—

If the lot of the native and half-caste children in the southern portion of the State is to be improved and they are to be given the opportunity to become useful members of society, this House believes that that portion of Royal Commissioner Moseley's report, wherein he recommends the abolition of native camps in favour of providing settlements where families may be housed according to their needs and the children attend a school of their own should be given effect to, and requests the Government accordingly; and meanwhile that the Education Department be instructed to provide a separate room and a teacher for native and half-caste children at schools where existing accommodation will permit of its being done.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [4.54]: I propose to support the motion, and I think the member for Pingelly should be complimented on having brought the matter before the House, not only in respect of the terms of the motion but on the way in which he did so. I listened with some interest to the member for Murchison when he spoke on this motion, and I agree with him when he says, in effect, that our aim in regard to the native population should be to raise it to the level of the white section of our community. Much of the discussion that has taken place in this House in recent years in regard to the natives has been directed towards that end. While there was a conflict of opinion when the Native Administration Act was amended, there was, I believe, a general consensus of opinion in this House that the attitude of the then Commissioner was not the right one. Amendments were passed by this House which, unfortunately, were not agreed to in another place, and in consequence the measure now on the statute-book, although it went some way towards the elevation of the native population to some higher level, did not go as far as this Assembly wished it to go.

In the net result we have, in the last four or five years, had a new native affairs administration which has achieved some good results. There is, of course, much to be done, and many things which can be requested. While I agree with some of the views of the member for Murchison, I cannot agree with the analogy he drew in regard to the attitude of the member for Pingelly towards native children and that of some people towards the question of paying fees at the University. In the latter case the hon. member made the point that we were seeking to create class distinctions. He said that by suggesting that some of those who went to the University should pay fees and others should not, because some were better circumstanced than others financially, we would bring about class distinctions. With that sentiment we can all be in agreement, but it is not analogous to the situation of a native child as disclosed or mentioned by the member for Pingelly.

The people who attend the University might be regarded as of equal mental attainments. They all have to pass the examination for matriculation and, therefore, whether some pay and some do not, they are all on a comparable level mentally.

But the same cannot be and was not said of the natives mentioned by the member for Pingelly. On the contrary, he sought to show what is clear to many of us, that the mentality of a native child when it reaches the age of 11 or 12 years is very frequently on a level with that of a white child of 6 or 7 years of age. He indicated his belief that it was necessary during that period—that is to say, when a native child is between the ages of 6 and 7, and 11 and 12—that native children should, where there was a reasonable number of them, be educated on the basis of an infantile mentality. I do not think there can be any serious disagreement from that. In my opinion that is the main thing the mover of the motion desires to bring before this Assembly—that during that period of the life of a native child it should have the attention of a separate, although not highly-trained teacher, so as to be educated to a reasonable standard. Such children should not be asked to compete with white children who, though very much younger, appear to assimilate the education they are to receive. That has been made clear by the report of Mr. H. D. Moseley, as Royal Commissioner, inquiring into Native Affairs in 1935. He said—

> It may be, however, that these children, though undoubtedly of fair intelligence, will not be able to reach a satisfactory standard at the age at which white children leave school. It has been said by authorities that it is in the last two years at school that the greatest progress is made by them. With a longer period of school training, followed by instruction in handicrafts appropriate to rural pursuits, I am convinced that a good future may be assured for the half-caste, provided adequate organisation is adopted.

Mr. Moseley at that stage was referring substantially, as I am doing, to the children in the southern districts, many of whom are half-castes. I do not know whether the criticism, if criticism is intended by this motion, should be levelled against the Department of Native Affairs in this way. Perhaps the Minister can inform the House of the co-operation, or lack of it, that exists between his department and the Department of Education in these matters. I have assumed, for lack of other knowledge on the subject, that the Education Department has some direct responsibility in regard to native and half-caste children living adjacent to civilised or white communities, and that it should assume that responsibility separate and distinct from the Department of Native Affairs. It does not seem to me that in such towns as Pingelly and Wagin, and others similarly situated, the Native Affairs Department should be held responsible for providing educational facilities for half-caste children. In my opinion, although I am open to correction, the Education Department must and should accept a reasonable amount of responsibility for the care of these youngsters. I want the Minister for Native Affairs to believe, when I support this motion, that I do so on the understanding that it is directed against whatever department is properly responsible for providing educational facilities for these children. That department I believe to be the Education Department. If that is so then it must accept the responsibility for what has apparently been —especially in the case referred to by the mover of the motion—a considerable degree of neglect.

Of course there are places under the control of the Department of Native Affairs, such as Carrolup, where native and half-caste children can be taught at the school. I have no reason to believe that the children in residence at such places are not being properly attended to. There is, however, a distinct reluctance on the part of the Minister to remove children to Carrolup compulsorily. I understand it has been done in some cases, but I believe that was because the circumstances obviously warranted some action being taken. A mistake or two may have been made, but generally speaking I believe that removals to such places as Carrolup have not been more frequent than necessary, because the Native Affairs Department believes that these children should not be removed long distances without their parents or relations who were supposed to, and in some cases did, find employment in the district in which they resided. So we find native and half-caste children in various townships who have not been attended to as normally other sections of the population would be. They have on the one hand, as the member for Murchison pointed out, had little supervision and encouragement to be clean and presentable and, on the other hand, they have had no encouragement at all with respect to education.

In regard to their cleanliness and hygiene generally, doubtless there is a case against the Department of Native Affairs. It may be that it should have brought pressure to bear on the health authorities, either of the State or of the district, to take steps to ensure that cleanliness and hygiene were attended to. It is fairly obvious that if they did take any such steps, they have not been very successful. I shall be glad to hear from the Minister, if such steps have been taken, what his opinion is as to the results, and if they were not satisfactory to hear from him why they were not satisfactory. I think this House is entitled to know in some detail what the department has done in regard to that matter and to ascertain wherein the fault lies—whether the work has been attempted, or why the work that has been done has not been followed up successfully. I am convinced that if the Department of Native Affairs will take steps to see that someone, either of itself or through some other department or instrumentality, ensures that there is a cleaning up amongst these youngsters and that they are given some encouragement to maintain better standards, there will then be no excuse whatever for the Education Department not taking early and sufficient action to see that these children are, at an earlier period in their educational life, put in a position to learn that which is suitable for them, bearing in mind their antecedents and their prospects in life. It does not seem to me, except in the rarest cases, worthwhile to endeavour to educate the aborigine or half-caste child in a subject such as, for example, trigonometry.

Mr. Patrick: Or to train them for the legal profession.

Mr. WATTS: Quite so. But I can appreciate the very useful work they could perform, and I think that type of work was clearly commented on by the Royal Commissioner, Mr. Moseley, in the report he made to the Government six or seven years ago. He pointed out in his report that these people could be trained to be of the utmost use in rural occupations of one kind or another. They are naturally, down to the third and fourth generations, people of the wide, open spaces. Only in rare instances do they desire to be cramped up and restricted. If an opportunity were given to the youngsters during the ages between seven and 12 years, to take a real interest in matters relating to hygiene and education as well, and some real effort were made to ensure that those matters were given proper attention, I am convinced that the aim and object, with which I am in entire agreement, of the member for Murchison to place these people as soon as possible on the same level as persons of the white community engaged in similar occupation, could be achieved. We shall certainly achieve no results by simply saying, "It is a pretty hopeless job."

As we look round the south-western portions of the State, I frankly admit there are times when we see aborigines, half-castes, and other natives from whose appearance we do not get much encouragement, nor are we helped to the belief that they can be made useful members of the community. I know we can look around amongst white youngsters and appreciate that if it had not been in many instances that we had taken strong measures to ensure that some of our young white delinquents, as we usually call them, were provided with a better environment and removed from the obvious ordinary detriments in their every-day life, we would have a section in our midst that Professor Currie once referred to as "poor white trash." I commend the motion to the Minister. I do not want him to take it from me, or from any member who has supported it, that it is directed principally or entirely at his department. We are not without some realisation of his difficulties. We are not sure—as I have said, we seek information on this subject—that he has received proper co-operation from other departments. I am convinced that he ought to receive that co-operation. If he has not, I hope he will advise us that he will take steps to ensure that he does. If he does not, I trust he will come to this House and tell members what efforts his department has made and inform us clearly what is the position, otherwise it will be absolutely futile.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I sincerely hope the motion will not be agreed to. In the first place it is, to my way of thinking, somewhat contradictory. First of all, the House is asked to express the opinion that certain portions of the report of the Royal Commissioner, Mr. Moseley, should be adopted and, secondly, to take steps through the Education Department to provide throughout the State sepa-

rate schools and teachers for half-caste children. Speaking on the Estimates this session, I did my best to point out to members that great strides had been made in carrying out the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner and that advancement had been made along lines suggested by him. Very many of the recommendations were carried out wholly or in part, but I admit there were some of the Commissioner's findings with which the department did not agree. In some instances there were many and varied reasons why the department could not give effect to some of the recommendations. Most decidedly the department agrees with the Royal Commissioner's comments and findings regarding the education and housing of the half-castes.

The departmental officials are not in agreement with the desires of some members representing country constituencies in this House, who have usually requested alterations or the provision of better housing, water supplies and so on, on reserves adjacent to some country towns. The department objects to that because it is economically unsound. It believes in institutions rather than in small settlements dotted throughout the Great Southern. It would be economically unsound to have these small communities of, say, 20 or so, though it would cost very little to put up 20 humpies and provide a water supply, because the department believes that it would not be long before we would have complaints similar to those being voiced now. Each of them would want a school. If we had small communities established by the Government, we would be told that it was our responsibility to provide hospitals for them. The department has had vast experience and has received complaints from all parts of the country areas. People of the country object to natives being accommodated in the local hospitals and to half-castes attending the schools, but they do not object to the half-castes doing their work and their bidding.

I repeat that this would be an unsound policy for the department to adopt, and it would be wrong to force such a policy on the department by resolution of the House. I am satisfied that many members have never given serious consideration to the difficulties that would arise if we tried to dot little communities with schools, hospitals, etc., all over the country areas. The department disagrees with such policy, firstly, from a financial point of view. It would be wrong to expend the taxpayers' money on a policy of that sort. The department knows that not all the half-caste population is susceptible to housing.

Mr. Stubbs: They are increasing very rapidly.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: We are aware of that, but it does not alter the fact that a percentage of them will not live in houses. We have separate housing for half-castes in our institutions and one may see them pull their blankets outside and sleep there. What would be the use of going to the expense of building houses with the uncertainty of their continued occupation? Every member representing a country constituency knows that half-castes are nomadic. They will work on a farm in one district for two or three weeks, probably helping with the shearing and then going on to another district. As soon as that job cuts out, they move on again. So they follow seasonal occupations and take their wives and families with them. This is another reason why the department does not favour building houses on these small reserves; they would not be occupied. Further, there is a tradition amongst the natives that, if one of the family dies in a house, others must not live in it afterwards. So I could go on giving many and varied reasons why we disagree with that policy.

In an institution it is a different matter. The children are accommodated in dormitories. I agree with Mr. Moseley's report regarding the institutions. If we have an institution, we can employ instructors in manual training and domestic work, but we could not do that if the natives were distributed in small communities throughout the country. Members are complaining of an insufficiency of labour. The department has been told on more than one occasion that the half-castes will not work. I give that statement a direct contradiction. There is not an able-bodied half-caste in the Great Southern who is not in employment, except that some may have finished temporary jobs and be out of work for one or two days before starting another. We have honorary local protectors who constantly inform the department of the number working and the number not working. Members may have seen two, three or four half-castes walking about a town, but they are entitled to a day off now and

then, just as is anyone else. There has been a lot of misrepresentation in the statements made about the half-castes.

During the debate on the Estimates I stated that anyone would be led to believe from the speeches made in this House that the Government had done nothing since Mr. Moseley presented his report. I pointed out that the Government had doubled the expenditure on the native people. Instead of spending £28,000 a year, we are spending up to £50,000. Surely something has been done! Surely that has made some difference! Members cannot tell me that that money has been expended without uplifting the natives to some extent and without having improved their living conditions. We have moved the aged and indigent natives from some of the country districts to our settlements but, having done that, we are in trouble with employers, because the able-bodied natives also want to go to the settlements. So we have many problems to contend with.

One member challenged the administration of the department. It is all very well for the Leader of the Opposition to say he does not want us to take offence and that members are not making a direct attack on the department, but one of his supporters has challenged the administration of the Commissioner of Native Affairs. In fairness to the Commissioner, who is not here to defend himself, I say we would have to go a long way before we could get a more able administrator. He has recently been brought into the limelight through having to give evidence at various Commonwealth inquiries on child endowment and other matters. On each occasion his advice has been accepted and applied in the Eastern States, and he has been congratulated by the Commonwealth authorities on the ideas and plans he has submitted and on the assistance he has rendered in pointing out how to obtain economical administration.

Mr. Marshall: Who fixed up the plan for the rationing of natives?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That is another matter on which the Commissioner was congratulated. Any difficulty in that connection has been straightened out by the Commonwealth authorities. The member for Avon appeared to think that certain regulations of the Department of Native Affairs were quite a joke. I do not perceive much jocularity about them. One of those regulations provides that no person shall enter a native reserve without the permission of the Commissioner of Native Affairs. That regulation, like most regulations, exists for a specific purpose. It was known to the department that some tragedies had occurred in the absence of such a regulation, and therefore a regulation was passed to prevent the supply of liquor in native camps and reserves. It is on record, too, that members of the meaner classes of whites have enticed natives out of institutions. Further, there is evidence of people visiting native institutions on the plea of a holiday and taking photographs of nude native women. I do not know whether the member for Avon endorses that kind of thing. If the hon. member does, I do not. It is one of my reasons for supporting the regulation in question, which I deem to be quite in order. The natives object to having their photographs taken under normal conditions, and it is quite exceptional for them to permit their womenfolk to be photographed in the nude.

My opinion is that this agitation has been engendered solely by colour prejudice. In the Pingelly district that prejudice has arisen because of some objections raised by the local parents and citizens' association against permitting native children to attend school with white children. The House does not know the history of the matter. For the benefit of those unaware of the real position I desire to read from the file a letter addressed to the Minister for Education on the 12th October, 1942, by the chairman of the association I have mentioned—

> At a representative meeting of the Pingelly Parents and Citizens' Association held here on October the 8th, the following resolution was passed:—That the Government be asked to provide a separate classroom and a separate teacher for the purpose of educating the native children in Pingelly. That we consider the association of the native children with the white children in the classroom is detrimental to the health and education of the white children.
>
> In view of the urgency of this matter the Parents and Citizens' Association requests and authorises the president to arrange for an interview with the Minister for Education, and to place the matter before him, requesting immediate action.
>
> That the president be given the power to co-opt for the deputation any member or members he deems necessary for the success of the resolution.

It was moved that the Minister be asked to give permission for the native children to be temporarily excluded from the school pending action by the department.

Parents are complaining of internal illness of their children in the infant classes. (Native children are being taught in the infant classes.) . . . And further the Minister is requested to provide separate sanitary arrangements for the native children.

I have no objection to what the letter proposes. Before leaving the subject of native children attending schools with white children, let me mention that the department consulted the local honorary protector, who in the course of his reply, dated the 22nd October, stated—

And some twelve months back the health inspector (a qualified man from the Cuballing Road Board with which the Pingelly Road Board had an arrangement to make use of the Cuballing Road Board's health inspector) wanted to know how things were at the native camp. "Come along and see for yourself" was my invitation. The sanitary arrangements he was the more concerned about; he was satisfied with what was being done, but thought that the sanitary contractor should visit the camp as he does various parts of the town on certain nights.

The honorary protector's reason for mentioning that was that the local sanitary contractor refused to call at native camps without some special consideration—a condition that was not agreed to. I have been asked what the department has been doing. My reply is that we are continually in touch with two protectors who keep the department closely advised. The local health inspector had within 12 months examined the particular area in question, and expressed himself as satisfied. Why was the ground of contention shifted from the Education Department to the Department of Native Affairs? After further argument the Education Department sent the Senior Medical Officer of Schools, Dr. Stang, to make investigations at Pingelly. I now desire to read the chief parts of Dr. Stang's report—

In all 42 children were examined, and of this number only two children had sores which were at all extensive. One was a white child and one a coloured—in both cases the condition was impetigo. Even these two cases which I have called severe were not really severe, but only by comparison with the rest. I am attaching a list of the children seen, and you will notice that in the majority of cases where they did have impetigo it was very mild, and the majority of children only had one sore. A great number of the other sores were ordinary abrasions from gravel rash, stone bruises, etc.

The sores amongst the children were not bad at all and certainly not nearly as bad as I frequently see in our metropolitan schools, where there are no coloured children present at all. The coloured children were quite clean, both in body and dress, on the day of my examination; but of course they knew I was coming.

I attended a meeting of parents afterwards. I pointed out to them that this condition of impetigo was quite common amongst children, and they were not in a position to say that the white children got it from the native children, as it was quite possible that the native children had got it from the whites, as it is a condition that is frequently found amongst school children.

In my opinion, the report clearly sets out that the people of Pingelly had an objection to the native children being educated at the white children's school, and that the Pingelly people's protest was made on that ground. Their action was not very effective, because the Senior Medical Officer of Schools reported that the native children were not in as bad a state from ordinary children's sores as were cases she had found in the metropolitan area. Accordingly the Pingelly people shifted their ground. They then said the complaint was not about the children, but about the camp. The member for Pingelly wrote to me inviting me to inspect the camp. I agreed to do so, but by the time the House had adjourned and I had the opportunity to go, it was too late because the natives had migrated. Only two native families were then living on the reserve and they are still there. It would have been useless for me to inspect the camp in such circumstances. The natives are still away, and I have no intention of making an inspection until they return, if they do.

With regard to the complaint about natives and half-caste children attending State schools, I point out to the House that the department has received many requests from people in country districts not to send native and half-caste children to the Carrolup Native Settlement, because, if that were done, the school would be closed up. Very few white children were attending such schools. That is on record on the department's files, which can be inspected by any member. The member for Pingelly seemed to have a general grievance against natives. He informed the House, notwithstanding my contradiction, that there were numerous natives and half-castes in the Pingelly district out of work, and he said they should be put to work at charcoal-

burning, firewood-cutting and other occupations. I investigated that position, too. As a matter of fact, the natives have a great dislike to charcoal-burning. They give a sound reason for their dislike. They say that charcoal-burning in the Pingelly district has a bad effect upon their health, owing to the dust which gets into their eyes and lungs. Further, they must work in the bush where there is no water supply, and consequently they are unable to wash themselves properly. They also say that by the time they have paid the local storekeeper for their supplies, they have nothing left out of their charcoal-burning. I therefore do not blame them for not continuing in that occupation.

The Government has had numerous complaints about the refusal to supply housing accommodation for natives. We have not heard one word, however, about what the employers do in the way of providing housing accommodation. The department has been the subject of much criticism through insisting upon employers providing housing accommodation for natives when they are working, whether at shearing or harvesting, or whatever it might be. There should at least be consistency. If complaints are brought under the notice of the Government and if this House is asked to pass motions insisting on what the Government ought to do, those making such complaints should give the department a chance to insist upon the employers providing proper accommodation for native workmen. The employer must do so for his white employees; but any old thing is good enough to put a native into.

There is another point I wish to touch upon. I have definite and positive proof that pressure has been brought to bear upon house owners in the Brookton area—which is only 12 miles or so from Pingelly—to prevent them from selling or renting houses to natives. This is definitely proof to me that it is purely colour prejudice. In the first place, the parents and citizens' association at Pingelly desired the native children to be removed from the school because of their bad effect on the white children. The medical adviser disproved that. The association then changed its ground and put the blame on to the camp conditions.

The only other point I wish to deal with was raised by the Leader of the Opposition. He wanted to know whose responsibility it was to permit native or half-caste children to attend State schools. It is definitely the responsibility of the Education Department. There are 500 native and half-caste children attending State schools throughout the State; and practically the only complaint the department has received in that connection has come from Pingelly. The Native Affairs Department, through its honorary protectors, is responsible for the cleanliness of the natives. The protector visits the camp and sees that the natives are kept clean. The head teacher of a State school has authority to send home children, whether white or black, if they are not clean. The Leader of the Opposition also raised the question of the inspection of native camps by the local health inspector. He said it was the duty of the Native Affairs Department, but I do not agree with him. The local health officer has authority to inspect native camps, and if he neglects his duty that is not the responsibility of the Native Affairs Department. The department is not in a position to give him instructions. It will, however, give him every encouragement to see that the camps are kept clean. I hope the motion will not be agreed to.

MR. SEWARD (in reply): The Minister in his reply accused me of raising the colour question. The member for Murchison made the same charge. I did not impute any motives to the Minister when I brought the motion forward, and I hope I shall not do so in the course of my reply. I can only assure him that I did not raise this question from a colour point of view. In fact, I said that my sole desire was to do something to assist the natives. That is still my desire. As for the Pingelly district, this motion has nothing whatever to do with it. Nobody asked me to bring the motion forward or suggested that I should do so. I did it spontaneously. I have spoken before in this Chamber on the subject of natives and half-castes, and I have nothing to withdraw. When the member for Murchison was speaking he said that this was simply a colour question and that those who took up the matter were influenced in that direction. Generally speaking, he found fault with the suggestions I had to make, but he carefully refrained from making any suggestions of his own to ameliorate the lot of the natives. Not one suggestion did he offer! I did make some suggestions; whether they are suitable or not is for some authority to say, but they were suggestions. The Minister in his reply answered some of them. He said that the

natives had an objection to living in houses and that they preferred to take their blankets and live outside.

As I pointed out in the course of my remarks, I was speaking not so much for the adult native as for the rising generation. It was with the condition of the rising generation that I was particularly concerned. I mentioned that I was at a gathering where there were some 20 youngsters, from 6 to 8 years of age, poorly clad, and, generally speaking, the objects of sympathy. I venture to say that the Minister himself would object to his own children sitting beside these natives in a schoolroom. I want these children raised up in life, weaned away from the native existence altogether, so that when they reach adult age they will not want to run out of the house and put a blanket on the ground to sleep on but, through having been better accommodated and treated better generally than their parents were will have acquired a taste for better living conditions and will have some incentive to raise themselves up. Then when their children come along they will live up to a better standard than these unfortunate children. That is the only object I had in mind in moving the motion. I made certain suggestions and if effect could be given to them the conditions of the natives would be considerably improved.

The Minister stated that we could not have schools for natives only all over the country. I agree. He said that we could not provide technical teachers to educate the natives in technical subjects. I agree again. But as I pointed out previously, where there is a sufficient number of families living in the one area a portable or movable building could be provided so that if the natives moved the building could be shifted as well. A monitor is all that would be required to teach the children because, as the Royal Commissioner pointed out, at present they are of poor intelligence and do not absorb education like white children, owing to their environment. When they reach the ages of 14 to 17 they might be able to undertake manual training, and could probably be sent to Carrolup Settlement or somewhere else to receive that training. I do not suggest there should be teachers all over the country but I think my suggestion could be given effect to. The Minister gave as his reason for believing that this was being made a colour question the fact that the Pingelly people asked that the coloured children should be taught in a separate school. The fact is that the doctor said that diseases from which white children were suffering had been contracted through contact with the native children.

In my letter to the Minister I mentioned two cases and gave the names of the parents. In one instance the sickness extended over six months. I submit that is reliable evidence to justify people asking that the native children should be taught in a separate room until they can be brought to something near the level of the white children. Replying to the remarks of the member for Murchison, the Leader of the Opposition pointed out that these neglected half-castes are not on the same plane as the white children. The whole object of my motion is to raise them to that plane, so that later on their position in life will be improved and the children coming after them will be in a different category altogether. In the circumstances, the people of Pingelly had nothing else to do but to make this request, especially as there was a room available in which the native children could be taught. There is no doubt that white children contracted sickness from the native children owing to the conditions under which the latter lived.

The Minister made reference to the report of Dr. Stang. I would ask whether the Minister received that report after Dr. Stang visited the camp. I know that the Minister received a report when no inspection had been made but subsequently Dr. Stang made an investigation. What her report was then I do not know. The motion was moved with the genuine idea of endeavouring to do something for these unfortunate children. The Minister said he did not hear any suggestion that the employers should be asked to make accommodation available for the natives. In that respect he contradicted himself. In one breath he said that the natives would not go into a house if it were built for them; then he said that the employers should provide accommodation.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Let the employers try it out and see whether the natives use such buildings.

Mr. SEWARD: Farmers and others should be assisted to erect wood and iron buildings.

The Minister for the North-West: The Government again!

Mr. SEWARD: Wait a moment. Let them be assisted conditionally on their employing native families. In the event of their failure to do so let the cost of the building be refunded. I think if that were done many adult natives could be accommodated. The only objection is that there would be a number of children spread about in little groups and their education could not be properly provided for. But if natives could be employed so much the better. I point out that I did not make any complaint that natives were running about Pingelly unemployed. I do not think that there are many unemployed at Pingelly. I did draw attention to that fact about six months ago, but that is not today. The natives need not undertake charcoal-burning. The Minister happened to make reference to a particular store well situated on the bank of the river where there is an excellent water supply. I know the place. If, however, the natives do not want to go in for charcoal-burning let them engage in any avocation they like so long as it provides profitable employment for them. I know that the protector in that district is vigilant in seeing that the natives are not exploited. The natives do not work the whole week and then go to the store and afterwards have nothing left. I consider myself perfectly justified in having moved the motion, and hope the House will carry it as an instruction to the Government that something should be done along the lines indicated.

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

Ayes	15
Noes	18
Majority against ..	3

AYES.

Mr. Boyle	Mr. Patrick
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hill	Mr. Seward
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Mann	Mr. Watts
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Willmott
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Doney
Mr. North	(*Teller.*)

NOES.

Mr. Coverley	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Cross	Mr. Panton
Mr. Fox	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Triat
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Willcock
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Wise
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Withers
Mr. Needham	Mr. Leahy
	(*Teller.*)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Abbott	Mr. Holman
Mr. Berry	Mr. Styants
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Perkins	Mr. Millington
Mr. J. H. Smith	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Thorn	Mr. Raphael

Question thus negatived.

MOTION—FARMERS AND PASTORALISTS' DEBTS.

As to Mortgage Interest.

Debate resumed from the 11th November on the following motion by Mr. Stubbs:—

That this House is of the opinion that the Government should introduce legislation at once to reduce during the war to not more than three per cent. interest rates on mortgage debts owing by farmers and pastoralists, whether to government instrumentalities or other financial institutions, because—

(a) of the severe stock losses in the pastoral areas;
(b) the compulsory reduction in wheat acreages;
(c) the severe rationing of supplies of superphosphate and other essentials;
(d) the insuperable difficulties regarding manpower;
(e) the increase in all costs of production during the war which are greater than any compensating increases in prices of some products;
(f) it is not fair nor just that interest should be charged in full when diminishing returns and higher costs make it impossible to pay it out of earnings, thus subjecting the debtors concerned to capitalisation of arrears with resultant compound interest.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS [6.2]: In his motion the member for Wagin is asking the House to agree to a proposal that this Government should introduce legislation to reduce interest rates to some sections of the community, and he gives his reasons.

Mr. Stubbs: Better rates than the maximum are given in some instances.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is noteworthy that in discussions of such difficulties in agriculture the issues are invariably complicated by some curious mixtures arising from economic, political and even sentimental reasons. The very first interjection from the member for Wagin suggests to me that some institutions and some persons, in spite of Commonwealth control of such matters as these, are at this moment influenced in granting compassionate rates to some deserving cases. I know that that is so. More than one institution adopts such practices. If, in future, a case warrants special consideration, then compas-

sionate rates, other than those prescribed by National Security Regulations limiting interest during these times, shall be charged to the client. The hon. member in this motion limits the application of lower interest rates to farmers and pastoralists who are in difficulties. He makes no provision at all for a general consideration, or a general writing-down of liability to any other section.

The first specific suggestion is that interest rates on the mortgage debts owing by farmers and pastoralists should be reduced because of the severe stock losses in the pastoral areas. In the year 1940 this Government agreed to the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire particularly into the conditions of the pastoral industry and its debt structure, and to make recommendations for whatever might be necessary to re-constitute that industry where, after seven years of drought, it was found to be in dire circumstances. The recommendations of that Commission were made on definite lines in regard to debt structure and involved large sums of money. The State was unable to get the Commonwealth to agree to provide that money, and this Government continued and encouraged conferences between itself and representatives, institutions and the pastoralists concerned in an endeavour to arrive at a voluntary scheme for debt adjustment. I would like to inform the House of just what has happened in that connection.

Very many cases of distressed circumstances have been considered in all a total of 94. In some of these the debt remaining on the property was in excess of £10 per sheep; in some the losses went from a flock total of 40,000 to 2,400. In a voluntary way, without any statutory obligation at all, the Pastoral Debt Adjustment Committee still meets and receives applications. The results have been, in total, that in 52 cases finalised and granted relief from debt £155,686 has been written off first mortgage debts; £22,260 off second mortgage debts, and to achieve that the Government is responsible for £13,851 to meet portion of the annual interest payment for which the pastoralist was responsible.

Mr. Marshall: That is only for a period of years.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so. It has been done to the limit of the capacity of the Government. We were anxious that it should be a much larger scheme, but we were unable to get the money to give full effect to the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner. This motion appears to me to pre-suppose that wherever money is owing by a farmer or pastoralist his financial position is hopeless. I well remember a remark made in this Chamber by the member for East Perth when speaking on this subject. He said, "It is very evident from the experiences in Western Australia, that farms as a basis for investment have ceased to be attractive." Even so, I think the hon. member will agree with me that there are many farmers and pastoralists owing large amounts of money who still have considerable equities in their properties. I know a number of pastoralists who owe £20,000 or £30,000, but I venture to say that some of them have much more money in war loans than many prominent and wealthy citizens of this city. Their position is not hopeless because they owe money! The motion suggests that all farmers and pastoralists who have mortgage debts shall have the interest payable on their debts reduced in any circumstances to 3 per cent.

Mr. Hughes: The pastoralists were more cute than the farmers, because they formed small private companies so that their assets could not be touched.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In very many ways they are different from the farmers. Their industry has not been subject to many of the difficulties that confront farmers.

Mr. Watts: They have some of their own.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: On the other hand, the pastoral industry is subject to rapid fluctuation, to extremes in losses—terrific losses there have been—which would wipe out entirely industries of a lesser magnitude. But in the case of the farmer, so much of his money was, and has been all the time, borrowed that the farming industry is accepted as the one capable of successfully continuing on borrowed money. I think that is a very unfortunate circumstance. It is almost impossible to imagine that any industry, primary or secondary, can not merely pay interest on the whole of its capital as borrowed money, but at the same time provide adequate recompense to those conducting such operations. But that is expected in the case of all farmers, and that has been so throughout generations of farmers down the history of Australia.

The crux of the position in this case is that although the hon. member mentions Government debts or those owed to private in-

stitutions, he does not mention the private mortgagee who has all his money invested in one rural security. He is not to be dealt with under this motion, but the hon. member does, by his action, seek to interfere with money invested as trustees' securities. Investment in land is, it must be borne in mind, a permissible investment for such funds. If the member for Wagin wishes to bring within the ambit of his motion cases that are deserving of attention, I am afraid he will have to reconstruct it very substantially. The most important point of all is that if the hon. member will refer to the Commonwealth "Government Gazette" of the 14th March, 1942, he will find that interest rates are limited by an order published by the Commonwealth Bank in the "Gazette" of that date. He will find that, by authority vested in the Commonwealth Bank, under National Security (Economic Organisation) Regulation No. 11, the maximum rates of interest on deposits and on loans are prescribed. He will find that the interest to be charged by trading banks, pastoral companies, local authorities or building societies is all covered in that particular Commonwealth regulation. Thus the member for Wagin asks, by way of the immediate introduction of legislation in this Chamber, that interest rates shall be controlled and that the control of such interest rates shall be limited to particular industries or persons, including particular types of mortgages.

Mr. Watts: Can you not reduce the interest rate below the maximum?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, and that is done today. That was admitted by way of interjection by the member for Wagin before I had been speaking for a minute. However, what is suggested cannot be done effectively in Western Australia in the light of the Commonwealth National Security Regulation to which I have referred. Although the issues involved could be traversed at great length, I submit that, for the very valid reasons I have advanced, the House should not agree to the motion.

On motion by Mr. McDonald, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 2nd February, 1943.

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

QUESTIONS (2).

GAOLS.

Appointment of Visiting Justices, Etc.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT (for Hon. L. B. Bolton) asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Have any appointments been made as visiting justices to the Fremantle Gaol or Barton's Mill Prison for the year ending the 31st December, 1943? 2, If so, will the Minister give the names and addresses of those appointed? 3, If not, is it intended to make any such appointments? 4, In view of the many escapes from and general dissatisfaction at Barton's Mill, will the Government consider appointing a visiting board to confer with the prison authorities?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, The names and addresses of the gentlemen appointed are as under: A. C. R. Loaring, J.P., Lawnbrook, Bickley; A. R. Thorogood, J.P., 256 Albany-road, Victoria Park; C. Kostera, J.P., Kalamunda Bus Service, Kalamunda; G. Weston, J.P., Pickering Brook—Barton's Mill. The Stipendiary Magistrate, Fremantle; L. B. Bolton, M.L.C., 102 Barker-road, Subiaco; C. M. Purdie, 190 Canning-road, East Fremantle; G. J. B. Thompson, 200 Canning-road, East Fremantle; W. J. Sumpton, Angwin-street, Fremantle; F. E. Gibson, M.L.C., 142 High-street, Fremantle; C. H. Rudwick, Glyde-street, Mosman Park; A. Turton, 25 Harvest-road, North Fremantle; James Farrell, 20 Fothergill-street, Fremantle—Fremantle Gaol. 3, Answered by No. 1. 4, It is considered quite competent for the visiting justices to fulfil the functions of such a board. Their duties as laid down in their letters of appointment embrace the hearing and determination of all cases awaiting adjudication; hearing complaints of any prisoners