

land. It is plain, therefore, that our only course is to seek some co-operative arrangement with the Commonwealth authorities in this connection.

That, I think, covers the main provisions of the Bill, the importance of which cannot be over-emphasised by the Government. A great deal of thought and consideration has been given to its drafting, and every avenue has been explored in an endeavour to cover all the powers necessary to deal with a question that is of national importance and must be tackled with energy if we are to save our inheritance. That there is a job to be done, and done quickly, is evident from the information I have given to members. If there is any document that would emphasise the urgency of tackling the problem it is that constituting the report of the Commonwealth Rural Reconstruction Commission, wherein it is stated that if a calamity is to be averted drastic action is necessary.

I think that members who give consideration to this problem—more especially if they have had access to the various reports on what has been done elsewhere, particularly in the United States of America in recent years—will agree that, while the position may not be as serious at present in this State as it is in other States of the Commonwealth there is no doubt that the problem is getting worse year by year and that the sooner we tackle it the sooner we will assist the agriculturalists, the pastoralists and those who are cultivating our lands, to a better knowledge of what is required if they are to make the best use of the land that they occupy. Primary production has played a great part in the economy of this State for many years and in view of the reports that we have received and the figures that I have quoted to the House tonight, I feel sure that members will agree that the time has arrived when we should have statutory authority to deal with the menace of soil erosion, whether by wind or by water. I hope the House will agree that the provisions contained in this Bill are such that they should be put into operation without further delay.

There is a tremendous amount of information available on this subject and I have not endeavoured to give to the House anything but a comparison of the problem in the United States of America with that in the States of Australia. A further com-

parison is that between the Eastern States of Australia and this State. I hope that in Western Australia we will take advantage of the experience in those other places and that without any undue delay we will make it possible for this State to deal with a problem which, if it is not dealt with in the near future, must necessarily assume greater proportions. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 8.30 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Wednesday, 10th October, 1945.*

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### PRICE FIXING.

*As to Extension of Commonwealth Powers.*

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Premier:

1, Has his attention been called to a statement appearing in the Press on Saturday, the 6th October, complaining of the delay by certain State Governments, in carrying out undertakings alleged to have been given at the Premiers' Conference in August, to pass legislation to extend Federal price fixing powers after the war?

2, Is he aware that the Government of Western Australia is mentioned as one of the State Governments that gave this undertaking?

3, If so, will he inform the House as to the correctness or otherwise of the Press statement?

4, If correct, when will he ask Parliament to pass the necessary legislation?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied:

1, Yes.

2, Yes.

3, The statement referred to is merely conjecture by some journalist regarding the supposed attitude of Federal officials. There has been no undue delay by the Government of this State, nor has there been any official suggestion whatever of delay made by the Commonwealth Government.

4, Draft legislation is under consideration and will be presented as early as possible.

### WATER SUPPLIES.

*As to Coolgardie Townsite Mains.*

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Works:

1, In re-laying the water mains in the Coolgardie townsite what size pipes are contemplated?

2, When does he anticipate that piping for this work will be available?

3, In view of the growing importance of Coolgardie, and the increase in population, can he advise how soon this work will be commenced after pipes become available?

4, Is he aware that about 40 consumers on the south side of the township are served by only a 1in. main, that this size of pipe is totally inadequate for domestic needs, and useless in the case of fire? Also that no provision has been made, when re-laying, for increasing the size of pipe in this section?

5, Is it a fact that the only water service to the Coolgardie Hospital is from a  $\frac{3}{4}$ in. pipe, and that no water is available in case of fire?

The MINISTER replied:

1, 2 and 3, A proposal for improving the Coolgardie reticulation to meet present and anticipated requirements has recently been submitted by the District Engineer, and is now under consideration by the department.

4, The 40 services on the south side of the township are served by mains ranging from six inches to one inch. This section of the town will be fully considered in connection with the improvement proposals.

5, The Coolgardie Hospital is served through a 1½inch service pipe with subsidiary  $\frac{3}{4}$ inch branches from a 6-inch main. The provision of a special fire purposes service is receiving consideration.

### GOLDMINING.

*As to Permit for Purchase of Fracteur.*

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Mines:

1, Is he aware that it is still necessary to obtain a permit to purchase fracteur for mining, and that permits have to be renewed every three months?

2, Is he aware that prospectors and others are often inconvenienced, lose time, and sometimes have to travel long distances to obtain fracteur, because of permit requirements?

3, As wartime regulations, and precautions governing the purchase of dynamite, appear to be no longer necessary, where mining is concerned, will he take steps to dispense with this cumbersome regulation, as in its present form it constitutes a distinct hindrance to the best interests of the goldmining industry?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, Yes.

3, The repeal of the Commonwealth National Security (Firearms and Explosives) Regulations has already been recommended by the Deputy Director of Security.

### DALKEITH HOT POOL.

*As to Filling of Basin.*

Hon. N. KEENAN asked the Premier:

1, Is he aware that the cement bathing basin commonly called the Dalkeith hot pool, has been filled up with sand?

2, Was such cement basin constructed at some considerable cost by the Army authorities?

3, Is he aware that the bathing basin was used by civilians with great advantage in the case of rheumatic troubles as the water had curative powers?

4, What was the reason for filling up the basin?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied:

1, Yes.

2, No. The basin was constructed some considerable time before the war from Government funds.

3, No.

4, To protect the structure against vandalism. It is intended to open the basin for public use as soon as a caretaker can be provided.

### WORKERS' HOMES BOARD.

#### *As to Rating of Land.*

Mr. NORTH asked the Premier:

1, Are rates payable to the local authority on land held by the Workers' Homes Board for building purposes?

2, If not, does he intend to introduce legislation to correct this anomaly?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied:

1, Land held by the Workers' Homes Board for building purposes is Crown land and is not rateable.

2, It is not agreed that the exemption of Crown land from local government rates is an anomaly.

### BILL—POLICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and *passed*.

### MOTION—TOURIST TRAFFIC.

#### *As to Separate Ministerial Control.*

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [4.38]: I move—

That the tourist industry is of sufficient importance in the future of the State to warrant control under a separate Minister of the Crown.

Since last session, when the House carried a motion favouring the re-establishment of the tourist industry, the Estimates for 1945-46 have been placed before us, and they indicate that this year the Tourist Bureau is to receive £3,000. The intention of the motion is to bring before the House the fact that the tourist industry is worthy of greater attention than was paid to it before the war or than is contemplated. Nobody would expect the matter to be worked up in five minutes. I am aware that probably the Estimates were prepared during the war; but the fact remains that if members will consider the various activities of the State which could come under a tourist Minister directing tourist policy, they will realise that there is quite enough to keep such a Minister fully occupied. It is worth

reminding members that the Tourist Bureau comes under the Premier's Department and the control of Cave House under the Minister for the North-West. Obviously Cave House is a tourist resort. Without going any further, we have two distinct Ministers operating one concern.

My suggestion is that the Premier should consider transferring the control of the Tourist Bureau to the Minister for the North-West, who already controls so many departments associated with tourist activities. I am sorry the Minister is ill, but I am speaking of the office rather than of the man. The activities of that Minister's portfolios are as follows:—Natives, Harbour and Light and Jetties, Fisheries, the North-West generally, shipping, caves, and State hotels. All those—as I hope members will agree—fit in with tourist activities. If we add to those the London agency, town planning and perhaps the State Gardens Board, and any activities corresponding to Cave House, we will have a complete tourist department. We would only have to add "Minister for Tourists" to the portfolio and we would have, in effect, a Minister for that most important activity. At present the actual control of the tourist department is under the Premier, yet the only concern that today makes money for the department comes under the Minister for the North-West. Surely that is an anomaly that gives room for reform and improvement. Many people consider that a tourist agency should not be under the Treasurer, and it is reasonable to assume that no Treasurer is going to advocate expenditure, the whole objective of a Treasurer being to do the opposite. I have only to ask the ex-Premier whether that is not true.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It is not true. The Treasurer makes money available for such purposes.

Mr. NORTH: The Treasurer is not normally there to encourage or advocate expenditure.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: That is part of his job.

Mr. NORTH: I am glad to hear that and I think the people of Western Australia would like to know it. Even if it is so, I still think that one department should be in charge of all tourist activities and, if it is in order for the Treasurer to advocate

expenditure in a department under his control, I think we should consider whether the Treasurer's department or the Premier's Department could carry the load of a big tourist activity. If we are to look on the tourist traffic in the future as an opportunity to recover for Western Australia some of her past economic strength, we will have to make more of that department than we have made in the past. Those who have travelled overseas, as have many present in this House, will realise that today and before the war Western Australia was only scratching at tourist activities, whereas the potentialities of the tourist traffic are enormous. The only thing lacking is to enable the department to become a responsible department with a policy and a Minister who can go to Cabinet and put forward his plans, and contact other Ministers in the development of those plans.

The first essential is to lure the people—not merely from the Eastern States but from other countries—to Western Australia. In this State we have had experience of luring people to these shores. When Hannan, Bayley and men such as these made their discoveries of gold, people came here from all over the world. They came not to spend money but to make it. We have to put before the world attractions of a more lasting nature than that of gold, which gave this State such a wonderful start many years ago. I am not deprecating the advantage of any local tourist traffic, but if the tourist traffic is given to a Minister as part of his duties, right away from Treasury control, he might be able to initiate a policy far greater than a mere attempt to attract a few trippers from other parts of Australia, useful though they may be.

We have many attractions here that are not known in other parts of the world. I lived in the Old Country as a student for many years and I know that not one in every hundred people in Great Britain knows anything about our country. Even the few who passed the Western Australian agency in the Strand used only to see a stuffed emu and perhaps a bowl of wheat and some wheat straws in the window. If there was a Minister in charge of tourist activities he could contact that London agency.

Mr. Doney: What new tourist attractions are there that could be exploited?

Mr. NORTH: The first essential is to tell the people of London—let alone of Great Britain—that there is such a place as Western Australia and a city called Perth. During the war—in 1942—when the United States soldiers and sailors came here to help defend us, they brought with them some star newspaper reporters. They got here just before the Jap menace was at its worst, and I suppose they were sent to report the war when it got here. Members will remember the amazing stories that appeared about this wonderful city of Perth that the people of America had discovered through their Press. They told the world about a place that they had found here. It could be said by those who have lived in Great Britain—I think the member for Williams-Narrogin lived there for some time—that people there know very little about us or about the opportunities to come here and enjoy our country. It may be said that all these are matters for private enterprise, and in the past we have depended upon shipping companies—I suppose we will now depend on the airways—to do their own publicity, but this State will be looking for any opportunity, in the next few years, to get increased revenue. Our position is not satisfactory from that point of view.

Everything I can think of is being done to make our financial position better. We have had the Henry George scheme, Major Douglas's scheme, nationalised banking and socialisation of credit advocated. All the things that are supposed to help make our position rosy have either been put into force or advocated in the last few years, and yet today we face a difficult position as regards our revenue. Although the Leader of the Opposition has advocated reform of the financial relations between the Commonwealth Government and the States, and though there are complaints about the Grants Commission and its operations, we know that the next few years will be very difficult for Western Australia. The other night the Premier, in a gentle way, suggested that later on we might have to fight for the rights of this country. Therefore, by adopting a State-wide policy that would bring about a large influx of tourists annually, we would be doing something to improve the revenue of the State substantially.

Last session when we passed a motion dealing with the tourist business, a point was made of the fact that Canada has been able to obtain a larger revenue from its tourist traffic than from any other business in the Dominion, including wheat production, manufactures and everything else. The tourist business is the largest business in the Dominion of Canada.

We in Western Australia have not really attempted to ascertain what our resources in this connection are. The member for Williams-Narrogin asked a few minutes ago what new avenues could be exploited. First of all I would say that we have not yet considered the point that Western Australia is now much closer to the large centres of the world than it was before the war. That fact in itself would alter the whole aspect from the point of view of a prospective visitor. If a tourist has to spend two or three months travelling here and returning to his homeland, it is a very different proposition from being able to come here and return in a week. Thus the whole prospect becomes more attractive. Further, people who live in European countries know that the period from October till March is a very good time to be out of that part of the world. At that same period we have a very congenial climate. In this State there are certain seasons that have their own attractions; for instance, there is nothing to equal the beauty of our wildflowers in their season.

Our railways and many other activities are controlled by the State, and those utilities would gain largely by enhanced revenue derived from the presence of tourists in the State. The Minister for the North-West controls a number of activities such as hotels and jetties, all of which are dependent upon local trade. Some years ago the authorities controlling the jetties were told that they would have to maintain those structures out of their own funds, that the Government could no longer assist them because there were no funds available for the purpose. If we set up a Tourist Ministry, those same concerns that today are a burden on the Government would become opportunities for making revenue. If the Minister for tourists got into touch with the local authorities in the metropolitan and country areas, he could suggest many big schemes of improvement, schemes for beautification, schemes for improving beaches and

camping sites, as well as the repair or reconstruction of jetties and piers and other amusement centres, which class of work is entirely beyond the means of local authorities today. In fact, local authorities have not found the control of jetties and piers acceptable to them because they cannot see how any revenue can be derived from those works. If we had a tourist policy along the lines I have indicated some of the problems that have arisen in and around the metropolitan area could be solved. Not long ago local authorities were requested to submit schemes for improvement and beautification, but I understand that very few were supplied. Some argued that there was no benefit to be gained by the local authorities from the fact of tourists patronising such places of amusement. In fact, the local authorities in some cases resent the intrusion of tourists when no benefit is obtained from their presence.

Let me refer to two jetties—one the well-known jetty on the Swan River at Claremont and the other the Cottesloe Pier. The Cottesloe pier has lost some piles; at any rate it has suffered badly from the weather, and a year or so ago a notice had to be put up warning people against using the pier. At Claremont the local council carried out some repairs to the Claremont jetty. In both those cases, however, no revenue is derived by the local authority, and so there is no incentive to attract tourists to those places, though there could be. It might be possible for the Minister with local consent to prescribe a small toll charge for people using the jetties, as has been done in other parts of the world. If a proper service were provided for tourists, there would be opportunities to raise revenue so that the jetties could be properly maintained without their being a burden to the local authorities.

If we are going to consider this matter further, it should be unnecessary for me to stress the dozen and one ways in which tourist traffic could be stimulated, because that would take a good deal of time, but if the Minister had control of the various activities I have mentioned, he would be in a position to galvanise existing concerns into greater life and thus produce a larger profit for the State. The Minister would need a department, a staff of officers and agencies, but not a great deal of expense need be entailed for a start. It would be more a matter of organisation. The outcome of in-

erased tourist traffic would be not only an augmentation of revenue for the State, but also of increased business for the community generally. Undoubtedly the whole of the business community and producers from the soil would benefit. There is no more certain invisible export than the tourist business. It provides money at the source, as it were. Instead of selling wheat, wool, fruit and other commodities to overseas countries, the tourists would bring their money here and there would be created a market on the spot, and thus we would gain markets that otherwise would never be available to us. When I speak of tourists being an invisible export, some members might think they could better be described as visible imports, but I shall leave that matter to the economists to decide. The net result of tourist traffic would be that money would be brought into the State just as if we were selling commodities to another country.

Let us consider another avenue of revenue-making and draw a slight comparison. The Fremantle Harbour Trust, according to the figures in the Estimates, is paying into Consolidated Revenue about £200,000 a year. The Cave House is returning to the Treasury about £12,000, but according to the Estimates of Expenditure the outgoings amount to about £11,800. That expenditure would probably be for repairs and improvements. We ought to envisage a tourist department under a Minister that would produce in the first instance about a quarter of a million pounds a year, something as good as the return from the Fremantle Harbour Trust, but gradually increasing until it became here as in Canada the greatest industry in the country. I do not desire to over-stress the details of what might or could be done. I wish to say that I do not mean that a Minister for Tourists should be appointed who would hold no other portfolio. The Minister for the North-West has many portfolios, but he could also hold the portfolio of Minister for Tourists. The tourist business should be taken away from the control of the Premier's Department, so that the proposed Minister could devote his time and attention to potential money-winners for the State. He should be able to advocate large expenditure where it is desirable for useful and suitable public works, not works of the

bread and butter type, but works that would bring in revenue from tourists.

If I can induce the House to go with me as far as I have gone and support that which I am aiming at, then what might be started in a very small way could grow with the years to a large and powerful asset for Western Australia, with its delightful climate and its natural advantages. These are known to all of us and there is no need for me to stress them. In that way the State would be acquiring far more financial stability than it is likely to gain in the future if we ignore this opportunity which we have had before us for so many years. I said many things last session on this subject and I shall not repeat them today; they are in "Hansard." I may add that perhaps this motion might not have been necessary had it not been for the caution of the member for Albany, who last session was prepared to agree to the motion I then submitted, but would not allow the words "the Paris of the southern seas" to remain in the motion. Had those words been retained, all that I have now said might have been avoided, because it was that lure which gave the motion its attraction. I hope the House will see the tremendous future there is for Western Australia if we start to sell our climate and scenery to the world.

**MR. STUBBS** (Wagin) [5.2]: I desire to say a few words in support of the motion. Western Australia contains a third of the area of the Continent of Australia and it is very sparsely populated. My memory goes back many years when I used to travel constantly by ship to the Eastern States. That was before the trans-Australian railway was constructed. Many of my fellow passengers were proceeding to Tasmania in order to enjoy a holiday in a cool climate. Very few of those passengers had been in the South-West of this State; they had not seen Albany or the beautiful surroundings of Denmark and Nornalup, and they told me they were taking a holiday to recruit their health. When I told them of the advantages of those places, they assured me that sooner or later they would visit them. By so doing, they would not only have saved a lot of money, but would have spent what they did spend in Western Australia and not elsewhere. May I suggest, in all seriousness, that greater attention be paid to the motion than

has been paid to this matter in the past by other Governments which have controlled Western Australia?

Our population of less than half a million souls is scattered over a huge area. Had this been any other country, there would have been 20 or 30 families where now there is only one. Unless each member of the Chamber wakes up to the fact that we must increase our population, then all I can say is that we shall not be doing our duty. I have no wish to delay the House with a long speech, but I earnestly implore members to consider that we have a heritage in Western Australia second to none, practically undeveloped. In my opinion, Western Australia is the brightest gem in the British Commonwealth of Nations, but it has never had a fair deal. Our avenues of taxation are being taken from us and unless we wake up it will only be a very short time when unification will be staring us in the face. That makes me feel perturbed, because from past experience I know that where the preponderance of votes is, that is where the money collected by taxation will be spent. Western Australia's relationship to the Commonwealth at the present time is parlous; we have only five representatives in a House of 75 at Canberra. Will any member challenge my statement that we will in a very short time be merely a mosquito on a bullock's horn when it comes to sharing in the expenditure of public moneys under the control of the Commonwealth Government? I have lived a long and active life in Western Australia—50 years. During that time my one aim has been to try to be a humble cog in the wheel of progress of the State. That is my excuse for asking members, to the best of their ability, to make Western Australia better known in the future than it has been in the past. I am heartily in accord with the remarks of the member for Claremont on the motion.

**MR. SHEARN** (Maylands) [5.12]: The member for Wagin struck the right note when he said there was no necessity to make a long speech on this motion, with which I agree in substance. I am not prepared, however, to explore some of the avenues that the member for Claremont suggested. Primarily, my reason for supporting the motion is that I believe—and in this I am

sure every member of the Chamber will be in agreement with me—we are now about to enter upon an economic situation involving a general review of the Government of this State. This is an appropriate time for the member for Claremont to introduce an aspect that will be associated with any worthwhile plan for assuring to Western Australia its full measure of the prosperity which Australia as a whole must of necessity enjoy in the future with the other nations of the world. The member for Claremont referred to the fact that some time ago local authorities were asked, among other things, to submit a programme of works which they considered to be urgent and which would come within the category of essential jobs in the post-war period for the purpose of employing labour.

It seems to me that, as a result of war conditions and the curtailment of public works throughout Australia, the Minister controlling the Department of Industrial Development could comfortably control our public works activities. I do not want to be misunderstood in saying that. I have the utmost respect for the great energy of the Minister for Industrial Development, who now is also Minister for Works. I suggest the time is fast approaching, if it is not already come, when the work of the Minister for Works will be a full-time job for him or for his successor. But I also suggest that tourist activity could well be carried out by a separate Minister for Industrial Development. It is well known that trade follows tourists and therefore, with all due deference to the member for Claremont, I think it would be better for the Minister for Industrial Development to undertake this duty than for the Minister for the North-West to do so. The two departments are closely related, and what one has to bear in mind is the direct revenue which would be returned to the Government from our tourist activities.

Other countries much more progressive than we have been early discovered the advantages to be derived from tourist traffic; and consequently I hope that the Government, if it has any plans in this connection, will let the House know what they are. In fairness to the member for Geraldton, I wish to say that when he was Premier he did all he could to popularise the State as a resort for tourists, but the war broke out and his activities had to be temporarily suspended.

He was on the right road, however. We have now reached the stage when we should exploit every possible avenue to attract tourists; the other States have already done so—they took the steps upon the cessation of hostilities—so we are starting behind scratch. If any State in Australia needs to advertise its potentialities it is this one. I hope the Government will take an early opportunity to advise the House what plans it has, if any, for achieving the general purpose of those members who will support the motion.

Western Australia should be developed as far as possible, and not in the distant future. We might gradually step up our means of developing the attractions of this State so as not only to increase the governmental revenue, but to give a general fillip to all our industrial activities. Many such concerns are contemplating opening in other parts of Australia. Western Australia, with its natural resources, merely requires an extra boost to be given by those in charge of affairs, to achieve tangible results in the not too distant future. I support the motion.

**MR. KELLY** (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [5.17]: I support the motion because of the freedom of discussion that it will provoke. At present we are entering upon a very important stage in the history of Western Australia. The tourist position might aptly be described as having its gates wide open. Although something has been attempted in the past, never in the history of this State has such a wonderful opportunity been afforded us to advance the tourist position. It is pleasing to notice that that is apparently well in the knowledge of the Premier because in his Budget he has allowed for appreciable increases in the allowance that has been made in connection with tourist activities in the past few years. I notice that the Tourist Bureau will be able to give publicity to the tourist attractions of this State by virtue of the fact that in the expenditure of £1,850 a large amount can be used on tourist propaganda for this State, and it will be possible for that propaganda to be extended to the other States and oversea.

Now that the world is in a transition period, conditions of travelling will, undoubtedly, be foremost in the minds of many people who have been bottled up for a number of years. The eyes of many of

these people will be turning to the possibility of lengthy tourist trips to various parts of the world. The time is now very opportune for the tourist potentialities of this State to be brought vividly before such persons. The motion has a great amount of merit because such an important adjunct to this State should not be relegated to lesser lights in any department. By bringing our tourist activities directly under the control of the Minister, who would have many other duties of course, the best interests of our tourist trade would be brought into the right perspective. The amount on the estimates for expenditure in this connection will give our tourist activities a great boost, but I think the allowance could be more generous. No doubt as time goes on and the importance of these things becomes clearer the amount can be added to in some way to enable the Minister, if appointed, to do justice to the requirements of the State. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

**MR. HILL** (Albany) [5.20]: I have much pleasure in supporting the motion. We might well follow the lead of South Africa. One of my hardy annuals is to advocate the appointment of a Minister for Transport. In South Africa all transport activities, including the Tourist Bureau, are under the Minister for Transport. He is the best Minister to handle tourist affairs because our transport activities will directly benefit by our tourist trade. Therefore, a properly managed and administered transport department could more easily deal with the various tourist activities. I am afraid that Western Australia has, up to date, neglected one of its most valuable assets, namely its tourist attractions, which we can continually sell but never lose. Two hours ago I was showing over this building an ex-Commonwealth official, a man who held a very important position in this State until his retirement. As we stood at the back and looked over the beautiful city of Perth he mentioned how he had met a friend some time ago coming from Europe, and this friend raved about the beauties of Perth, and said, "You are not advertising what you have." This local man said to his friend, "You are going to Sydney. When you return tell me what you think of it." When that man came back to Perth he said, "There is



nothing in the East that will compare with Perth." Last year I objected to Perth being tacked on to a motion then being discussed because we should, when dealing with our tourist activities, make them State-wide.

Mr. Cross: What about the beauties of Albany?

Mr. HILL: We do not want to boost up any particular activity. We are a Western Australian Parliament, not a Perth Parliament nor a Great Southern Parliament.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HILL: When I travelled East some five years ago the only posters I saw were some that were bought and paid for by the townspeople of Albany. A few months ago my son, who was undergoing training in the Air Force as an air gunner, had his training stopped, and he took a trip to Sydney. He wrote me a letter in which he said, "I have had a good look around Sydney. I walked over the bridge, rode over it, trammed over it, and have gone under it in a boat. I have gone to the beaches here and the people have asked me what I thought of their lovely beaches. I had to be truthful, and I told them that we had beaches that knocked theirs into a cocked hat." There is not a beach in Australia that compares with Nannerup, which is only 10 miles from my home, and it is only one of many wonderful beaches in Western Australia. Incidentally, I have some literature published by the people of Albany. If the State of Western Australia had done as much for itself as Albany has done our tourist trade would be one of the best advertised in Australia today. I know of no State that has so many advantages. In the North we have Geraldton, a wonderful winter resort and a fine fishing centre. In addition we have Yanchep, Busselton, Bunbury, Yallingup, Albany, and other places right around to Esperance.

Hon. P. Collier: What is there extraordinary about Busselton or Bunbury?

Mr. HILL: They have very nice attractions. Bunbury might be termed the Brighton of Western Australia.

Hon. P. Collier: Albany is all right but not Bunbury or Busselton.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HILL: I did not hear what the hon. member said. I sincerely hope the Government will take notice of this motion and establish a Ministry so that there will be a Minister who can handle all our tourist activities. I can remember that some years ago I came to Perth in June. One night I had nothing to do so I went to a picture show. When the advertisements were shown one was worded, "See Yanchep." Well, Yanchep is only one of our tourist attractions. The next slide showed a picture of "Miss Yanchep," a motorbus attached to the Tourist Bureau, and advised the public to "Tour the State by Motorbus." I thought then that if we had had a live Tourist Bureau we would have seen advertisements with these words—"Use our railways. Go to Albany to get out of the cold and wet." Joking aside, I feel that our tourist attractions have been neglected too long, and I was pleased to hear the Premier announce that the tourist vote was to be increased. I am sure that every penny so spent will be repaid, directly and indirectly, many times.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [5.26]: This motion anticipates the debate on the Estimates, and I suggest that the discussion that has taken place should more properly take place on the Estimates, which set out the expenditure. The kernel of this motion is not so much the discussion of the tourist trade and how it should be conducted, but that it should be under the control of a Minister. There are more important industries in the State than the tourist industry that should be under the control of one Minister. We know how important the coal industry is to Western Australia.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I do not think there is anything about coal in the motion.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I am giving reasons why it is more important for the mining industry to have one Minister in charge of its affairs than to have one Minister administering the tourist industry. The same thing applies to railway and transport administration, to education and to other departments that are fundamentally important to the State.

Mr. North: They all have Ministers.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Yes, and so has the Tourist Bureau.

Mr. North: Which Minister?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The Minister who administers the Tourist Bureau.

Mr. North: Two Ministers attend to it.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: In many cases Ministers have two or three important industries to administer. Railway administration and transport are both more important than our tourist activities. Also mining, education and public health are more important. If we are to have only one Minister dealing with a particular department these industries are of much greater importance than our tourist trade. I do not propose to discuss, on this motion, what should be done with our tourist trade. If the motion is passed I do not think it will be carried into effect. Therefore, I do not propose to vote for it. I think education is of outstanding importance and that one Minister should give his sole attention to it. The same thing should apply to other of our important industries. First things should come first. We must attack realities and face up to things as they are, and deal with matters in their order of precedence. I am, therefore, not going to discuss the question of our tourist trade on this motion, but what the motion states, namely, that a Minister should be appointed for this purpose. Members know that there are other industries of greater importance than the tourist industry, important though it might be. Members representing country electorates will admit that the development of our lands and agriculture is more important than the development of our tourist trade. It would be preferable to have a Minister dealing with land and agriculture alone than to have him interested in a number of other activities as well. That would certainly be preferable to having a Minister solely concerned with tourist traffic. I oppose the motion.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascayne) [5.31]: The member for Middle Swan struck a note that I intended to sound, because the motion in its present form is quite illogical and out of all proportion. As a matter of fact, effect could not be given to it if it were agreed to. I could, by wearying the House, mention at least 25 different departments that come readily to mind which would involve more work than a Minister in charge of tourist operations could possibly be expected to be concerned with, even if he exploited every attraction that Western Australia possesses from the standpoint of tourist traffic. The authority of such a

Minister for developing our attractions, the ministerial control involved and the administrative requirements would not be great. On the other hand the organising requirements in connection with the activities under such a Minister would represent a job of a full-time character for the man appointed to the position. He would have to plan, arrange, collect, write, inspire and do everything that a person occupying the position of director of tourist activities would be expected to undertake. His position would be quite different from that associated with ministerial control.

I could go further than the point made by the member for Middle Swan. As one who has served in several ministerial capacities, I say that the Premiership, the Treasury and Housing should constitute three separate portfolios, and further that Employment, Works, Water Supplies, Labour and Town Planning could all call for separate portfolios with much greater merit than that attaching to any claim that a Minister should be appointed to take charge of tourist matters only. In saying that, I am not in any way belittling the importance of the tourist traffic. Some of those who have spoken to the motion were not in the Chamber to hear the comments I made during the Budget speech with regard to the expansion of tourist activities. Not having had the advantage of perusing "Hansard" yet, they may not know what I said in that connection. I informed the Committee that the Government had in mind, and intended to carry out, a plan for great expansion and encouragement of the tourist traffic.

My predecessor in office in the immediate pre-war period had built up the operations of the Tourist Bureau to the highest peak it ever reached, and the expansion included the opening of an office in Melbourne. With the outbreak of war, all such activities were retarded and restricted down to the smallest amount that has ever been spent on the encouragement of tourist traffic in Western Australia. The plan that will shortly be put into operation involves, first, the appointment of a very able person to the position of director—not at any mean salary, either. That plan will be given effect to in weeks, or almost days. The responsibilities of that officer will be very great and most important—not ministerially great. The task con-

fronting him of collecting material for publications, the bringing of existing publications up to date, the designing of such publications, the preparation of letterpress associated with them and so forth, all call for the early appointment of a very able person to assume control of that aspect.

I would go so far as to say that publicity, both from within and without the State, is at present at a very low ebb, and, whether it be in respect of the Agent General's office in London or of any public department, due to war causes and other reasons there is not available to the general public or to inquiring persons who may be either anxious to travel in this State or even be residents of the State, the information that should be readily accessible to them. All that is being looked into at the moment. Although the member for Albany supported the motion as it stands, he stated that he thought the Minister for Transport should be the Minister in charge of the Tourist Bureau. If he thinks that he cannot support the motion.

Mr. Hill: I explained that afterwards.

The PREMIER: As I mentioned previously, if we agreed to the motion in its present form, we could not possibly give effect to it—so why carry it? Let members rest assured that every activity of government will be attended to in its proper and rightful place, and the income derived from the tourist traffic will be devoted to promoting that phase of the State's activities.

**MR. HOLMAN** (Forrest) [5.37]: I was pleased to hear the Premier's statement regarding what is to be done in connection with the development of the tourist traffic in Western Australia. In moving his motion, the member for Claremont undoubtedly did not take into consideration all the matters that would be involved and certainly the motion itself is entirely different from the explanation he gave of its purport. On the wording of the motion, it certainly implies that the tourist activities should be under the administration of a separate Minister, and that view was adopted not only by some members but by the Premier himself.

Mr. North: There are only two activities today—Cave House and the Tourist Bureau.

Mr. HOLMAN: If Cave House is the only activity engaged in by this State, and is the only interest occupying the attention

of the Tourist Bureau, I have gravely misunderstood the position. I certainly do not think I have misunderstood it at all. Our forests constitute an attraction for tourists quite as much as Cave House.

Mr. North: I mentioned that.

Mr. HOLMAN: Fortunately, the Minister for Forests is also the Minister in control of Cave House. There are various other directions that could be availed of for the development of the tourist traffic and the Minister for Transport would be involved in any improvements effected in that regard. Certainly the member for Claremont did not explain the purport of his motion to my satisfaction. I commend him for the interest he has displayed in connection with the tourist traffic, for the promotion of which he has always been a keen advocate. As to the remarks of the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie, who said he was pleased to see an increased vote for the Tourist Bureau this year, although this is not perhaps the appropriate time to discuss the Estimates, I think that as the matter has been mentioned I would be excused for pointing out that the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie has hardly studied the position.

The reason for the decreased vote during the war period was that it was not possible to continue the tourist activities at that time. Prior to the war, the vote had been increased and for the financial year 1939-40 it was approximately 50 per cent. higher than the allocation for the preceding year. To my mind, the publicity that the State has enjoyed during the war period is certainly comparable with that secured during the pre-war period. Although the money we could desire was not made available by the Government, for obvious reasons, still, the publicity in fact enjoyed by Western Australia during the war period was greater than ever before.

Mr. North: Quite true!

Mr. HOLMAN: We have had a far greater number of advocates, to give voice to the praise of our beauty spots. We have advocates in our own girls who have married Allied servicemen. If they are true to the country of their birth, they will provide in foreign lands much of the publicity that is needed. Allied servicemen who have visited this State and have been treated so generously by its people will also be favour-

able in their comments about the State and its attractions. We are fully aware of that fact because of the letters of appreciation and thanks that have appeared in the Press from time to time. Quite a number of prisoners of war who arrived by H.M.S. "Maidstone" have visited various parts of the State. I had the pleasure of meeting some of them in my electorate a few days ago, and I know that many have visited Harvey, Bunbury and other centres. They have been greatly impressed by what they have seen, and they also will be advocates of the tourist attractions of this State on their return to England. In these circumstances, the war has not necessarily upset the prospects of the tourist traffic in this State.

There is another aspect. Because of transport restrictions, many of our own people have been unable to journey to the Eastern States and necessarily have had to spend their holidays here. Probably for the first time in our history we have been able to force our own people to take advantage of the attractions of their own State. They, too, I believe, now having had the opportunity to see the wonderful potentialities of the State, will be advocates for an extended tourist traffic. Any member of this Chamber could talk for hours on this subject, even were he to confine himself to areas within his own electorate. He could stress the importance of the publicity angle so far as the tourist traffic is concerned. I could stress not only our timber industry, in which so much interest is taken by anyone who sees the activities going on in those areas, but could also refer to our orchards, the beaches, and every other part of my electorate. I know I am straying from the motion, but I trust I have strayed to a good purpose.

If the member for Claremont has done nothing else he has done a service by allowing me and other members to say what we think should be done concerning tourist activities, and what has been done. I feel I cannot agree to the motion as it is worded, and will be obliged reluctantly to vote against it. On the other hand, I congratulate the hon. member on the interest he has shown in the question generally.

**MR. NORTH** (Claremont—in reply) [5.46]: I did not move this motion in an endeavour to outwit the Estimates. When

we are dealing with the Estimates we cannot adequately discuss a question of this kind. We can only move to reduce an item by £1, and we are unlikely to get any decision from the Government concerning the issue of the tourist traffic generally. I am indeed glad to know from the Premier's remarks of the action he is taking, which in a sense, fills the bill. The wording of the motion does not indicate that a Minister for tourist traffic should be appointed. The Delphic oracle is a long way from here, and we in Opposition have to be very careful what we say. We have so little power to do anything. We have to creep along; I hope not crawl. The motion has been moved by an innocent and humble member of the ruck, not even of the Opposition, but from a back bench on the Opposition side of the House in the endeavour to get something done. The motion says—

The tourist industry is of sufficient importance in the future of the State to warrant control under a separate Minister of the Crown.

I agree with the Premier that the same thing could be made to apply in the case of the railways.

The Premier: Read the motion again and stress the word "separate."

Mr. Holman: Explain that word, will you?

Mr. NORTH: In due course! This motion is quite as important and useful for the railways. The same motion could be moved in respect of that undertaking. There are members on this side of the House, whatever the Government may think, who say there are not enough Ministers today to do all the work that requires to be done.

Mr. J. Hegney: I agree with you there.

Mr. NORTH: The Delphic oracle again! We have to be so careful on this side of the House. It is said that it is outrageous on our part to ask the Premier to agree to appoint another Minister.

The Premier: Would you support an amendment of the Constitution to make that possible?

Mr. NORTH: Definitely, and the same could be said of other members. I know that is not altogether germane to this issue, but it arises out of it to a certain extent. If the motion, or this pious conviction, were gone on with, the Premier would have to appoint some Minister. I would welcome

that. I think we can slightly transpose the words of Mr. Churchill and say, "Nowhere in the world are so many square miles ruled by so few Ministers." That is quite true today. What the motion aims at is—having granted that it does not bind anyone and does not seek for the appointment of a Minister for this particular purpose—to emphasise the conviction that in opinion of the House, when the Premier sees fit, he should so arrange by a simple transposition of one department that the tourist activities as a whole will all be under one Minister. It would also mean adding to the print in "Hansard" dealing with portfolios the words "and tourists," in some place where they are not now. What the Premier has promised this afternoon is very important to the people of Western Australia. They now know for the first time there is going to be a director.

The Premier: No, you could not have been here.

Mr. NORTH: I heard part of the Premier's speech about the extension of the tourist traffic. We do not hear too well on this side of the House. It is good information, however, and there is no harm in repeating it this afternoon. If the motion is thrown out it will make very little difference at this stage. If it is carried it would not even mean asking the Government to make any change in any direction, merely to stress this point.

The Premier: Just discourse on the meaning of the word "separate."

Mr. NORTH: I think also it will show the people of the State once more that the Government means business in regard to tourist activities both this year and in the future.

Question put and negatived; the motion defeated.

## **MOTION—PUBLIC WORKS STANDING COMMITTEE.**

### *As to Legislation for Appointment.*

Debate resumed from the 26th September on the following motion by Mr. Mann:—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should introduce legislation for the appointment of a Public Works Standing Committee representative of both Houses of Parliament but in which the number of members of the Legislative Assembly shall be greater than the number of members of the Legislative Council, so that no public work to cost more

than £50,000 shall be authorised unless it has first been investigated by such Standing Committee.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [5.52]: This motion asks the House to agree to request the Government to set up a Parliamentary Public Works Standing Committee. It further asks that the personnel of such committee should be drawn from both Houses of Parliament, and that every proposed public work, the estimated cost of which is in excess of £50,000, shall be referred to the committee for investigation before being undertaken by the Government. There may be a good case in support of the motion, but I respectfully suggest that the member for Beverley in his speech in support of it did not present to the House a good case for consideration. He told us that under the present system the control of public works is in the hands of the Cabinet or the Government. That is quite true and it is desirable that it should be so, because the Government is elected for the purpose of initiating and carrying into effect public works for the purpose of developing the State in regard to its production and for the further purpose of providing services of different kinds for the benefit of the people. If the Government fails in this phase of its activities then it is answerable in the first place to Parliament for its failure, and in the second place to the people as a whole when the general election takes place.

The hon. member has asserted quite wrongly that under the present system there had developed a bureaucratic control by under secretaries of departments who took charge of their respective departments. That assertion has no foundation in fact and is in effect, in my opinion, a very gross reflection upon the under secretaries of the departments concerned, and especially the Public Works Department which is the most important department of all in relation to public works. He told the House and the country that no one had the faintest idea at all about the wood distillation and charcoal-iron projects now being developed at Wundowie. That assertion was bordering on the reckless because, in fact, members of this Parliament have been informed on several occasions of the nature of the project being developed at Wundowie, and ample oppor-

tunity has continuously been available to members in debate and by way of question to obtain any further information they require at any time in connection with this matter. Furthermore, statements have been published in the Press from time to time for a long period setting out the broad principles of this project and a great amount also of the details in connection with it.

The member for Beverley said that a Government official had gone to England in connection with the proposed South Fremantle power scheme with a free hand to go on with the business. That is not so, nor was it so at any stage of the proceedings. When the South Fremantle power scheme proposals were developed the Government decided to send the most suitable officer available on the technical side to England for the purpose of ensuring that the best arrangement possible would be made to obtain the plant and equipment necessary to the successful establishment and subsequent successful operation of the South Fremantle power scheme. That officer had not a free hand to do whatever he liked, or decided or thought was best. He had to maintain continual contact with the Government, partly in a direct way and partly through the Agent General for the State in London, and he was in almost continuous contact and in frequent discussion with the Agent General in London in regard to the whole of the transactions that had to be carried out there in connection with the proposals.

It was stated by the member for Beverley that the State was committed to the expenditure of £6,500,000 in connection with the proposed standardisation of railway gauges. That is not so. The State is not committed to any expenditure at all in connection with the proposal except minor expenditure involved in connection with the survey of the line from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle.

Mr. Thorn: What about telling us more concerning it? Where does the £200,000,000 come in? Who is going to share in that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Which £200,000,000?

Mr. Thorn: The amount was published in this morning's paper.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Works will address the Chair.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: All I say is that the Government has not yet agreed to the expenditure of any money of any consequence in connection with the proposal for the standardisation of the railway gauge.

Mr. Thorn: It looks as though you will be thumped into it, though!

Mr. Mann: Wait till your Minister gets back!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Toodyay—and perhaps even the member for Beverley—may think that we will be thumped into it—to use the very descriptive word of the member for Toodyay—but I can assure them that we will be thumped into nothing.

Mr. Thorn: Good! That is what we want!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We will not even be thumped into anything the hon. member may want to thump us into.

Mr. Thorn: That is all right. Do not worry about that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We will look into any proposal put up, from every angle, and will make a calm decision on the facts of the case. So every member of the House can take the assurance that the Government is not committed up to the present to the expenditure of money of any consequence in connection with this proposal; nor is the Government committed to the proposal.

Mr. Doney: The Government would bring the matter before the House before it came a decision, I take it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think it would.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the Minister to address the Chair and never mind interjections.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am trying to address the interjectors through the Chair. The member for Beverley also deplored emphatically—I think he really believed he was right in what he said—that the new Perth Hospital should not have been located where it is located. It may very well be that if he knew all the circumstances in connection with the matter, his view in that regard would be different. I carry my mind back a few years to the time when the Government proposed to use a portion of Government House grounds as a site for the erection of new public offices.

There was a very great outcry at the time. I think it would not be abusing the English language to describe the outcry as terrific.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: As an uproar!

Mr. J. Hegney: Almost hysterical!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It came not only from within, but also from without Parliament. But it was finally decided by some of those who protested the loudest that the proposal of the Government was soundly based and desirable, and that it should be proceeded with.

Mr. McDonald: You will have the same experience with the Claremont gaol site, I suppose.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Beverley next dealt with the question now introduced into the debate by the Leader of the Liberal Party; namely, the proposed site for the new metropolitan gaol. It is true that there has been a fair amount of outcry, a great deal of it inspired by people for different reasons, some of them having a very incomplete knowledge of the circumstances.

Mr. Doney: The public has little opportunity of knowing all the circumstances beforehand. They certainly do not know what the Government knows. That is the trouble.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is quite true that the public generally cannot have the same complete information about a proposal as is possessed by the Government; but the Government seeks all possible information before making its decisions; and, as I said earlier, the Government is answerable to the public. If the Government makes a blunder, it does not expect any mercy from either Parliament or the public.

Mr. Thorn: They will still vote the ticket; do not worry about that.

Mr. Mann: My word they will!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think the fact that the present Government has been in a position to hold the confidence of the public of Western Australia for so long is a fairly sure indication of the soundness of the Government's judgment, speaking in a broad and general way.

Mr. Mann: What a most astounding statement! Absolutely!

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It is a fact.

Mr. Mann: What an extraordinary imagination!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Beverley made the weird claim that the appointment and operation of the proposed committee would remove from the political life of Western Australia the decided slur that is now upon it. He did not give any further explanation of what he was talking about in that regard; but I suggest to him and to every other member, and to the public also, that there is no decided slur upon the political life of Western Australia at present; nor do I think there has been one in all the years past in the political history of this State. The hon. member wound up his speech by stating that the deliberations of the proposed committee would be free from the taint of party politics.

Mr. Mann: Perfectly true!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Here again, he did not give us any elaboration of what he intended to convey by that wide sweeping generalisation.

Mr. Read: He is working our way.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It may be, as suggested by the member for Victoria Park, that the hon. member is moving in the direction of becoming an independent member of this House.

Mr. Thorn: Did not the Minister support a similar committee in South Australia when he was a member of that Parliament?

Mr. Mann: That is an embarrassing question!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No it is not; the interjection is not even appropriate.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister should take no notice of interjections.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I want to say that during my period in the Parliament of South Australia the question of supporting or opposing this proposal never arose.

Mr. Mann: A very short period!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think it would be a mistake for a committee of this kind to be established. It is true that in some of the States of Australia a committee of this kind is operating, but there is a wide divergence of opinion in the other States as to the wisdom of having a committee of this kind.

Mr. Doney: It was considered here about 15 years ago by this Parliament.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is a committee of this kind operating in South Australia somewhat along the lines proposed in this motion. That applies also to the Commonwealth and to Tasmania. In Victoria, the question of submitting a proposed work to the Parliamentary Public Works Standing Committee there is entirely discretionary to the Government. The Government of Victoria, by Order in Council, may, if it cares to, submit to the Public Works Committee of that State the responsibility of investigating a proposed public work. It will therefore be seen that in Victoria the Government retains complete control. If the Government does not want to submit a proposed work to the committee, it is not submitted.

Mr. Doney: Having once submitted it, does the Government abide by the committee's decision?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. I think the decision of the committee, as in all States, is merely a guide to the Government. I do not think that in any State a favourable decision by a public works committee automatically compels the Government to go ahead with the project.

Mr. Mann: There is no proposal of that kind in this motion.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not suggesting there is. I am replying to the remark of the member for Williams-Narrogin. In New South Wales there was in operation for some years a committee of the kind proposed in this motion. It operated for a considerable period; but since 1930 it has not operated, which means that for 15 years successive Governments in New South Wales have not thought it desirable to seek the aid of the committee. That is very important, because it establishes the fact that a big State like New South Wales, after having had practical experience of this method, abandoned it. In Queensland they had a somewhat similar system to the one proposed for this State. Their committee was not described as a parliamentary standing committee on public works, but as a Royal Commission on works. That Royal Commission consisted entirely of members of Parliament, so that in fact, and for all practical purposes, it was the same as a public works standing committee. That Com-

mission was used for some time; but as the years went on, it was used to a lesser and ever lesser extent, until finally the Parliament of Queensland passed an Act for the development of public works on a different basis altogether.

The system developed in Queensland is very much along the lines of that now operating in Western Australia, except that our system does not have behind it, as is the case in Queensland, the full force of an Act of Parliament. In Queensland, the principal man today is the Co-ordinator General of the Queensland Public Works organisation. We in Western Australia have a Director of Works in the person of Mr. Dumas. To a very large extent, he carries out in this State the same duties as are carried out in Queensland by the Co-ordinator General of Works. So here again, in Queensland, as in New South Wales, Government and Parliament have moved away from the idea of a parliamentary public works standing committee. Therefore, if we take the three main States of Australia—the three biggest States, which would be carrying out the greatest quantity of public works, both in number and magnitude—we find that the parliamentary public works standing committee is not favoured. In Victoria it is entirely discretionary to the Government as to which, if any, proposed works are to be referred to the committee. In New South Wales, the standing committee has been abandoned entirely, because no works or proposed works have been referred to it since 1930; and in Queensland, they have moved away to the operation of a system very much the same as the one we ourselves operate in Western Australia.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The operation of a committee of this kind could seriously delay the putting into effect of public works proposals that had been developed and approved by the Government. A great deal of the time of the officers concerned in the development of works proposals is taken up in the investigations necessary before a proposal reaches a stage where it can be put forward for Government approval. If, after that, a proposal has to go before a standing committee, it is certain that a considerable amount of time will be taken by that committee in carrying out its



investigations. I think that committee would be especially careful to carry out the closest possible investigation to make sure that the proposal put forward was, beyond doubt, desirable and possessed of sufficient merit to warrant the committee giving its approval to it. In carrying out those investigations not only would the committee seriously delay the proposal but, in addition, it would use up a considerable amount of the time of the main technical officers of the Government. That would mean that far less proposals would, in the aggregate, be developed during a particular year, or the Government would of necessity have substantially to increase the number of its officers in the departments concerned. In my judgment both those points are strong arguments against the establishment of a committee of the kind proposed. Delay could have serious consequences at a time when it was to be avoided at all costs.

We might, for instance, have a very dry season in Western Australia, necessitating the development of works proposals as quickly as possible for the purpose of having them put into operation either to provide work for men who had been rendered idle because of drought conditions and lack of national income, or because of the desire of the Government to put into operation works such as water supplies in order that future dry seasons might not have such serious consequences. In such circumstances it would be necessary to have the proposals developed as quickly as possible, and approved by the Government and put into operation without any delay or loss of time. If such proposals had to go before the proposed committee considerable time would be lost, and that would be disadvantageous to everybody concerned. Another time when delay of this kind could be extremely serious would be a period when trade depression or something of that nature had come upon the State. In such periods unemployment develops substantially, almost overnight.

Mr. Doney: Those urgent works could be exempted, by arrangement.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Say the Government finds that the number of people for whom it has to provide work has increased from 5,000 to 20,000 in a short period.

Mr. Mann: This committee would sit continuously. It is not intended to be a spasmodic committee.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In a situation of that sort the officers of the Government would be called upon to develop proposals for public works as quickly as possible, and the Government would be anxious to consider and decide on those proposals without any unnecessary loss of time. If the Government was under the necessity to refer each such proposal to a committee, and that committee was bound to investigate each proposal thoroughly, it can be seen just how serious and how tragic a situation might develop before the necessary steps to deal with it could properly be taken. I think there are many strong arguments against the setting up of this committee and not many, if any, strong arguments in favour of setting it up. It is conceivable that the establishment of a committee of this kind could limit the initiative of a Government regarding its public works policy.

A Government would frequently be in considerable doubt as to when a works proposal which it had approved, and which it was willing and anxious to take the responsibility for putting into operation, would be carried out. I think it is undesirable to have any Government placed in that position. Under our Parliamentary system a Government has to carry the responsibility for the initiation and carrying out of works. If this committee were to be set up and operated it might be thought that it would share with the Government responsibility for any works that the committee itself recommended but, in the final analysis, that would not be so in fact. The Government would still be held responsible, and properly so, by the people of the State. I think it cannot be shown that the public works policy of this State in the past, under all Governments, has been below—in quality, foresight or statesmanship—the public works policy of any other State in Australia.

Mr. Doney: What about the cost, in some cases?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On the question of cost, I think the works carried out in this State would generally compare very well with works carried out in other States of Australia.

Mr. Doney: Generally, but not in the case of the Canning Highway, for instance.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is easy for someone in this State to pick out a certain work that has been carried out in

the past and to say that the cost of carrying out that work was excessive. Cases of that kind can be cited, and similar cases could be cited in the other States, and on a much larger scale than in Western Australia.

Mr. Doney: That is agreed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Therefore any comparison in that regard must be broad and general, and must not rest upon particular instances which might be picked out to suit the argument being put forward. In the early post-war years I think it is essential that our public works programme should be put into operation without any unnecessary delay. At the moment no one can foresee the employment necessities, even to the extent of three months ahead, to say nothing of what they might be 12 or 18 months ahead. The Government should therefore be left with a large amount of freedom and initiative to develop, and where necessary to put into operation, public works undertakings. If the Government is to be hampered on the point of delay in putting works into operation when they have been approved by the Government, that, as I explained earlier, could have serious consequences, not only in the years ahead but in the almost immediate future.

The Government is prepared to take complete responsibility for its public works programme, partly because we know that in the employ of the Government of this State we have officers, both administrative and technical, who are not only skilled and reliable but who, in addition, take a very wide view of the State's requirements. It is fair to say that their vision is not limited in any respect, and the result is and has been that works proposals have from time to time been developed for establishment in practically every part of the State where population exists. The post-war works proposals, which will be put into operation when manpower is available, will be carried out in almost every part of Western Australia, including the North-West. So I ask members to vote against the motion. I think I have given sufficient grounds to justify members in doing so. All of those grounds are important, some of them extremely important, especially those dealing with the question of using up a considerable amount of the time of the technical and administrative offi-

cers associated with the development of works proposals, and in connection also with the vital question of delaying the putting into operation of works considered by the Government to be both desirable and necessary.

**MR. McDONALD** (West Perth) [7.46]: I must express regret at the attitude of the Minister. It appears to me to be a conservative one, although I am in agreement with him to the extent that I do not like the latter portion of the motion. I do not think that we would be justified in preventing the Government from proceeding with a public work unless it had first obtained the consent of the proposed committee after an investigation. With the Minister, I feel that the Government must assume responsibility, and whether such a committee approved or disapproved of a proposed work, it would be for the Government, in the last analysis, to go ahead with it or abandon it as Cabinet thought fit. If the latter part of the motion were eliminated, I venture to suggest that the arguments advanced by the Minister would largely disappear.

We are extremely conservative in relation to the procedure of this House. I think we should be prepared to try new forms and methods by which the work of this Chamber might be made more effective. I believe that the proposal of the member for Beverley is a new method by which the experience of the House might be usefully devoted to ensuring that we get the best possible kind of public works in this State for the money available. We have the testimony of members from both sides of the House in South Australia as to the value they attach to a similar committee in that State. It is true that Victoria may not make very much use of its public works committee; it is true also that in Queensland and New South Wales such committees, for reasons that are not very clear, seem to have fallen into desuetude; but the Commonwealth makes very full use of the committee method. The Commonwealth has a number of committees, such as the Broadcasting Committee, the Social Security Committee, the Public Works Committee and other committees on which it places great reliance for the preliminary work of inquiry and investigation before it introduces legislation. Those committees

play an important part in the question of determining the works and the legislation introduced into the national Parliament.

In relation to very large public works involving large expenditure, there is an absence of systematised discussions in this House. We find announcements in the Press as to what is being done regarding large-scale public projects, often before any announcement is made in this House. On the Estimates and on occasions when matters can be suitably introduced, we admittedly have statements by Ministers as to projects in hand, but I believe other members will share with me a feeling of a certain lack of knowledge. Take, for example, the very large works contemplated at South Fremantle, about which Mr. Taylor has recently been to England. I confess that I have not read the statement made by Mr. Taylor on his return, and therefore I might be speaking without the knowledge I should have, but I take it we have virtually signed a contract for an expenditure involving perhaps £2,000,000. There has been no discussion of any particular volume in this Parliament as to the site of the proposed works, of alternative sites, or of the nature of the services and the expenditure on the services that these works are going to render.

I do not know whether we propose to continue to call ourselves a deliberative assembly. In the House of Commons, continuous statements are made by the Prime Minister and responsible Ministers in their week-to-week meetings as to what the Government has in mind. In relation to social security proposals, Mr. Morrison made a very full statement as to what the Government had in mind, not what it had made up its mind to do, but what it was turning over in its mind, and invited members of the House of Commons to express their views. Having heard what members had to say, the Government issued an official booklet setting out its proposals. By those means the House of Commons functions as a deliberative and responsible assembly.

During the war, the Commonwealth had the Advisory War Committee. I suppose if there is any matter upon which decisions have to be made with extreme promptitude, it is one associated with the conduct of a war. Yet the national Government of Australia thought the advisory committee had a value and continued it throughout

the period of the war. If the Commonwealth had not felt that the committee had a real value, I presume it would have been discontinued very promptly. That is a case where delay might be far more serious than it could be in the case of public works. I will go so far as to say I do not think the Government should be debarred from entering upon public works of urgency until it had received the approval of the committee, but if the concluding words were deleted from the motion, I would ask members to try something new for a change in the way of securing effective service from members, increasing the value of their contribution and increasing the information and knowledge they would have in advance of important projects in this State.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And instruct the delegates to the Loan Council and the Premiers' Conference meetings.

Mr. Mann: We might do some good there, too.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We might.

Mr. McDONALD: The member for Guildford-Midland, I believe, is on my side, and what he says contains a large measure of truth. These conventions like the Premiers' Conference have grown up under the pressure of war and economic conditions, and are superseding to a large extent the functions of the State Parliament and even of the Commonwealth Parliament.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Hear, hear!

Mr. McDONALD: This is an innovation which might be justified, but I venture to say it should be very carefully watched by what are called the people's representatives in Parliament. If we had such a committee, it would be a medium by which members of both Houses would get earlier information as to what was proposed at Premiers' Conferences and Loan Council meetings and members could make a contribution that would assist our representatives—the Premier and Ministers—when they went to Loan Council meetings or Premiers' Conferences. At present there are many big problems confronting us. Housing represents an immense project; there are water supplies on which we propose to expend millions of pounds, and there are other projects in our loan programme, and so far the opportunities for discussion in this House or of gaining knowledge of the details have, I venture to say, been meagre. Most mem-

bers will join with me when I say that we are in a position of disadvantage when we meet our constituents and the public in that we are able to give so little exact information. The proper place for us to hear this information is in Parliament or through some Parliamentary committee. If the member for Beverley is agreeable to an amendment being moved by a colleague of his to delete the latter portion of the motion, I am prepared to support it.

**MR. SEWARD** (Pingley) [7.57]: I was more than disappointed at the speech of the Minister for Works. I had hoped that he might at long last have given Government consent to the proposal. This is by no means the first, second or third time that the matter of establishing a public works standing committee has been brought before the House. I point out to the Minister that I am not concerned about the advising of the Government nearly so much as I am concerned about the advising of Parliament. If we take the Minister's speech, then the obvious result might be that as soon as a general election were over, the party on this side of the House could be told, "You will not be wanted again until the next general election is due; we have been elected and intend to run the whole show." That is what it amounts to.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You have to face up to that position.

**Mr. SEWARD**: That is the position. The member for West Perth mentioned the construction of the power house at South Fremantle. What member on this side of the House knows anything about that project, except what has been given out from time to time by the Government that the scheme is to be carried into effect? Last session I mentioned that the cost of this work would be about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  millions. I believe I was corrected and told that the amount would be  $1\frac{1}{2}$  millions, but I heard today that the cost is going to be  $2\frac{1}{2}$  millions. Parliament is entitled to some investigation of this work before it is undertaken.

There is the question, also, of the Great Southern water supply scheme and the South-West power scheme. In connection with the South-West power scheme we had an investigation by Royal Commission, but we know nothing about the Great Southern water scheme. I believe this is a matter

that requires the closest investigation by some small committee such as is proposed by the member for Beverley so that when the matter comes up for discussion—if it ever does; things never seem to come before Parliament until they are half constructed or we are irrevocably committed to their construction—we shall be in possession of the requisite information. An investigation should be made to give the public proper information with regard to the work that is going to be carried out, and also to see that the cost of the work is kept within reasonable bounds. At present, no member on this side of the House knows what the works are to cost, or even what they are estimated to cost. It is only when the works have been completed and the State gets the bill that members on this side of the House learn the amount involved.

The Minister raised the question of Wundowie. I have been guided by the Government and rely upon its statements that these works are proving successful. We all hope they are, but, as the Minister interjected, all I know about Wundowie is what I have seen through a railway carriage window, and that is all I have seen of Wundowie. I have had no other opportunity, so must rely on the Government's statement that it is a sound proposition. I would say, however, that the work has been going on for a long time and that the progress has been very slow, extraordinarily slow, so slow that as I pass Wundowie twice a week, I look out of the window to see if I can observe whether there has been any improvement or advancement on the previous week. As the Minister mentioned a few nights ago, an officer is abroad making investigations into the latest developments in that type of work, in order that we might have the latest methods adopted here. I should think that such an investigation ought to have been made before the work was commenced, in order to prove to the Government that it would be successful.

That is the kind of work which I take it the committee proposed by the member for Beverley would carry out. The Minister made great play of the fact that such a committee would hold up everything; that everything would have to be held up until the committee made an investigation and that consequently we do not want such a committee. He might just as well have said

that we do not want a fire brigade; because what use would it be training firemen when a house was on fire? Nobody would suggest that the committee would hold up any work in the event of a calamity such as the one to which the Minister obviously referred. I mean the depression time, when there was a crying need to put works in hand immediately. Those works could not be delayed; we all know that. What we are concerned with, however, are projects that come up from time to time and are estimated to cost large sums of money. These should be investigated by a committee, so that when Parliament meets and the matter comes before it, members will have something to guide them in the way of an all-party statement.

Obviously, when a Minister introduces a Bill he gives all the information from his particular point of view, that is, from the point of view of the Government, but there is the side of the other party to consider. The other party may consider that if two works are to be carried out, one outweighs the other. That is a matter which Parliament ought to investigate. There is another work which it is proposed shall be carried out, the wheat terminals at Fremantle. I would like to have considerably more information on that matter than I possess at present before the works are undertaken. However, I think that is a Commonwealth matter; at least I hope so. If it is not, however, I want a lot more information on that particular work also. Then, as the member for West Perth indicated, there is the railway gauge question. I do not know what to make of it. The Government says it is not committed to the work, but a report in this morning's paper indicates that it is. I hope we will get the truth very shortly. I am not struck by the ending of the motion because, as I said, I am not so concerned about the committee reporting to the Government as I am about its reporting to Parliament. I therefore move an amendment—

That the words "so that no public work to cost more than £50,000 shall be authorised unless it has first been investigated by such standing committee" be struck out with a view to inserting other words.

I think £50,000 is a little high; the lower amount, £30,000, would in my opinion, be quite sufficient to confine the investigations to. Parliament would thus have all the information obtainable about the works to be

carried out. I hope it will be possible for the motion to be carried; because, as I mentioned before, we at present on this side of the House know nothing about what work the Government proposes to embark upon. We see a notice in the Press that works like the South Fremantle power station, or the works at Wundowie, or water works, are to be carried out, and when we meet our constituents we are asked about them. We then have to confess that we know nothing about the works, and in turn are asked what we are in Parliament for. The fact that whether or not some of the other States have discontinued referring such matters to a committee, I think has nothing to do with the question. These States may have good reasons for discontinuing the inquiries; in this State, at all events, I think they are necessary. I hope the Government will not remain adamant, and that the committee will be appointed.

**MR. MANN** (Beverley—on amendment) [8.6]: I have no objection to the amendment; in fact, I think it improves the motion considerably. I sincerely hope the Minister will approve of it. That is all I have to say on it. I shall reply to the motion if the amendment is defeated.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—on amendment) [8.7]: I think I can be as brief as the member for Beverley has been on the amendment. All the arguments I used against the motion apply equally against the amendment.

Amendment (to strike out words) put and passed.

**MR. SEWARD** (Pingelly) [8.8]: I move an amendment—

That the words "such standing committee to inquire into and report to Parliament upon projected public works which are estimated to cost more than £30,000" be inserted in lieu of the words struck out.

Amendment (to insert words) put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	..	21
					—
Majority against	..	..			8
					—

## AYES.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver  
Mr. Hill  
Mr. Mann  
Mr. McDonald  
Mr. McLarty  
Mr. Needham  
Mr. North

Mr. Owen  
Mr. Read  
Mr. Seward  
Mr. Shearn  
Mr. Thorn  
Mr. Doney  
(Teller.)

## NOES.

Mr. Cross  
Mr. Fox  
Mr. Graham  
Mr. Hawke  
Mr. J. Hegney  
Mr. W. Hegney  
Mr. Hoar  
Mr. Holman  
Mr. Johnson  
Mr. Kelly  
Mr. Millington

Mr. Nulsen  
Mr. Rodoreda  
Mr. Styants  
Mr. Telfer  
Mr. Tonkin  
Mr. Triat  
Mr. Willcock  
Mr. Wise  
Mr. Withers  
Mr. Wilson  
(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Question put and negatived; the motion, as previously amended, defeated.

### BILL—SUPREME COURT ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

#### Second Reading.

**MR. McDONALD** (West Perth) [8.13]: in moving the second reading said: This Bill proposes, with the consent of the House, to reduce the rate of interest on judgments of courts from the present rate of 8 per cent. to the rate of 5 per cent. In this State interest on judgments of the Supreme Court was provided for by an Act of 1842 (6 Vict., No. 15, Section 5), which prescribed a rate of interest on judgments of the Supreme Court of 10 per cent. per annum. In 1900, by an Amendment Act (No. 27 of that year) the rate of interest was reduced to 8 per cent. on judgments of the Supreme Court. By an amendment of the Local Courts Act, 1904 (this amendment being made in 1930, No. 35 of 1930, Section 7), the provision regarding 8 per cent. interest per annum on judgments was applied to local court judgments which exceeded £100 in amount. When we consolidated the law in the Supreme Court Act of 1935 we provided by Section 142 that—

(1) Every judgment debt shall carry interest at the rate of eight pounds for every hundred pounds by the year from the time of entering up the judgment until the same shall be satisfied, and such interest may be levied under a writ or warrant of execution on such judgment.

(2) This section applies to a judgment in a local court except where the amount of the debt claim or demand allowed by the judgment does not exceed one hundred pounds.

I think the House will agree with me that a rate of eight per cent. per annum on judgments is out of line with current rates

and with the times. In England the rate of interest on judgments is four per cent. per annum by virtue of the English Statutes 1 and 2 Vic., Chap. 110, Section 17, and the Rules of the English Supreme Court of Judicature Order 42 Rule 16. The rates of interest on judgments of the Supreme Courts of the other States are as follows:—Victoria eight per cent., the same as this State; South Australia seven per cent.; New South Wales five per cent.; Tasmania five per cent.; Queensland five per cent. unless the document sued upon otherwise provides. In England the rate of interest on judgments is four per cent. and in most of the Australian States it is now five per cent.

This Bill proposes that in our State the rate, in future, will be five per cent. I do not think it is necessary for me to add much to what I have said, except one or two words on the matter of principle. When a judgment is recovered for a sum of money in a court of law and it is not paid, the reason for the non-payment is almost always that the debtor at the time has not the money with which to pay. In those circumstances it will be agreed, I think, that if such a man should find his debt increasing at the rate of eight per cent. per annum he has imposed on him a very substantial hardship. At the same time, the rate must be sufficient to represent an inducement to him to endeavour to pay the debt, otherwise he might prefer to avoid paying it for as long as possible in order to obtain the benefit of the money in his own hands at what might be regarded as a low rate of interest. I think, therefore, it is desirable to suggest a rate of interest of five per cent. in line with the opinion that has prevailed in New South Wales, Tasmania and Queensland.

By Section 16 of the Interpretation Act if the law is altered, as we would be doing in this case, it is not to affect any right accrued prior to the date of the alteration. If, therefore, the House sees fit to pass this Bill, people who have judgments unsatisfied will be able to claim eight per cent. per annum up to the time the Bill is passed, and thereafter five per cent. per annum. In the case of future judgments the rate will be five per cent. per annum from the time such judgments are entered in court. This is a Bill that does not need to be enlarged upon. I think members will agree that in these days to penalise a debtor by adding

to his debt at the rate of eight per cent. per annum is something we should not do.

Mr. J. Hegney: Why did not you reduce the interest rate to what it is in England, namely, four per cent.?

Mr. McDONALD: The suggestion of four per cent. is quite reasonable. I gave some consideration to a reduction to four per cent. but, on the whole, rates of interest tend to be slightly higher in Australia than in England. I thought that I might accept the judgment of the majority of the other States whose Parliaments have fixed five per cent. I also thought that we should not have a rate of interest so low that it would be advantageous to the debtor to postpone, as long as possible, the payment of his judgment debt, or to avoid that payment. It seemed, therefore, in all the circumstances, that five per cent. was an improvement on the existing law and, at the same time, a rate that would be some incentive to the debtor to discharge, as soon as possible, the amount he owed under the judgment. We must bear in mind that the amount owing under the judgment may be needed by the judgment creditor, and it may be a hardship for the judgment creditor not to receive the money. That money, for example, might represent a claim for wages or, if the amount is a large one, for damages for serious injuries suffered through the negligence of the defendant in some motor accident. I therefore considered that while we should reduce the rate from the present exorbitant figure we might do well to have the rate of five per cent. which would create some incentive in the judgment debtor to meet his liability as soon as he could. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

### **BILL—MOTOR VEHICLE (THIRD PARTY INSURANCE) ACT AMENDMENT.**

Returned from the Council without amendment.

### **MOTION—SOLDIER LAND SETTLEMENT.**

*As to Proposed Legislation.*

Debate resumed from the 12th September on the following motion by Mr. Thorn:—

That in view of the facts—

- (a) That a large number of members of the Forces have been discharged and are continually making inquiries as to land settlement conditions;
- (b) That particulars of such conditions cannot yet be given to them notwithstanding that some of the inquirers have been discharged for nearly three years—

this House views with alarm the failure of the responsible authorities to put into effect schemes applicable to such settlement, and calls for an immediate announcement that necessary legislation will be placed before the House this session so that there will be no prospect of such delay and risk of failure as will be likely if the announcement is deferred until the approach of the time when the bulk of the members of the Fighting Forces will be seeking repatriation.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [8.22]: I support the motion and I hope the House will pass it by a substantial majority, thus indicating to the Government that, in the opinion of the House, more rapid progress should be made in the matter of settling on the land our returning ex-servicemen. When speaking to this motion a few nights ago the Minister for Lands stated that the State and Commonwealth Governments were prepared only to move slowly in view of the disastrous effects of two of our land settlement schemes in the past. It is very wise to proceed cautiously, but not necessarily slowly in a matter of this kind. I would like some evidence to show that any progress at all has been made. It seems to me that those engaged in this matter of a land settlement scheme for returning ex-servicemen are busily engaged in cleaning up the carriages of the train of rehabilitation without paying any regard to raising steam to get the train in motion. It is many years now since we had talks on plans for land settlement for returning ex-servicemen. No reasonable person can maintain that both the State and the Commonwealth Governments have not had ample time to bring those plans to a stage where we might expect them to be put into operation.

I know it is claimed that the State Government is hampered by the fact that there is no Commonwealth legislation—or if there is now there was not until a few days ago—dealing with this matter. But that excuse does not absolve the State Government from blame because it is responsible for the welfare of the citizens of this State, and we now have a substantial number of ex-servicemen unjustly penalised by reason of the fact that

there is no scheme of land settlement for them. The State Government knows what the Commonwealth proposals for land settlement are in general terms. If the Government has evidence that the citizens of this State are being unjustly penalised because there is no land settlement scheme in operation here, then obviously it is the duty of the State Government to tell the Commonwealth authorities, in unmistakable language, that there has to be a scheme and that if the Commonwealth Government does not get on with the job the State Government will have to do it itself. I think I have indicated, on previous occasions, that not only one, or even a few, but many instances of returned soldiers being penalised, have occurred.

I mentioned a case that came to my notice two or three years ago. In that instance, a man wanted to take over a property offered to him. He met me only last Saturday, and he asked me if any progress had been made, and if there was any scheme under which he could take up land. I said, "No." He said, "It looks as though I shall have to go to Perth and get a job." I met a friend in St. George's-terrace only a fortnight ago, and he said, "Is there any land settlement scheme for the returned soldier?" I told him there was not. He said, "I met the son of a friend of mine and he asked me the same question and I told him that there was not, and that the best thing he could do was to go to the Public Works Department and ask if he could get a pick and shovel job. He was told that that department was not putting on any men." I had even a worse case than that. A young married man in my electorate was discharged from the Forces. He wanted to take up land. There was no scheme available for him, so he leased a property. He asked me if I could do anything for him. He had spent what savings and deferred pay he had and he owed his storekeeper £60 for provisions. He had applied for assistance under the Repatriation Act and been refused.

I saw the Repatriation Department, which treated my application as an appeal, with the result that he was granted sustenance for six months for himself and his family, and given a loan of £250 to buy stock. His position was desperate; he owed the storekeeper £60. I talked to the storekeeper who suggested that out of the loan of £250 he should buy some sows because he would get a quicker return from them than from anything else because, owing to the excessively

wet season, what little crop he had would certainly be a failure. If he put on sheep, he might get a little wool, but pigs were the quickest means of getting revenue. When we asked the Repatriation Department if he could spend any of the £250 to buy feed for the pigs, the reply was, "No."

The last I heard of this case was that the man owed £75 to the storekeeper. His sustenance will come to an end in another four months and there is very little in the way of proceeds this year. I have no hesitation in saying that I can see nothing for that unfortunate man than for him to walk off his property, stone-broke and dispirited. What is the use of our talking of promises to returned men when that treatment is meted out to them? It is enough to break anyone's heart. If the Commonwealth Government has not the interests of these men at heart and will not pass legislation, then let the State Government call for a meeting of the Loan Council and force it to grant the finance necessary to put into operation a scheme in Western Australia. Let us do something for our citizens if the other States will not help us.

Here is another case: A man came to me yesterday from away out in the far eastern part of my electorate. Before he went to the war, he had a farm, a property of about 3,000 acres, of which 1,700 acres were cleared. He has 600 or 700 acres of fallow. He told me that unless he could get money to enable him to repair his machinery, he could not harvest his crop. I sent him to Mr. Taylor to see whether anything could be done for him there. Such cases are becoming so numerous that the House would be very neglectful of its duty, in my opinion, if it did not pass a motion such as the one moved by the member for Toodyay. It is all very well to talk about starting secondary industries and employing men in them, but what are we going to do with the products of secondary industries unless we have the people here to purchase and consume them? We cannot send the products of secondary industries oversea or anywhere else on account of the freight charges and so forth. We must have population here to consume them, and that population must be people settled on the land. If anybody came to me and asked my opinion as to whether he should go on the land, I would unhesitatingly reply, "No, not at the present time under the conditions now existing." Life on



the land is wonderful and affords great opportunities, but the hardships, trials, and disabilities are so great that a man, in my opinion, would not be justified in taking up land now unless something were done for him.

When listening to the wireless a few days ago, I heard a statement that members of the New Zealand Forces would all be back in the Dominion by next Christmas. I do not know what Christmas it will be before all our men are back, but whatever Christmas it may be, we must ensure that there is something for them when they do get back. The member for Mt. Marshall, when speaking to the motion a few nights ago, gave some interesting information regarding New Zealand's treatment of returned soldiers. He told us that the number of men placed on farms with the aid of rehabilitation finance was 955, and that 133,000 acres had been acquired by the Crown under the Small Farms Act. Yet we have not even got an Act. All we can say to our men who are returning is, "There is nothing for you."

I hope that the Government, if it cannot make the Commonwealth authorities get a move on, will take some action for putting a scheme into operation on the responsibility of the State. If necessary the Government could approach the Loan Council in order to get the requisite money. We owe this to the citizens of our State who are coming back from the war and expect to find some provision made for them. I have pleasure in supporting the motion and sincerely hope that it will be carried.

**MR. HOAR (Nelson)** [S.33]: I have listened to quite a number of speeches made by members opposite in support of this motion. With other members, I am equally anxious to see that a sound land settlement scheme is brought into being, but I consider that much care and thought must be given to the many complex problems associated with successful land settlement and that we would be foolish if we took any action in the way of hasty legislation.

It is all very well for members of the Opposition to utilise an opportunity like this and, through the subject-matter of the motion, endeavour to set the Government up as an Aunt Sally and throw bricks at it. That is not good enough. The experience of soldiers from the first World War should have taught members of the Opposition that

we have to be far more careful on this occasion in framing our legislation for the years to come. There is too much at stake to warrant our taking unnecessary risks. If a similar percentage of ex-service personnel apply for land after this war as that which applied after the first World War, there will be approximately 54,000 men and their wives and families whose lives will be influenced for good or ill by the amount of care and careful handling of legislation in respect to soldier land settlement.

I should have thought that the experience of soldiers after the 1914-18 war, who entered upon land high in hope and resolve, would have caused the Opposition to hesitate before bringing such a motion before the House. The report of Mr. Justice Pike, which was issued in 1929, furnished some very interesting information on the experiences of ex-soldier settlers. He stated—

Up to the year 1927, just a few short years after the experiment had started, comparatively speaking, 29 per cent. of soldier settlers had abandoned their holdings and the total cost to the taxpayers of this country at that date was no less than £23,500,000.

The position did not improve to any great extent after that; in fact, it deteriorated, until we can say that the accumulated cost of land settlement to the taxpayers of this country by 1943 was no less than £45,000,000. All this disillusionment in a personal sense and heavy capital loss in a national sense was brought about mainly because Governments of the day did not have the courage to stand fast behind their convictions but instead capitulated to the type of propaganda contained in the subject matter of this motion.

**Mr. Mann:** What are you talking about? You were not here and do not know what has happened.

**Mr. HOAR:** One of the greatest requirements of statesmen and members of Parliament today, including the member for Beverley, is high courage—courage sufficiently strong to withstand the attacks of ill-advised public opinion.

**Mr. Mann:** I suppose that is not propaganda.

**Mr. HOAR:** There are thousands of soldier settlers who have lived to rue the day when ill-considered legislation on this matter was brought into being. Pressure groups were established and grew, newspapers got behind the scenes, and probably unwise poli-

ticians in those days joined in the general clamour for land for the soldiers. The soldiers were granted land, but at what price? In the circumstances that existed in those days, according to my reading of the history of this settlement venture, there were limited areas of Crown land available, and the consequence was that large estates had to be purchased for subdivision, and the purchase price of those estates was not set by the representatives of the people, but was determined by the landholder-speculators of that day. Because of the high price ruling for farm products and because of the incurable optimism of people that such high levels would continue indefinitely, an entirely fictitious set of land values was brought into being that bore no resemblance at all to the productive capacity of the soil and, as a consequence, the fact of soldier settlers having to bear the cost must have been a contributing factor to many of the failures of that time.

The Rural Reconstruction Commission, in its second report, speaks of the inflated prices of land. An authoritative witness, in the course of evidence, made the following statement:—

It is possible for the debt on a farm to be actually more than 100 per cent. of its real value for the following reasons:—

- (1) Inflated land values due to the demand for settlement purposes. If the Government, in order to provide land for soldier settlement, is forced to purchase land for subdivision, it will probably have to pay more than the land will subsequently be worth, as when a Government or anybody else goes into the market to purchase large quantities of land, prices become inflated on account of the demand created and later on a re-action sets in when the demand lessens.
- (2) High prices ruling for primary products immediately after the war. Experience has shown that for the few years following the last war, peak prices were obtained for most primary products which also helped considerably to cause a boom in land values, but this boom burst later when prices became deflated.

There is no doubt in my mind that the same situation could very easily exist today unless great care was taken to overcome it. The problem of land values will have to be grappled with now that this war is over. As members know, I believe that even today, in spite of the large areas of land that are known to be under the control of

the Crown, those that are available for settlement or could be made available for settlement are exceedingly limited. It is quite possible that the Government may yet be faced with the decision of having to buy large tracts of land for further subdivision.

The Premier: There is no doubt about that.

Mr. HOAR: I know quite well, so far as forest country is concerned, that in utilising Crown land the expenditure would be far too heavy to be borne either by the individual farmer or by the taxpayer. We know quite well, from our experience of the group settlement days, the heavy expenditure incurred in bringing that particular class of country to a state of production; almost £50 per acre was needed to clear it in order to bring it to that point of production. Bearing that in mind and knowing also that even in the Crown land which is not so heavily timbered and so more easily cleared the fertility of the soil in quite large areas of that land is known to be unsuitable for settlement, heavy capital expenditure would be needed to bring it up to a point where a settler could confidently be placed upon it. So I say there is every evidence today to indicate that the Government will almost be compelled to a large extent to acquire estates in order to cater for the requirements of ex-servicemen, so far as the land is concerned.

We know that in preparation for the return of our men the Government today is investigating and improving the many vacant holdings that are scattered throughout the State, and there is no doubt when these have been brought up to the point where they may safely be made available, then they will be made available to suitable applicants. When the demand for that particular type of land has ceased, and assuming there is still a demand for further settlement on behalf of our returned men, then I say that, so far as the subdivision of these large estates is concerned and their purchase, the Government should make certain this time that the price of the land does not inflict a burden on the man who hopes to get his living from the land, and that the Government should in fact state a pre-war year for price determination. The demand for anything increases its price, and I believe that this

governmental control should be exercised also over machinery and general farm equipment, all of which after the last war brought a burden to the shoulders of the soldier settler which he afterwards found himself quite unable to meet.

In my opinion, there should also be a better selective supervision over the purchase of stock. We all know that after the last war, because of the high prices ruling then for butter-fat, many of our ex-soldiers decided to go on the land and take up dairying. But apparently it was not enough to inflict upon them excessive capital expenditure of such a character as to make it quite impossible for them to meet it; but some were also given cows which were not of dairy breeds at all. In many cases the cows were physically defective. In fact, it has been said by many of my personal friends who have had experience in this matter that, as long as a beast had a leg on four corners and looked like a cow, it was declared to be a cow. There is no question at all, whichever way one looks at it, that the soldiers were given a bad start after the last war.

Mr. McLarty: Where are they going to get dairy stock in future?

The Premier: Get some of our big cattle owners to breed heifers and sacrifice the profit on steers. That would be a good thing for the Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The Premier: It is the profit that counts.

Mr. HOAR: We should take care that no more exploitation goes on so far as the soldier settlers from this war are concerned. True, we have been led to believe that, from the financial point of view, the settler who will come under the new settlement scheme probably to be brought in shortly, will not have to worry so much about his financial commitments as did the soldier of the last war. We are told that certain general principles have been drawn up and agreed to between the Commonwealth and the States; and it appears that that portion of the farmer's debt which exceeds the productive capacity of his land will be borne partly by the Commonwealth and partly by the State concerned, in other words the general taxpayer again. And the extent to which the general taxpayer this time will be called upon to foot the bill is determined entirely by the careful investigation and planning

given by the Government to the settlement conditions of whatever scheme it has in mind. I say if anybody—no matter whether he be an Opposition member or some person outside this Chamber—is prepared to put his head down and charge like a bull at a gate over this matter, that is no reason why we on this side of the House should follow such an unwise example.

During the course of this debate the member for Beverley—unfortunately absent now—had something to say. I listened with care—and with interest to some extent—to what he said. He told us that there was nothing wrong with the motion and that we could all vote for it; and then, to upset his logic, he proceeded to explain to us just why we should not vote for it. He instanced the results of the last war and the heartbreaks of the soldiers who came back and settled on the land. He told us all that, and then said we could all vote for this motion! He urged and pleaded with the Government to take every care possible to see that those conditions did not recur.

Mr. Mann: You are not logical in your remarks.

Mr. HOAR: That is what the Government is doing today. It is taking all the care humanly possible to ensure that the conditions ultimately to be drawn up and offered to every applicant are such as to give the greatest possible opportunity for success on the land. How the member for Beverley can reconcile his argument with his obvious intention of voting for the motion, passes my comprehension and is probably only known to him.

The Minister for Works: Not even by him!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HOAR: The member for Mt. Marshall, in an otherwise interesting speech, made in my opinion a fatal mistake when he advocated unlimited land settlement. During his remarks, he instanced the disorganisation of agricultural industries that has occurred in Europe and elsewhere as a result of the war.

Mr. Doney: Did he use the word "unlimited"?

Mr. HOAR: I will tell the hon. member exactly what he said.

Mr. Mann: You are in a pessimistic mood.

Mr. HOAR: He quoted the conditions in various countries, and said that there had been no over-production but under-consump-

tion and, because of this, he said, "I hope there will no limitation of land settlement." I stand corrected; but the meaning remains the same. In discussing this situation in Europe, he definitely stated there was no over-production but colossal under-consumption. He also went to the extent of referring to conditions in Australia many years ago. He mentioned the number of people in this country—probably he was referring to the depression years when people were definitely living below the bread-line standard—and indicated that as an argument in support of the expansion of land settlement in this country. I point out to the hon member, and to members generally, that at the time of which he was speaking, when there were 1,250,000 people living in this country on nutritional standards that were considered by the authorities to be far below normal requirements at that time, we were producing enough wheat to feed a population  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times the size of ours and enough wool to clothe 100,000,000 people for 12 months. There were butter, cheese, milk products, meat and fruit in excess of our local requirements; and I say this: That if our people were going short of food, and clothing, and other necessities of life at a time when they were producing more than they could consume locally—

Mr. Mann: And there was a Labour Party in power—

Mr. HOAR:—that is no argument for the further expansion of land settlement in this country. Rather is it an argument in favour of a complete overhaul of our system of distribution and of the financial system that controls it, an argument that has always been opposed by opposition parties whenever human values have conflicted with financial interests and power. It is true there is an argument in favour of feeding Europe's present starving millions. It is a serious situation; and I believe that wherever food and clothing can be found, it should be sent to those people to the extent to which shipping space is available. I say also that the agricultural activities of those people have been suspended only as a result of the war, and to use this short-term demand in an attempt to capitalise the present unhappy situation and assert that that condition is going to remain constant for Australian producers, is inviting disaster to the very people this motion seeks to support.

It is said that no limit should be placed on land settlement. I contend that the limit must be determined by the capacity of the home and external markets to absorb our produce at payable prices. It is true that the home market could be improved. The thought of 7,000,000 people occupying a continent of this size is patently absurd; and we can improve the position probably partly by natural means, but mainly by immigration. We find, however, that if we were to institute a migration scheme permitting 100,000 people to enter this country each year, we would still have, in 1960, a population of approximately only 10,000,000 people; and, so far as the productive capacity of that year is concerned, we would find that there would still be tremendous over-production of wheat and wool. Also there would be an exportable surplus of butter, cheese, milk products, currants, sultanas, and apples, and the only new production for local consumption needed would be in respect of potatoes, citrus fruits and pig meats, and those only on a very small scale.

So it can be seen that the Australian demand for many years to come could not be used as an argument in furtherance of an expansion of agricultural industries in Australia or of an increase in land settlement, for the simple reason that this is essentially an exporting nation and our standards of living are largely determined by the capacity and willingness of countries overseas to deal with us and purchase our produce at payable prices. Too often in the past those prices have been insufficient to meet the normal requirements of our primary producers. As a result, 7,000,000 people have frequently been asked, or forced, or coerced—whichever term is preferred—to provide subsidies on unprofitable exports. To my way of thinking, any legislation that is going to be introduced in connection with settlement must have regard to that fact. We must ask to what extent 7,000,000 people can continue to subsidise the feeding of Europe's millions. We have done a lot now; but if land settlement is extended in this country, in course of time, when prices come down again; when they begin to collapse; and when the producers reach the stage in which they have found themselves on numerous occasions; if our produce has been increased as a result of unwise legislation, 7,000,000 people will find it impos-

sible to provide subsidies in respect to that particular kind of production.

It is true that a great demand has arisen in Europe today; but we would be foolish if we were to consider that as a permanent demand. It can be only temporary. Probably it is true that for five or six years our producers will continue to receive payable prices for their products; but when the world has again settled itself and these other countries start to come into their own again, and their efforts in regard to agriculture tend to provide much of their pre-war requirements; then there must be a lessening in demand for Australian products and there will probably be a fall in price at the same time. I want to make this point: that if our post-war land settlement scheme has been based on this short-term policy rather than on a long-range policy, development will be followed by wholesale disappointment and financial loss to the very people the Opposition claims to be representing. I consider there definitely should be no more talk of unlimited land settlement. Members opposite who represent the farming community should, in my opinion, be the very last people to advocate a policy that could lead to a blind rush to glutted markets, with resultant collapse of prices and other consequences that have been experienced in this country before.

The Premier: We have any amount of examples of repurchased estates in this country which have been written down but cannot pay rent.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Nelson will proceed.

Mr. HOAR: Our policy must be firmly based. We must make sure that it conforms with the requirements of the markets of the world and not with the wishes of the Opposition. We must take a long-range view and recognise the situation in Europe and elsewhere as a short-term situation only, and find out from our customers not only to what extent they are willing to do business with us in the present years of dislocation and stress, but how far they are willing to put their trade with us on a permanent basis in the years to come. It is quite possible that much of that information is now available. I imagine that this investigation and probing between nations will go on continually in order to find a firm base on which we can build our agricultural industries. In my opinion, if the future in-

ternal economy of this country is going to be influenced by the extensive fluctuations in price, that are largely brought about by reduction in the standards of living of people in other countries when they take a downward trend, then any proposal to expand, substantially, land settlement in this country must be viewed with extreme caution.

Mr. Seward: Tell us what you are going to do with the returned soldier.

Mr. HOAR: The member for Pingelly a few moments ago said that it was all right to talk about secondary industries, and asked what we were going to do with their products. One might well ask him what he is going to do with the products arising from an increased land settlement scheme. The argument is the same. There is room for increase in land settlement today, but it should not be blindly undertaken. Only after the most careful investigation should we extend our policy. It should not be based on our local requirements because our production is far in excess of what we need. Our policy should be based on the permanent trade relations with other nations, brought about as a result of consultations and conferences. If we fail to base our policy of land settlement on such a foundation, we are inviting the same sort of disasters and heartbreaks that were experienced after the last war.

Mr. Seward: Everyone knows that.

Mr. HOAR: A motion of this kind is just another way of setting up the Government as an Aunt Sally, and shying bricks at it. That is not a fair proposition when we consider that the Pacific war has only just ended. All our military advisers told us it would probably last another 12 months. No-one could anticipate the atom bomb, or its dreadful consequences, which so early brought to a close the Pacific war. If the Pacific war had been extended for the length of time indicated by our advisers, all the legislation for returned soldiers would have been in operation long before general demobilisation began. I see nothing of value in this motion; nothing constructive. The safest thing we can do, unless the member who moved it agrees to withdraw it, is to vote it out.

MR. THORN (Toodyay—in reply) [9.4]: I have not, for a long time, listened to such a pessimistic speech in this Chamber as

that of the member for Nelson. If the hon. member had come straight out and said he was not in favour of a land settlement scheme, he would have been more to the point. He has not, in his speech, said anything helpful to a scheme of this description. This motion is just as urgent today as ever it was, and it is wrong to state that this is rushing the scheme. This war started more than six years ago and, as the member for Nelson said, it has just finished. During the last war a soldier settlement Bill was passed and put into operation in 1917, some 18 months before the war finished. We, the legislators in this State, and the Commonwealth Government, should not wait until the war finishes before being prepared to legislate in the interests of the returning men. The Commonwealth Parliament has adjourned now with no scheme passed for the settlement of our soldiers. We have for some time been stressing the urgency of this matter. We expected that something in that direction would be done. It now looks as if nothing will be done until about next April or May.

We are faced with a very serious position. Every day we receive inquiries from men desirous of settling on the land. I would like to ask the member for Nelson, who is so keen to stress the point that the motion was only brought forward to make an Aunt Sally of the Government, if he can bring forward something better. Unless he can do that, he should not mention the matter at all. It is of national importance to this State. He referred to the Opposition bringing the motion forward. Surely this matter is of interest to members on his side of the House as much as it is to us! Surely they are just as keen to bring about satisfactory land settlement as we are! Why does he want to twit the Opposition side of the Chamber with bringing this matter forward with the idea of embarrassing the Government? That seems to be the policy right through the piece. As far as I can see, the present Government has been careful always not to embarrass the Commonwealth Government. The functions of this Government and this Parliament are to look after the interests of this State first.

Mr. J. Hegney: The Opposition should not try to embarrass the Government.

Mr. THORN: No. I was quite fair in my remarks. I paid every compliment to the Government and to the present Premier for the action he took to press this matter. He feels it is so urgent and grave that it should be continually pressed, yet the member for Nelson seems to think that the motion is premature. I said before and I repeat that all the warnings the member for Nelson gave with regard to settlement after the last war, and the mistakes then made, have been guarded against in the preparation of this scheme. I know that.

Mr. J. Hegney: How?

Mr. THORN: The member for Middle Swan should know, because a tremendous amount of work has been done in this State. Two boards have been appointed, and Mr. Fyfe has been made Director of Land Settlement. Those boards have drawn up a scheme which guards against any failures in land settlement.

Mr. J. Hegney: You said these schemes were not ready at all.

Mr. THORN: There is no legislation available and that is what we are anxious to see finalised. I do not want to dwell upon the member for Nelson, but he raised a warning against over-production because of our small population. I take it that the experts of the Commonwealth will be alive to the finances of this country, and the more we can export overseas the more we shall be able to trade with the outside world. The member for Nelson should not stress the points of bonuses for primary production and the bolstering up of primary production, because primary production has been bolstered up no more than has industry.

Mr. Hoar: I say that you cannot stand much more of it.

Mr. THORN: The point is that with a progressive Commonwealth we must have a progressive policy. The hon. member has said that we cannot stand much more of this. We seem to be standing it all right now, and I expect that we have never suffered such high rates of taxation as we are at present. If we produce goods for export by means of our primary industries—I do not think we can export industrial products—we shall lower the financial burden on the Commonwealth and thereby obviate increases in taxation. I am of the opinion—I think at heart the member for Nelson is—

that one of the best avenues for the rehabilitation of our ex-servicemen will be on the land. When we are finally faced with the rehabilitation of the returned men I think the Government will be thankful that there is a land settlement scheme in operation to rehabilitate them.

The policy of Cabinet, as expressed in this Chamber, is that the State Government is most anxious to play its part in such a scheme. If the Commonwealth Government delays much longer legislation that would give us a chance to relieve the present position, I hope the State Government will bring in legislation such as other States have, in order that we may proceed with the scheme. Though it may be said that we should wait until the bulk of our men are demobilised, there is a great number of men demobilised today—men qualified to go on the land—and the longer the present position obtains the greater will the problems facing Governments become. As a matter of urgency we should get the scheme going and get on with the job.

The Premier: What would be the prospects of the dried fruit industry taking up thousands of returned soldiers?

Mr. THORN: The position there is that for years the dried fruits industry has been dependent for its existence on the export market. When we export 70 to 80 per cent. of our dried fruits, I claim we are dependent on an export market, and the Premier can answer the question for himself. When, out of a peak production of over 100,000 tons for the Commonwealth, Western Australia produces only 3,500 tons, is there any room for an extension of the industry in this State? I say there is, though I know that at present our agricultural experts are advising the Government not to extend the industry. When Greece and other countries were in full production we were able to maintain the industry and hold our own in competition with them. They have now suffered the ravages of war and it will take them a considerable time to get back to full production.

It may be said that when those countries were in full production and we were holding our own with them we were being granted a bonus. That is so, but the bonus was so small that it had no influence on the industry and it would not have mattered had we not had it. How

far will £2 per ton on dried fruits help us? I brought this motion forward in all earnestness, knowing full well the extent of the activities of the State Government, and expecting to have the wholehearted support of this Chamber to urge on the Commonwealth Government the necessity for its bringing forward legislation straight away, so that we could settle the men on the land. I do not know what is in the mind of the member for Nelson, or whether he set out to defend the Government, but I think it can defend itself. He inferred that this motion was only brought forward in order to have a shot at the Government. It was nothing of the sort—it is directed against the Commonwealth Government. I cannot understand the way in which the Commonwealth Government has been muddling things. It would be better for the Commonwealth Government in the end if it would leave to the State Governments the responsibility of furthering this scheme. Past mistakes would not be made again, though mistakes would still be made.

We have learnt a lot from our last soldier settlement scheme and from our group settlement scheme, and I think we have sufficient experience not to repeat those mistakes. In spite of all the mistakes I think it will be admitted that those schemes were responsible for a great deal of production, and the Commonwealth benefited through the export of that produce, even if we had to write off large amounts on those settlements. The wealth of a nation exists in what it produces, in its goods, and not in the bullion locked up in its vaults. The more goods we can produce and the more markets we can find for them the better it will be for Australia. We require some planning of our production, and do not want to produce commodities haphazardly. If we analyse the markets available to us and the requirements of foodstuffs and commodities, and plan our production along those lines, so as not to over-produce, I believe the Commonwealth will make progress.

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

Ayes . . . . .	11
Noes .. . . .	20
	—
Majority against . . . . .	9
	—

## AYES.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver  
Mr. Hill  
Mr. Kelly  
Mr. Mann  
Mr. McLarty  
Mr. North

Mr. Read  
Mr. Seward  
Mr. Shearn  
Mr. Thora  
Mr. Doney

(Teller.)

## NOES.

Mr. Cross  
Mr. Fox  
Mr. Graham  
Mr. Hawke  
Mr. J. Hegney  
Mr. W. Hegney  
Mr. Hoar  
Mr. Holman  
Mr. Johnson  
Mr. Millington

Mr. Needham  
Mr. Nulsen  
Mr. Rodoreda  
Mr. Styants  
Mr. Tonkin  
Mr. Triat  
Mr. Willcock  
Mr. Wise  
Mr. Withers  
Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

Question thus negatived; the motion defeated.

### MOTION—GAOLS, ADMINISTRATION, SITE, ETC.

*To Inquire by Royal Commission.*

Order of the day read for the resumption from the 3rd October of the debate on the following motion by Mr. Hill:—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should immediately appoint a Royal Commission, including at least one person from outside Western Australia with a wide knowledge of modern methods of penology, to inquire into and report upon—

- Better methods of prison management and administration for this State;
- The site for the necessary new gaol or gaols, and the best types of buildings to suit modern ideas and ensure safe custody;
- Desirable amendments to our prison laws;
- Any other matters calculated to improve gaol conditions and to assist in the reform of prisoners who are capable of reformation without exposing prison staffs or other citizens to undue risks of loss or injury.

Question put and negatived; the motion defeated.

### MOTION—SANITARY SITE, SOUTH PERTH-CANNING DISTRICTS.

*To Inquire by Select Committee.*

Debate resumed from the 3rd October on the following motion by Mr. Cross:—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire and report on the following matters:—

- Whether that area of land, consisting of approximately 75 acres 1 rood 30 perches, being portion of Canning Loc. 37, on deposited plan 3383, lot 25, situated right on Clontarf highway, the main road between Armadale and Fremantle and against Clontarf Orphanage, is a suitable place for a sanitary site.

(2) Whether the proposed new site will be detrimental or have any detrimental effect on—

- The inhabitants of Clontarf Orphanage;
- the inhabitants of Castledare Orphanage;
- the children who attend South Como School;
- the staff and students of Aquinas College;
- the proposed new school for which land has been recently acquired, adjacent to Hobbs avenue, South Perth;
- the owners of surrounding lands;
- the construction of workers' homes on the numerous blocks of land recently acquired by the Workers' Homes Board as set out in the "Government Gazette" of September 21st, 1945;
- residents of either the Canning or South Perth Road Board Districts;
- the general progress of either South Perth or Canning Road Board Districts.

(3) Whether there are any alternative proposals which will eliminate the need for any sanitary site within both the South Perth and Victoria Park districts, within a reasonable time.

**MR. READ** (Victoria Park) [9.22]: This motion for an inquiry into the conditions that have affected the people on the south side of the river for some years asks whether the proposed new site would be detrimental or have any detrimental effect on the inhabitants of Clontarf Orphanage, Castledare Orphanage or the staff and students of Aquinas College, and in my opinion is unnecessary because statistics show that these depots have no detrimental effect upon the health of the community. The people living in the two suburbs that have this system and the people living near the depots are, according to statistics, as healthy as are the people living in any other part of the metropolitan area and served by the deep sewerage.

The Minister for Works: As healthy as the member for Canning?

**Mr. READ**: I have perused the health statistics of the Medical Department and the Perth City Council over a number of years. Taking North ward and Victoria Park ward, the infectious cases in each instance numbered 50, and in Victoria Park ward there were 33 per cent. more people than in North ward. Perhaps I had better relate what transpired in the matter of getting the Victoria Park sanitary site removed. The Acting



Lord Mayor of Perth and Councillor J. Totterdell formed a deputation which included Cr. Veryard and myself and was introduced by the member for Perth to the then Minister for Health, the Hon. A. H. Panton. We asked whether there was a site available which could be chosen by the Medical Department and which could be used for a sanitary depot.

In 1917, when the greater City of Perth scheme was decided upon, the City Council took over the depot from the Victoria Park Council. In 1934 the people who had built in the proximity of the depot began to complain. In 1940, after the establishment of the Government school on the 10-acre site approximately a quarter-of-a-mile from the location of the sanitary depot, complaints were made and were backed up by the Teachers, Parents and Citizens' Association connected with the school. All means were taken by the health committee of the Perth City Council to find a new site within the city boundaries. There was considerable agitation by the South Perth Road Board, which was in a like position to ourselves, because its sanitary site is adjacent to ours. In May, 1941, after a conference with the South Perth Road Board, the council agreed to present a joint request to the Government to grant the requisite land within the Collier pine plantation, in view of the fact that the removal of the depot was necessitated by the building of the school. On both occasions the member for Canning organised an agitation against the proposal, and so we were not able to use the locality which otherwise might have been made available.

As no suitable locality could be found for the new depot in the council's territory, representations were made to the Government to provide a site in the Collier pine plantation. This was refused. On the 13th December, Dr. Park wrote—

If it were likely that deep drainage were to be one of the post-war activities for Perth, there might be justification for retaining the present site until drainage was completed.

The Acting Commissioner of Public Health, however, served an order on the council on the 5th February, 1945, to have the site removed by the 30th June, 1945. That is the position today. We have made every endeavour to secure a site, but without the assistance of the Government it was impossible to do so. The legal aspect is that a

municipality or a local governing body may not deposit its community waste matter on the land of any other municipality without the consent of the Government. We have endeavoured in every way to find a new site, but no matter to what part of the City of Perth area we went, we would be doing so at the expense of other ratepayers, who would be then nearer to the proposed site than they are to the present site. I propose to give members an analysis of what the member for Canning said when submitting his motion. He said that hundreds of electors are actually affected. I know that that is incorrect, because no electors live anywhere near the proposed new site. Both the South Perth Road Board and the Canning Road Board at a deputation supported this motion, and no elector within the boundaries of those boards lives within two miles of where the new sanitary site is likely to be. Como citizens and the Como Progress Association also protested. The member for Canning said they were strongly behind the efforts to have a site selected in some other position, yet not one of those citizens lives within two miles of the proposed site.

Mr. Cross: Two miles?

Mr. READ: Yes. The member for Canning said that the history of the proposed new site and its location seemed to be the world's greatest secret. He started to make inquiries and said he got a clue at a meeting of the R.S.L. in Victoria Park. He followed that up by visiting the Town Planning Commissioner and so, in various ways, he ultimately ascertained that the site was Lot 25—a 75-acre block, at the far end of the pine plantation, the end furthest from the Victoria Park boundary. So far as the agitation by all these various people against the new site is concerned, I should say that it was stirred up by the publicity of the member for Canning, because he, more than anyone else in his electorate, was able to find out the location of the new site only after making several inquiries. Yet all these people immediately knew and protested against it!

Mr. Cross: They knew when I told them.

Mr. READ: Exactly! That is what I am saying. Nobody protested against the site until the hon. member interviewed the institutions and the other people who protested. Therefore, these people protested on the say-so of their member. They did

not know the actual facts, otherwise I do not think they would have taken the action they did. The member for Canning blames the City Council for the alleged neglect that has taken place over the selecting of this particular site. In stating that the City Council was remiss, the ex-Minister for Health interjected that he thought the city councillors should be shot. Had they been shot other persons, just as foolish, would have taken their place, so no good can come of that suggestion. I notice that both the ex-Minister and the present Minister for Health visited the sites. We appreciate the interest the Ministers have taken in the matter. The present Minister could have sent an inspector to make a report, upon which he would have relied; but instead, he visited both sites within the boundaries of the city area. These community waste depots are not pleasant and cannot be made pleasant, so had the Minister expected to find a picnic ground or a rose garden he would have been disappointed. Nevertheless, I think they are conducted as well as any other depot that has to be used for community waste. A brother from the Clontarf Orphanage said on the deputation that if the site was so unpleasant it should be transferred, because the boys had to live at the orphanage for 24 hours a day. I suggest it was not right for the member for Canning to worry other people with troubles that do not exist.

Mr. J. Hegney: How far is the orphanage from the depot?

Mr. READ: I have the figures. The sanitary site will be on the northern end of the 75-acre block, which is bounded on two sides by the pine plantation and on another side by scrub country. From the proposed new site to the Manning-road is 36 chains; at right angles along the road to the gate of the Clontarf Orphanage, the distance is 32 chains; from the front gate of the orphanage to the building itself is nine chains, and that is the nearest institution to the proposed new site. This proposed new site has been selected by the Town Planning Commissioner and I believe that for once he has done the right thing. On viewing all the positions that came up for consideration at the time, I think this would be the least nuisance to any residents. The hon. member made an impassioned speech in defence of the orphans. He said—

For the sake of the health of those children, the site should not be there . . . The orphans have no parents to represent them . . . They look to me to speak for them and I will not let them down.

I have been trying to tell the hon. member that there is no menace to those children. I would like to tell those who run these institutions that there will be no detriment to the health of their charges. We must remember that these orphans are in the keeping of a religious institution whose operations are world-wide and which has in its care thousands—probably tens of thousands—of orphans throughout the world, and which has been able successfully to educate and rear those children in an expert manner. The position in Victoria Park is that there are 2,600 homes with the pan system. Of that number, 1,100—that is, 40 per cent. of the total—have the sewerage system passing their residences; and yet they are not connected. However, I believe that when material and labour are available, all those people will be connected and that will reduce the users of the pan system by 40 per cent.

It is almost certain that the Government will have to undertake sewerage in every direction, because it is one means by which work can be provided which will pay for itself. I believe that the capitalisation of the Sewerage and Drainage Department is about £9,000,000, and for that outlay slightly under £750,000 is collected every year. So it pays for itself. Again, the Perth City Council has in mind the issuing of an order that septic tanks shall be put into every new building that is erected from now onwards. So we will not overload the system in that direction. There are 898 of these premises within the area next to be sewered. That is laid down by the department, and is in addition to those already to be connected. The proposition of the council is to do something—for those who cannot afford to instal septic tanks—along the lines of what was done by the Fremantle council, which sewered upwards of 500 houses.

The council called tenders, had the work done, and charged the people at the rate of £3 per year. They had been paying a pan rate of £2 per year, so to have septic tanks installed cost them only £1 a year more, and the first payment was not collected until after the tank had been in operation for

six months. If that were done, I feel sure there would be little need to shift the sanitary depot to the proposed new site in South Perth. The trouble with the present pan system has been that there has been a shortage of manpower. The blackout came upon us, and we had to revert to the day system on account of no lighting being available for lanes in the vicinity of the houses served. Then, when we were again able to use lights, the unions that had already changed to the day system absolutely refused to return to the night system, and so we were unable to relieve the situation in that respect. The position now is that the Perth City Council has been ordered out. It endeavoured to induce the former Minister for Health to allow the site to remain in the present position.

A deputation led by the member for Perth has also placed the matter before the present Minister for Health; but in each case there was a refusal. The Perth City Council has always worked in harmony with this Parliament and the State Government, and it undertook to shift that site at the request, or demand, of the Government. It wishes to honour its obligation, even though it will cost from £10,000 to £12,000 in roads and footpaths, which would be used for only a few years. That money could be spent much better on other facilities for the people, but the council feels that it has undertaken to obey the demands of Parliament and should do so. On the other hand, as the member for the district—leaving the council out of it—I would welcome an inquiry to see whether something could not be done, on the lines I have suggested; that is, to allow the present position to prevail until such time as the Government has manpower and materials available to sewer the whole place.

On motion by the Minister for Health, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.19 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Thursday, 11th October, 1945.*

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

### BILL—GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (PROMOTIONS APPEAL BOARD).

Reports of Committee adopted.

### MOTION—NORTH-WEST.

*As to Action to Restore Economy.*

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by Hon. F. R. Welsh:—

That, in view of the serious position existing in the northern part of the State, this House considers that the Government should take immediate action to restore the economy of the North Province.

**HON. A. THOMSON** (South-East) [4.35]: This motion, which asks the Government to take immediate action to restore the economy of the North, seeks to impose a rather difficult task. It is most discouraging to the people who have risked their all in the development of the northern parts of this State, to find that the population today is less than it was 20 years ago. True, it has been badly hit by drought, pestilence, wild dogs, foxes, blowflies, grasshoppers, lack of efficient shipping and high costs generally, which have all contributed to its present economic position. The people of the North deserve a much greater reward for their efforts than they have received.

It seems to me that despite modern scientific appliances, such as radios, aeroplanes, etc., the olden days of isolation meant, apparently, greater prosperity. In those times the bullock and donkey waggons were the only methods of transport. The State Shipping Service, established to assist the North, has incurred great financial losses and has not given the service that the Adelaide Steamship Co. gave over 40 years ago, when the North was served by the "Bullarra" and the "Koombana," plus the Holt Blue