The penultimate amendment seeks authority to delegate the powers of the Chief Inspector of Machinery to the Deputy Chief Inspector. The duties of Chief Inspector of Machinery are one of the responsibilities of a very busy officer—the State Mining Engineer—who is absent on official business on many occasions from head office. It is most necessary, in the interests of efficient administration, that his authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Inspector, who is a fully qualified officer and who is, in fact, actually responsible for the administration of the branch.

The last amendment seeks to alter the basis on which inspection fees are charged by the Inspection of Machinery Branch. This amendment follows a request from the Metropolitan Ironmasters' Association, who have been concerned at the high rate of inspection fees. As members are undoubtedly aware, boilers and machinery of a nature specified in the Act are subject to inspection by qualified officers who are attached to the Department of Mines, and who, as I mentioned previously, are under the control of the State Mining Engineer, who is also Chief Inspector of Machinery.

Under the Act "machinery" is defined to mean "every steam engine, motor, or other source of motive power, and every machine, shaft, belt, gearing, pulley, flywheel, lift, crane, contrivance or appliance driven by the same for any purpose, but does not include hand, treadle, wind or animal power, or the machines and appliances driven by such sources of power." Certain classes of machinery are exempted from inspection, these including railway, tramway, ship, launch, car and motor lorry engines; also traction engines other than those driven by steam, machinery driven by motors of less than one horse-power, and internal combustion and electrical engines used exclusively by agriculturists, pastoralists, dairy farmers, market gardeners, orchardists and pearlers, in their callings, and on which no labour other than that of the owner is employed.

In accordance with the present phraseology of the Act, inspection fees are assessed on old factory methods in which a number of machines were driven from a common line shaft with one engine or motor. Under these systems, in which there was a great deal of belt and gear guarding, inspection fees were charged on the motor or engine only, notwithstanding the fact that a number of machines might be driven by this motor or engine. The modern factory tendency is to dispense with line shafts and to divide machinery into individually driven units. This improvement, together with the advancement in machine design, has dispensed with a great deal of guarding.

As according to the Act, each individually driven unit has to be charged an inspection fee computed according to the housepower of the driving unit, extra charges now have to be met by owners of modern machinery. In effect, this constitutes a penalty on improvement. In the past, under outmoded methods, an owner would pay one inspection fee for a number of machines driven by a single power unit. Nowadays, with the modern equipment of a group of machinery split up into individually driven units, he has to pay a fee for each unit. This is felt to be unreasonable, and the Bill seeks to permit fees to be charged on the aggregate horsepower in the establishment, instead of on individually-driven groups. This will result in lower inspection charges and may assist in encouraging owners to invest in more modern equipment.

Finally, I may mention that, as is being done in as many Acts as possible, the provisions relating to the gazettal and tabling of regulations have been deleted from the Act by the Bill. These provisions are redundant, as they are contained in the Interpretation Act, and they are also out of date, as those in the Interpretation Act have been amended. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Davies, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.21 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 28th November, 1950.

CONTENTS.

CONTENTS—continued.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3.0 p.m., and read prayers.

BILLS APPROPRIATING REVENUE.

Personal Explanation, Hon. J. B. Sleeman.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: On a personal explanation, Mr. Speaker, I have here a cablegram from the Speaker of the House of Commons which reads as follows:—

> Your telegram not perfectly understood. Do you refer to Messages from Lords to Commons concerning a money Bill? See Erskine May fourteenth edition, page 777. Or to Royal recommendations for expenditure consequent on Bills, page 783.

On turning to page 783 and subsequent pages, I find that in most cases it is necessary to have the Message before the second reading and it must be received before the third reading. Further—

> Where a Bill affecting the interests of the Crown has been suffered, through inadvertence, to be read the third time and passed without the Royal consent being signified, the proceedings have been declared null and void.

It thus seems to me that a number of Bills have been passed in this House which should be declared null and void. There was the one which the member for Melville queried the other night, having reference to the Jubilee celebrations and there was one that the member for Melville introduced to which I think my remarks would apply. I hope the House will take note of these things. We have proceeded in a lackadaisical sort of way. I am expecting another cablegram from the Speaker of the House of Commons. It may be here before this sitting is completed; but what I have said already is sufficient to indicate when a Message is necessary. "May" says, at page 784—

> But if the matters affecting the Royal interests form the main or a very important part of a Bill it would be courting waste of time if the permission of the Crown to proceed with the Bill were not ascertained at the outset.

Then the writer goes on to say that if a Bill goes through the second and third reading stages without a Message having arrived, the Bill is null and void. Consequently, as I have said, it appears to me that quite a number of Bills which have been put through this House recently are null and void and should be submitted again because they are as if they had never been passed.

Personal Explanation, Hon. F. J. S. Wise.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: If I may make a personal explanation, Mr. Speaker: Following your ruling in the House last week in connection with the Workers' Compensation Act Amendment Bill, I wrote to His Excellency the Governor drawing his attention to the fact that during this session

a Bill for an Act to amend the State Housing Act had been passed without a Message having been received from His Excellency and that, if the decision made by you when ruling the Workers' Compensation Act Amendment Bill out of order were applied to the Bill to amend the State Housing Act, that Bill would have to be declared invalid, and it would not be legal for it to be authorised by him. I have received a reply from His Excellency to the effect that the matter has been referred to the Solicitor General and that he is awaiting an answer from him. I would like these papers to be tabled in order to show what I have done in this matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no provision for tabling such papers.

QUESTIONS.

HEALTH.

As to Mobile X-ray Unit.

Mr. SEWELL asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Is the mobile x-ray unit for T.B. detection still in operation?

(2) If the answer to (1) is in the affirmative, where is the unit now?

(3) Is it a fact that the unit travelled to the North-West of this State to test natives for T.B.?

(4) Has the unit ever been to Geraldton?

(5) If the answer to (3) is in the affirmative and that to (4) is in the negative, why could not the unit have called at Geraldton on its way to the North-West?

(6) If the answer to (4) is in the negative, when can residents of Geraldton expect the opportunity of offering themselves voluntarily and without personal expense for a T.B. check-up?

(7) On what date, and with what Government department, did the unit commence operations?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Perth.

(3) No. A special unit was sent to the North-West to test natives. This unit is not suitable for ordinary mass radiography. The survey of natives was carried out as a special investigation at the request of the Commonwealth Department of Health.

(4) No.

(5) See (3).

(6) A part-time tuberculosis officer is stationed at Geraldton. X-rays of the chest may be obtained free of charge at the x-ray plant at the Government Hospital, Geraldton. At present these x-rays are usually limited to patients with symptoms referable to their chest.

(7) First used by the Tuberculosis Control Branch at Graylands Camp, the 15th February, 1948, for migrants. An additional mass radiography unit was ordered in March, 1950, of which delivery is expected in June, 1951. It is then hoped to include the major towns, such as Geraldton, in the mass radiography service. By that time the personnel of the clinic should be able to cope with the ever increasing demands on their services.

KALGOORLIE ABATTOIRS.

As to Master Butchers' Request.

Mr. OLIVER asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Has the Government received from the master butchers of Kalgoorlie and Boulder a request for the hire for use of the Kalgoorlie Abattoirs?

(2) If so, does the Government intend to accede to the request?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied:

(1) The butchers are using portion of the cool storage space for meat bought in the metropolitan area.

(2) Answered by (1).

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

As to Introducing Amending Legislation.

Mr. McCULLOCH asked the Premier:

Following the serious depreciation of Australian currency, the high cost of living and the increased State basic wage since the State Workers' Compensation Act was last amended in 1948, does he intend this session of Parliament to introduce legislation to amend the Act further whereby compensation payments made to injured workers will be increased to a rate commensurate with the current value of money?

The PREMIER replied:

No, but as already stated the question will be considered prior to next session.

TRAFFIC.

As to Statistics of Taxi Accidents.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Police:

Arising from questions asked by me re traffic accidents in which taxicars were involved and his statement that at no time has the practice to record accidents involving taxicars separately from accidents involving other cars been adopted by the Police Traffic Department and as statistics containing similar information to that now required were given to me and reported on page 430 of "Hansard" for 1947, and the information can now be obtained by the same means as then, will he have these figures supplied for the information of members?

The MINISTER replied:

The information supplied in 1947 was obtained by a general search of all traffic accident files. There are 8,059 accident files for the year ended the 30th June,

1950. The detailed examination of these would be necessary to obtain the desired information. This would entail a great burden on the staff available and take a considerable time, and also expense for overtime.

Under these circumstances, it is not considered desirable to have the necessary statistics compiled.

BUS SERVICES.

As to Lord-street-Maylands Route.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

When is it anticipated that buses will replace trams on the Lord-street-Maylands route?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

It is expected that sufficient buses will be on hand to allow the change-over to be made some time in March of next year.

ROADS.

As to Southern Cross-Coolgardie Section.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Works:

(1) When does he anticipate that the priming of the Southern Cross to Coolgardie road will be completed?

(2) Is he aware that the long delay in completing this work is making maintenance costs on the section of main road very high, and that the travelling public continue to be greatly inconvenienced?

(3) When does he anticipate that a commencement will be made with the construction and priming of certain sections of Antares, Phoenix and Hydra-streets, Southern Cross?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) It is not possible to indicate a date when a primed road will be completed between Southern Cross and Coolgardie as there are factors outside Main Roads Department control which strongly influence the progress. There remain approximately 72 miles of road still to be primed, of which approximately 17 miles have still to be cleared and formed, while other sections have only been developed to the stage of a three-inch gravel pavement.

It had been intended to proceed with the waterbinding and priming from Southern Cross to Yellowdine, but as water restrictions have been necessary on the Goldfields Water Supply system, road construction work calling for large quantities of water has had to be postponed until circumstances are more favourable.

Between Boondi and Woolgangie it has not been possible yet to determine the final position of the road as railway deviations may be necessary in the future. It is hoped that some finality may be reached early in the New Year.

It is most desirable to have at least two winters elapse before surfacing roads that have been constructed on entirely new locations.

(2) The traffic through Yellowdine is between 30 and 40 vehicles per day and the maintenance costs per mile on the through road are not as high as those on many unsurfaced roads in other parts of the State.

(3) It was intended to complete this work in conjunction with the waterbinding of the Southern Cross-Yellowdine section. Work will be commenced when it is possible to lift the water restrictions.

EDUCATION.

(a) As to Pre-fabricated Schools, East Belmont and Riverton.

Mr. GRIFFITH asked the Minister for Education:

Will he indicate whether or not the construction of pre-fabricated schools at East Belmont and Riverton will be completed and whether they will be ready for occupation by February, 1951?

The MINISTER replied:

Documents have been forwarded to the contractors for the purpose of obtaining a tender for the East Belmont School, and it is expected that this stage with regard to Riverton will be reached within the next few weeks.

(b) As to Date of Completion.

Mr. GRIFFITH (without notice) asked the Minister for Education:

In view of the fact that the Minister's reply does not indicate whether the schools will be completed and ready for occupation by February, 1951, will he be kind enough to say so now?

The MINISTER replied:

It is impossible to give an indication in regard to East Belmont. If a tender is received quickly, the chances are, yes, but if, as happens in some cases, no tender is received, the chances are, no. In regard to Riverton, it is unlikely that the answer will be yes, because a commencement will probably not be made until about that time.

INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT.

As to Suggested Amendment.

Mr. SHEARN (without notice), asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Has his attention been drawn to a forecasted amendment to the Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment Bill in the Legislative Council which, if adopted, would seriously jeopardise the livelihood of a large number of small city shopkeepers and professional tenants?

(2) If so, will he investigate the prac-

ticability of seeking to afford a measure of protection for such cases by provision of an appeal to a magistrate?

(3) If not, will he state fully the reason?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

I can sense the difficulties that face the hon. member. I have seen the reference in the Press and on the notice paper to the proposed amendment to which, I presume, the hon. member is referring. I have no means of deciding just what will be the effect of the discussion in another place on the amendment. I cannot be sure that it will come before this Chamber, but, if it does, every member here will have an equal opportunity of stating his views upon it.

BILLS APPROPRIATING REVENUE.

As to Re-introduction.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN (without notice), asked the Premier:

(1) Is it his intention to take any action to deal with the ruling that stands at present, that any time during a session is good enough for a Message to be received?

(2) What does he intend to do with regard to a number of Bills that have gone through and are affected?

(3) Is he going to leave them as they are and make a feast for the legal men during the next 12 months, or will he have some action taken to rectify the mistakes that have been made by the House this session?

The PREMIER replied:

Only one Bill that I know of is affected, and it is proposed to re-introduce that Bill.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Which year?

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: There are more than one.

The PREMIER: The Attorney General has the matter in hand. He has been conferring with the Crown Law authorities and, if action is necessary, it will be taken.

ARGENTINE ANT CAMPAIGN.

As to Supplies of D.D.T.

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

(1) Has her attention been drawn to the statement appearing in last night's paper that the Argentine ant week which began on Sunday had turned out to be a squib, because supplies of D.D.T. and other materials necessary for the control of the menace were badly organised?

(2) If so, will she try to step up the organisation?

The MINISTER replied:

It has not been badly organised. An exceptional quantity of D.D.T. has had to go out and a few chemists have not yet received their quota, but the position will be remedied within the next 24 hours.

PRICES.

(a) As to Statement on Conference Proceedings.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE (without notice) asked the Attorney General:

Has he any information to make available to the House in connection with the conference of Prices Commissioners, which he attended on behalf of Western Australia, on Friday last?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

The proceedings of the conference were fully reported in the Eastern States papers and, therefore, I presume in the Western Australian papers. If there is any point which any hon. member would like clarified, I shall be only too pleased to explain it.

(b) As to Items Re-controlled.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke (without notice) asked the Attorney General:

Could he indicate the number of decontrolled items which are again to be placed under price control in this State?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

I am speaking now from memory. The main series of goods that it was decided to re-control were those which had a lead content in them, namely, paints and allied articles. The other item that I can recall was breakfast foods. The reason in each instance is that it was felt that some check on the manufacturing side of these items should be considered.

MEAT.

As to Select Committee's Recommendations.

Mr. GRAHAM (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Has the Government yet given consideration to the report and recommendations of the Select Committee that inquired into the meat question?

(2) If so, with what results?

The PREMIER replied:

No, the Government has not yet given consideration to that report.

HOUSING.

As to Effect of Widow's Eviction.

Mr. MAY (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Is he aware that a widow, Mrs. M. Bell, of Johnston-street, Collie, is being evicted?

(2) Is he aware that this means that at least three employees will have to leave the coalmining industry on account of no alternative accommodation being available to them?

(3) Is he aware that an application made by this widow for a Commonwealth-State rental home to accommodate these employees has been refused?

(4) Is the attitude of the Housing Commission in this regard in line with Government policy to increase the number of employees in the coalmining industry in order to increase the State's output of coal?

The MINISTER replied:

I thank the hon. member for having informed me this morning that he was going to ask this question. I have examined the relevant file from back to front. The case of this applicant has been considered by the Collie Advisory Committee, which on two occasions has rejected the application. The application was further considered by a full meeting of the State Housing Commission on Thursday last and the Commission agreed with the decision of the Collie Advisory Committee. I therefore regret that I cannot see my way clear to over-ride the decisions of those two bodies.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

1, Perth Town Hall.
Introduced by the Minister for Lands.

2, City of Perth (Lathlain Park Reserves).
Introduced by Mr. Read.

3, Superannuation and Family Benefits Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Premier.

BILL—LOTTERIES (CONTROL) ACT CONTINUANCE.

Message.

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

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—BUILDING OPERATIONS AND BUILDING MATERIALS CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT AND CONTINUANCE.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendment made by the Assembly to the Council's amendment No. 2.

THE KAURI TIMBER COMPANY LIMITED AGREEMENT BILL JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE.

Report Presented.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE brought up the report of the Joint Select Committee, together with a typewritten copy of the evidence referred to in the report.

Ordered: That the report be printed.

On motion by Hon. F. J. S. Wise resolved: That the consideration of the report be made an Order of the Day for the next sitting.

DISCHARGE OF ORDER.

On motion by Hon. F. J. S. Wise, the Hire Purchase Agreements Act Amendment Bill was discharged.

BILL — COAL MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS) ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. G. P. Wild—Dale) [3.25] in moving the second reading said: This Bill, the purpose of which is to amend the Coal Mine Workers (Pensions) Act, 1943-1949, is being introduced as a result of a request by the Coal Miners' Union some months ago that the Western Australian legislation be brought into line with that of New South Wales. At the time of the request by the union it was decided to defer the introduction of this Bill until the actuarial report, which was being made as at the 30th of June, 1950, had been received. There are many alterations necessary to the legislation introduced in 1949, in order to give extra benefits to bring Western Australian miners into line with those of New South Wales, and at the same time to alter the rates of contribution by both the employers and employees.

The Bill provides a scheme for the compulsory retirement of coalminers at the age of 60 years and the payment to them of pensions commenced on the 1st of July, 1944. There are similar schemes in operation in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. The parent Act has been amended from time to time to bring the Western Australian Act into line with those of the Eastern States. The purpose of the Bill I am now introducing is to bring the Western Australian Act into line with that of New South Wales. At the first triennial actuarial report this fund was found to be in a very depleted condition.

The actuary, at the 30th June, 1947, estimated that the uncovered liabilities were £335,000, and pointed out that the

fund was in great difficulties, the main causes being the large initial deficiency due to the granting of free pensions and pensions to persons of advanced age who had paid few contributions, and the low proportion of retired mine workers who were receiving Commonwealth pensions. Subsequently changes were made to the parent Act in 1948 and there were several new features introduced, bringing the benefits under our legislation into line with those in New South Wales.

Provision for increased contributions by both employers and employees was made and the actual subsidy paid by the Government was raised from £4,500 to £16,000 per year. Mine workers entering the industry at an age greater than 35 could not qualify for retirement benefits at the age of 60, but they could qualify for invalid pensions after 10 years, or a refund of the contributions actually made by them could be granted when they ceased employment. There were some factors that favoured the fund.

The proportion of men over 65 years of age receiving Commonwealth pensions has increased from 65 per cent. in 1947 to 69 per cent. in 1950. There were also heavy resignations, many of the men resigning being of an advanced age, and the experience of death from accidents, and cases of invalidity, proved more favourable than was expected.

As a result of the changes made in 1948, when the last triennial actuarial report was presented—as at the 30th June, 1950—it was found that the fund had improved considerably, and it was estimated to stand with a liability reduced to £144,000. It is considered that if the fund continues to improve at the same rate, until the next triennial report is issued in June, 1953, there should be every possibility of the fund becoming much more stable. The actuary recommended that, providing benefits did not increase and conditions did not alter, the fund would stabilise itself in 1953 but if, on the other hand, increased benefits were given then there would have to be extra contributions made by both mine workers and mine owners.

In New South Wales last year benefits were further increased and consequently Victoria and Queensland followed suit. To honour our promise, we are amending our pensions legislation to bring the benefits into line with those paid in New South Wales. The weekly rates of pensions payable in the Eastern States, compared with those now being paid in Western Australia, are as follows:—The retired mine worker in the Eastern States receives £2 15s. and in Western Australia, at present, he is being paid £2 12s. 6d. The allowance for the wife in the Eastern States is £2 2s. 6d. and in Western Australia £1 17s. 6d. The allowance for a female relative, over the age of 16—that is one in lieu of the wife—receives £2 2s. 6d. in the Eastern States and in Western Australia £1 12s. 6d. A widow in the Eastern States receives £2 5s. and in Western Australia £2.

Among the proposals in the Bill is one to make payments retrospective to the 1st July of this year. The amendments contained in the Bill will, it is estimated, cost the fund an extra £10,000 per annum, which, however, will be picked up by an increase in both mine workers' and owners' contributions. To obtain this amount the contribution paid by a mine worker will increase from 4s. to 4s. 4d. and the mineowner from 8s. to 10s. 10d. This compares favourably with most of the Eastern States. In New South Wales the mine worker pays 4s. and the owner, for each miner, pays 14s. In this particular case 18,000 men are employed in the industry and the Government contributes £80,000. In Western Australia we have 1,180 men employed in the industry and the Government contributes £16,000. The mine worker's contribution here will be the same as in Victoria and, though the owner's contribution will be increased by 2s. 10d. for each miner, the contribution will still be the lowest in Australia.

A further point to be considered is that as the State Government takes 80 per cent. of the coal produced at Collie, the Government will pay, by way of increased price of coal, approximately 80 per cent. of the owners' increased contributions—representing an amount of approximately £7,000 per annum. It is further intended to amend the Act by giving the Governor power by proclamation to vary the rates and contributions paid by both mine workers and mine owners and, at the same time, if thought fit, vary the pensions. This is considered most desirable because with rising costs one never knows from day to day when it may be necessary to increase the pensions and, in order to pay those higher pensions, it would be necessary to have extra contributions from both mine workers and mine owners. Therefore, there is provision in the Bill to permit the Governor to vary the rates of both contributions and pensions, if thought fit.

When Commonwealth old age, invalid and widows pensions are increased by 7s. 6d. per week for each person, there will be a number of retired miners, and widows of deceased miners, who will not be eligible for any payment from the pensions fund because, in the case of husband and wife, jointly, and a widow, the amount received as Commonwealth pension will be in excess of the miner's pension payable. At present the man and wife drawing the Commonwealth pension receive £5 per week. Under this Bill, every mine worker or the widow of a deceased miner should receive some pension and provision is being made for the payment of a minimum amount of 5s. per week where the deduction of Com-

monwealth pension from the miner's pension would reduce the miner's pension to an amount of less than 5s. per week.

At present, child endowment is taken into consideration when assessing the amount of a pension paid to either a pensioner or a widow. A typical example of an anomaly in this regard is a pensioner with three children under 16 years of age, the first of whom draws 5s. and the other two 10s. each, making a total of 25s. per week. Under the existing law the amount of pension being paid from the fund to the pensioner, or widow, would be reduced by the sum of 25s. per week. Under the Bill it is intended to make a flat rate of 10s. for one child or any number of children and not take child endowment into consideration at all. An amount of 10s. will also be paid, at the discretion of the tribunal, for any child who may be undertaking secondary education or education of a similar nature, up to the age of 18 years. Under the Bill, the tribunal will also be granted power to provide a payment of 10s. per week for any child who may suffer physical or mental defection. In any case where a wife's allowance has not been paid, the tribunal may also, in its wisdom, be allowed to pay an allowance, for instance, to a member of the mine worker's family over age 16. Possibly, the pensioner may be a widower and may have a child over 16 years of age who can care for the younger children in the family and so act as housekeeper generally; and as a result the tribunal will be able to grant the same pension to her as that which would be obtained by a wife.

A pension will also be granted to a female relative over 16 years of age who is not a member of his family or to an adult female, not a relative, who is caring for a child of the pensioner under 16 years or, an adult female who is caring for the invalid wife of the pensioner and, finally, subject to the satisfaction of the tribunal, a pension may be granted to the de facto wife of the pensioner. As to the granting of a pension to a de facto wife, there is a proviso, namely, that it will be granted only if such wife is over the age of 30. It is considered that the period of payment of a pension should be limited if such female is under 30 years because she could go out and earn her own living.

At present an invalidity pension is payable only if the mine worker is incapacitated as the result of an injury received while he is working in the mines. This section of the Act is also proposed to be amended so that if a man has an accident in the street or on, say, the football field, he will be brought under the provisions of the Act and paid a pension provided he has been working in the industry for 20 years, and has made contributions to the fund for a continuous period of five years or more immediately preceding incapacity. The qualification for a widow's pension will also be widened to include widows of deceased miners who die from other causes, provided the miner has contributed to the fund for five years or more.

Mr. May: Will that be retrospective?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That is retrospective to the 1st July, 1950. It is also intended to allow a widow to earn from employment an average of £2 10s. per week—the same amount as a retired mine worker—without affecting her pension. Any amount earned in excess of £2 10s. per week will be deducted from the pension. The provision in the Act for a period of disqualification to be imposed where a widow receives workers' compensation will be repealed and a pension will be paid immediately after the mine worker's death. That is a section of the Act that has reacted rather unfavourably against the widow, in that if a worker has been killed his widow receives a lump sum of workers' compensation, and under the system operating now the total amount of compensation that would be received is divided by the amount of the miner's pension that would be paid to her and, when the total sum of workers' compensation has been cut out, she then comes under the Coal Mine Workers' (Pensions) Fund.

It is quite possible that a man could be killed at 50 or 55 years of age and his widow may receive £1,200 or £1,250 as workers' compensation, and if that amount is divided by the amount she would receive as a widow's pension under the Coal Workers' (Pensions) Fund, she has probably passed on herself before she has received anything from the fund to which her late husband has been contributing for 20 or 25 years. That position is to be altered by the Bill.

Provision is being made for the tribunal to be a body corporate, so that it may dispose of Commonwealth inscribed stock, and when the opportunity exists, to invest funds in debentures and securities at a higher rate of interest than is paid on inscribed stock. It is also intended to amend the Act so that it will embrace transport workers who work in the open-cuts at Collie. In 1948 an amendment was put through to this Act authorising the inclusion of excavator drivers, mechanics, welders, borers, labourers, etc., working on open-cuts and, in order to bring transport workers into line with them, it is intended to amend that particular section. Finally, the Bill will bring the Coal Mine Workers' (Pensions) Fund into line with the New South Wales scheme. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. May, debate adjourned.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 23rd November.

HON. F. J. S. WISE (Gascoyne) [3.47]: I have taken the opportunity of comparing the Bill with the parent Act and its amendments and, in the main, as the Minister said when introducing it, it is bringing up to date certain sections of the Land Act. In addition, it is making provision for the dealing in land because of certain Commonwealth-State action and for other reasons. I would have wished that other amendments to the Act had been introduced in the Bill, but since they do not appear I will refrain from any comment and, instead, pass some remarks on certain questions on the Lands Estimates. The Bill contains 30 clauses which are somewhat voluminous, but they are extremely simple in principle and as there is not one clause to which I raise objection I have no other attitude towards it than to assist in its passing. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—CHILD WELFARE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. A. F. Watts—Stirling) [3.52] in moving the second reading said: This Bill, which has passed another place, is to amend Section 20 of the Child Welfare Act of 1947. That section provides that a Children's Court shall exercise jurisdiction in respect of offences alleged to have been committed by children. It will be remembered that the Act of 1947 deprived the Children's Court of the right to hear offences or charges against adults in respect of offences committed against children, but conferred complete jurisdiction on the Children's Court to deal with offences by children. That was somewhat different from the law which had prevailed prior to that time where there had been a certain discretionary power in the Children's Court in connection with offences which might in the ordinary way be committed, though controlled by a superior court. Anyway, the provision of the Act as it stands now has been taken to mean that the Children's Court must hear and determine all cases brought before it concerning offences by children, no matter how serious they may be.

Under the Act a child is a person under the age of 18 years. These cases could include wilful murder, murder, manslaughter or treason and the Children's Court could not send any person to a criminal court on any of these charges, which deprived the accused in such serious offences of the right of trial by jury. To correct this position and to clarify the powers of the Children's Court, it is proposed to insert the word "exclusive" in line 1 of paragraph (a) after the word "exercise" to make it clear that the Children's Court shall continue to deal with all offences by juveniles except those indictable offences named in the following subclause. This subclause provides that where juveniles are charged with having committed or attempted to commit wiflul murder, murder, manslaughter or treason, a children's court must commit the accused for trial to the Criminal Court. As it is at present, the Children's Court can only sentence the accused to three months' imprisonment on any one charge, or commit him to an industrial school for a maximum period of two years if he is over 16 years of age.

The powers of a resident magistrate in respect of the foregoing indictable offences are to satisfy himself that there is a prima facie case against the accused, and then send him to the Criminal Court to be dealt with. Apart from the four indictable offences I have mentioned, namely wilful murder, murder, manslaughter or treason, there are other grave charges such as rape, incest, robbery with violence, unlawful carnal knowledge, etc. If the accused were an adult, he would be committed for trial or sentenced at the Criminal Court, but if he were a juvenile he would be dealt with summarily. It is therefore desired to give a magistrate of the Children's Court discretionary power to send juveniles for trial or sentence to a higher court.

It should be borne in mind that a children's court can be constituted by persons who are not even justices of the peace in the normal way and are certainly not resident or stipendiary magistrates. While that does not occur in the metropolitan area, it can occur in some of the country places where certain persons are appointed to be members of the children's court. Therefore it has been felt that this discretionary power, which is to deal with these serious types of sentences, should only be exercised by a children's court where there is a resident magistrate, and the Bill proposes that that type of offence shall only be dealt with by a children's court when a resident magistrate is presiding over it.

The other amendment in the Bill deals with the question of neglected children. It will be remembered that before the Child Welfare Act of 1947 was passed, a child was charged with the offence of being a neglected child. Members will possibly remember that the then member for

Mt. Marshall in the course of debate, suggested that the charge of being a neglected child should not be preferred against an infant, particularly one of very tender age, and that instead some other system should be evolved of bringing a neglected child before the court. In consequence, the provision that the child be charged with being a neglected child was struck out and the court empowered to make declaration to that effect. The Act provides that—

> Any person who has, either by wilful misconduct or habitual neglect, or by any wrongful or immoral act or omission, encouraged or contributed to the commission of any offence by any child or cause or suffer the child to become a neglected child, shall be guilty of an offence.
>
> (2) A charge of an offence under this section may be prosecuted, heard and determinted before a children's court.
>
> (3) The court before whom any person is convicted of an offence under this section may (if such person is a parent or guardian of the child and the child has committed an offence), in lieu of or in addition to any other punishment, order the person convicted—
>
> (a) to pay any fine which may have been imposed on such child . . . . .
>
> (b) to find good and sufficient security to the satisfaction of the court that the child will be of good behaviour for a period not exceeding twelve months.
>
> (4) If the court orders such security as aforesaid, it may suspend any sentence of imprisonment imposed on the convicted person—

That is, of course, the adult—

> until there has been a breach in the conditions of the security, and on any such breach occurring the suspension shall be removed, and the sentence shall become operative . . . .

This section has been used in the past to punish parents and others who, by their own misconduct, have caused children to become neglected or to commit offences. The High Court of Australia recently decided that, on account of the phraseology of the section, a child must be shown to have been convicted of an offence before an action could be sustained against a person for contributing. Under the Act, as it stood before 1947, and as it would have stood today had it not been for the suggestion of the then member for Mt. Marshall, to which I referred a few minutes ago, the child would have been charged with the offence of being a neglected child, and in consequence would have committed an offence.

Therefore, the judgment of the High Court which I mentioned earlier, affected the question of the offence portion, which was taken out of the Act in pursuance of the suggestion that was made—and I think it was a very good suggestion—that the child committed no offence. That being so, the phraseology of the Act, which required punishment of the adult person or parent for having contributed to the child committing the offence, had no longer any validity or force. Therefore, it is proposed by the Bill to amend the Act by altering the word "the" in line 5 of Subsection (1) and inserting in lieu the word "any," which will have reference back to the child referred to in the previous line of the subsection. For the same reason, other alterations must be made of a consequential nature. With the proposed amendments incorporated, the provision will then read—

> Any person who has, either by wilful misconduct or habitual neglect or by any wrongful or immoral act or omission encouraged or contributed to the commission of any offence by any child, or of any act by a child under the age of 14 years, which act, if it were committed by a child over 14 years of age, would be an offence—

Then follow the words that will be effective in the Act—

> —or caused or suffered any child to become a neglected child, or contributing to any child becoming a neglected child, shall be guilty of an offence.

These are the amendments it is proposed to incorporate in the principal Act to ensure, on one hand, that certain serious indictable offences shall be transmitted to the superior court, to grant discretion, in certain other indictable offences of a very serious nature, to the Children's Court to enable it to deal with them summarily if it likes or, alternatively, to refer them to the superior court; to ensure that other charges shall be dealt with only when there is a resident magistrate or stipendiary magistrate available to try them; and also to clear up the difficulty arising out of the High Court judgment. Those are the proposals contained in the Bill.

I may say that not only has the measure been considered and recommended very favourably by the Child Advisory Council set up a few years ago, but it has also been considered by the special magistrate of the Children's Court in Perth, who is extremely anxious that it should be passed. In a minute to me on the subject he stated that he had discussed the matter with the Chief Justice, who is of opinion that it will meet the eventualities it is intended to deal with. I move—

> That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. R. G. Hawke, debate adjourned.

BILL—TIMBER INDUSTRY REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR FORESTS (Hon. G. P. Wild—Dale) [4.6] in moving the second reading said: This is a small amending Bill to clarify the rather ridiculous position brought about by an amendment passed in 1946 to the Timber Industry Regulation Act. On that occasion, the definition of "timber holding" was amended to include the following words:—

> and any place, whether of a kind similar to or different from any included in this definition, at which timber is stacked, sawn, split, hewn, used in joinery construction or otherwise fashioned.

The interpretation placed upon those words has been rather loose in that, since that time, neither the inspectors appointed under the Timber Industry Regulation Act nor those of the Factories and Shops Department would accept responsibility for making inspections of many of the yards that have sprung up in the metropolitan area since the war. We have many yards, such as those at Carlisle or Thomas's, Whittaker's, Bunning's, and so forth, to which timber is brought from country districts in an unhewn state, cut up there and put through the carpentry or joinery works attached to the yard.

The original intention of the amendment was to embrace yards such as those that carried the whole of these various operations under one management. However, the amending Act of 1946 has been interpreted to cover all the small joinery works and carpentry shops scattered round in isolated places, and there has been a great amount of confusion in consequence, the result being that neither the inspectors under the Timber Industry Regulation Act nor those attached to the Factories and Shops Department would accept responsibility for carrying out inspections or for fixing the line of demarcation of the operations of the various inspectors.

The Bill represents an endeavour to divide the responsibilties. It seeks to delete from the definition of "timber holding" the word "aforesaid," in lines 7 and 8, and insert in lieu the following:—

> the expression includes timber yards to which timber is despatched to be dealt with as merchandise and all workshops associated with such timber yards for the preparation or treatment of timber for sale or in the manufacture of joinery.

It is hoped that that amendment will clarify the position. In future, inspectors under the Timber Industry Regulation Act will go to yards that deal with timber and hew it while, at the same time, joinery or carpentry shops are attached to them; while the inspectors of the Factories and Shops Department will go only to joinery and carpentry shops entirely dissociated from the timber hewing industry. I move—

> That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. A. M. Coverley, debate adjourned.

BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 8th November.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. A. F. Watts—Stirling) [4.10]: I find myself in opposition to the measure introduced by the Leader of the Opposiiton, and, after members have given consideration to all the aspects of this matter, I believe they also will be opposed to the proposal in the Bill. The parent Act was designed to encourage the provision of additional transport services for passengers and goods and to avoid uneconomic duplication of services. It is true that probably the main objective of the Act was the protection of railway services. The railway system is operated mainly by the Government, but an important second system has been operated over the past 56 years by the Midland Railway Company Ltd. under authority granted to it by an Act of Parliament of this State.

The company's rates and fares are substantially the same as those charged by the Government railways for similar distances, with one exception that the company's freight rates are less in the case of a large proportion of goods traffic between the metropolitan area and Geraldton. By the operation of the company's special port-to-port rate, the freight on most classes of traffic between the metropolitan area and Geraldton is appreciably reduced, being in some cases approximately two-thirds of the comparable rates charged by the Government railways. The Midland railway thus affords the people of Geraldton and the surrounding districts a concession that is not enjoyed by any other community similarly situated elsewhere in the State.

One would think, therefore, that, from every point of view, the condition requiring activity on the part of the Transport Board in regard to the co-ordination of traffic, as related to the Government railway system, should apply in relation to the Midland railway system. It was intended that a degree of protection should be afforded to the Government system, and as the Midland railway system, authorised by Act of Parliament, serves an area of the State which the Government railways do not serve, and provides, as I have mentioned, a special port-to-port rate, it seems that the company also should be protected in the same

way against unfair competition. I think that this has been recognised in the past both by Parliament and by the Transport Board.

As the hon. member said in the course of his remarks, it is true that the definition of "railway station" as including any railway station whatsoever was not in the original Act of 1933 and, therefore, as what was in the Act referred, by virtue of the Act itself, to a Government railway when the Act was passed, the schedule in which the present definition of "railway station" is to be found could not perhaps have been considered to apply to Government railway stations.

In 1938, the State Transport Co-ordination Act was amended. The Hon. H. Millington, then Minister for Works in the Willcock Government, was responsible for the passage through Parliament of an amending measure which inserted these changed words in the schedule, and one can only gather from his remarks at the time that he inserted the words purposely with the idea of clarifying the position of the Midland Railway Company, that company occupying a position comparable in regard to the district it served to that of the Government railways. I wish to read an extract from a speech by the Hon. J. C. Willcock, then Minister for Railways, when introducing the State Transport Co-ordination Bill of 1933. This is to be found in "Hansard" of that year at page 2137—

> The North-West aerial service is being subsidised by the Commonwealth Government. If, with the aid of the subsidy, that concern were able to compete, say, with the Midland Railway, if the payable business were captured by aircraft and the Midland Railway had to be closed, where would we be? The Midland country is recognised as being amongst the best in the State, and what would happen to that country without effective railway facilities?

So it appears there has been a consensus of opinion all along the line that the Midland Railway Company in all the circumstances of the case, should be entitled to the application of the same conditions as apply to the Government railways. In the case of the Government railways, the people have to find both a very large capital outlay and usually some losses. They have had to bear those losses over a period of many years. The Midland Company, through its shareholders and debenture holders, has supplied the whole of the capital required for its railway, and to that extent has relieved the people of that obligation. The company has been operating its services over the period I have mentioned, during which time the shareholders can be said to have received practically nothing in the way of dividends. At present the company is operating the system, I am informed, at less than the actual cost, and therefore the people of the Midland area, in common with those in other parts of the State, being served by the company at less than the actual cost, since the revenue does not permit of the debenture holders receiving any interest on the capital invested in the undertaking.

I suggest that if this Bill becomes law, the volume of business that the Midland Company will obtain will become substantially less and it will be compelled, in an endeavour to meet costs, to seek approval of freight rates and fares higher than those now being charged or even higher than those charged by the Government railways. That will mean additional expense for the users of the Midland Railway and that additional expense will be caused not by a better service but simply because two or more transport undertakings will be covering a route which is well served by the Midland Railway Company's system of road and railway service. It appears, therefore, that the Bill will have exactly the effect which Parliament, under the State Transport Co-ordination Act sought to avoid. It will lead to a multiplicity of services covering the same ground, with the result that the established services will be unable to meet the bare costs.

At present, by Section 37 of the parent Act, before granting commercial goods licenses the board has to take into consideration existing transport services, which include the transport services operated not only by the Government but by any private person, company or undertaking. The reason this provision was included in Section 37 was the desire of Parliament to encourage goods transport services and the investment of necesary capital to establish them, and to give them some protection against uneconomic competition by others in the same field. As far as I can understand, the Bill of the Leader of the Opposition will eliminate this protection so far as the Midland Railway company is concerned but, not only that, it will also remove it from all other persons companies or firms operating commercial goods vehicles under license from the Transport Board, because it will apply apparently only in respect of Government services.

Mr. Marshall: The Transport Board would still have discretionary power. It could still refuse to grant a further license.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I presume it could. I do not doubt the board has discretionary power; but I submit that if this amendment were passed, it would be in a more difficult position than it is now in the exercise of that discretion.

Mr. Marshall: I doubt that.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: In dealing with this matter, the Leader of the Opposition was obviously engaged

in very sympathetic consideration of a small community at Shark Bay. It is not denied that the industry there is an asset to the State; but I do not think that we must necessarily design legislation to give those people a very doubtful privilege by permitting them to transport goods for over 300 miles alongside an adequately established transport service, goods which are available at Geraldton and in many cases are carried there at a special freight rate, which surely would be a direct negation of the policy of decentralisation which has been painstakingly built up by successive Governments in this State.

I propose to give a short review of what has happened in regard to the company concerned, which is a private company. For years it was content to transport fish to Geraldton and rail it from there to Perth. It back-loaded stores from Geraldton to Shark Bay. Two ex-Servicemen put their deferred pay, I understand, into a refrigerated vehicle—the first commercial refrigerated vehicle in the State—and obtained a license from the Transport Board to transport fish from Geraldton to Perth. The only material back-loaded was bait, which could not be carried by rail and could not be obtained in Geraldton.

Those men commenced handling the Shark Bay fish after it arrived in Geraldton, and everyone was satisfied until an accident put the Shark Bay vehicle off the road. The replacement of that vehicle was no doubt a costly proposition and it inspired the company to give it more use. It commenced asking for permission to operate all the way from Shark Bay to Perth. The Transport Board turned a somewhat sympathetic ear and approval was granted. At that stage the approval was confined to the transport of fish. The company was still not satisfied and pressed for permission to back-load all types of goods from Perth. Sympathetic consideration was given to that application also; and after taking a number of factors into account, including a realisation that the company's means of heavy transport, namely shipping, had been cut off by the breakdown in the lightering system at Shark Bay, the Transport Board approved on the 16th October last of a license authorising the back-loading of all goods with the exception of petroleum products. The board declined to allow petrol to be road-hauled from Perth to Geraldton as supplies are available there at costly port installations, again erected in furtherance of a policy of decentralisation.

Members should note here that this question of petrol transport has nothing whatever to do with the Midland Railway Company as practically all supplies are transported direct by sea to Geraldton and do not represent any substantial portion of the railway traffic. I have a good many details on this subject to indicate that the Transport Board has endeavoured to deal with these cases on their merits and has not endeavoured to hide behind the provisions of the Act as has been suggested. It is claimed that there is no regular service from Perth to Shark Bay and that in consequence there are no existing transport facilities to protect.

I think I might draw some analogy. Bell Bros. are working a manganese show at Peak Hill, some 90 miles from the railhead at Meekatharra. By the same line of argument, as there is no regular service from Perth to Peak Hill, are Bell Bros. to be permitted to transport all their fuel and general supplies by road from Perth to Peak Hill? I suggest that most members would strongly disapprove of that course. Why then should not protection be given to the Midland Railway Company, as the existing operators over a large portion of the route to Shark Bay, just as the State railways, which are the existing operators, should be protected over a substantial portion, over which the State railways run, of the route to Peak Hill? I think there is no denying the fact that those two cases are analagous and must be considered by the same line of reasoning; and if it is reasonable to accept the proposition of the Leader of the Opposition in this instance; it is equally reasonable to accept the other. I do not propose to suggest to the House that it should accept either.

The railway system, I think, must be reviewed as a whole; and the proposal to cut off the Midland Railway Company's line fails to realise the proper function of this system, which is to transport goods as cheaply as possible to and from outlying districts. Provision is made in the First Schedule of the transport Act for the distribution and collection of goods from and to the nearest railway point and this makes no distinction between State and privately-owned railways. That, I consider, shows a proper appreciation of the functions of a railway, and was, as I have said, inserted in 1938, apparently to make the position clearer. In spite of their superficially very heavy losses, the railways must have set off against those losses, to some degree, the saving that they have effected, by the transport of heavy goods, to road maintenance in Western Australia. Some people have scornfully said that the State Transport Co-ordination Act was only a railway protection Act. I do not think that suggestion is soundly based. The Act could equally well be said to be, to a substantial degree, a roads protection Act, and I think we must look at the matter from that angle also.

So far as I can see, the Transport Board has endeavoured to hold the scales of justice evenly between these two systems of transport. Modern conditions and altered circumstances have made that task more difficult than it was originally, but I think the State Transport Co-ordination Act has earned the right to remain on the statute book, and that there are grounds for saying that from some aspects

the Transport Board would have been justified in administering the Act even more stringently than it has.

As I think members know, the Commissioner of Main Roads views with great apprehension the steadily increasing heavy road traffic that is being diverted from the railways, particularly on to main roads, and has emphasised the fact that unless a halt is called the condition of our roads may sink to the same low level as did the railways—a level from which they can be recovered only by an expensive rehabilitation programme. In the course of his remarks, the hon. member made some reference to traffic between Fremantle and Midland Junction, saying that the transport Act was being used to license private enterprise to compete with the railways and other Government-owned transport between those centres.

The forerunners of the so-called profitable services operating between Fremantle and Midland Junction were in existence long before the transport Act was passed and, by a specific section of that Act which was introduced by a Government of which, I think, the Leader of the Opposition was a member or at least a supporter, licenses were to be granted to those operators as a right, the Transport Board having no option in the matter. Those services, however, have contributed many hundreds of pounds to the roads being used and to the State's transport system generally, including even funds that have been used to subsidise services in the northern areas of the State.

The license fees that are payable by the Midland Railway Company are similar to those assessed in respect of the State railway road services, taking into consideration the limitations imposed by Section 60 of the State Transport Co-ordination Act. In both cases the loss of traffic suffered by the railway was taken into consideration when fixing the rate of license fee payable. The Bill, in the opinion of the Government, is a dangerous one, as it seeks to undermine the principle of transport co-ordination which we should all strive to maintain and expand.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is a funny one.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is dangerous because of its effect on our road system, to which it offers a most serious threat, and it is particularly dangerous in its thrust at decentralisation. It is dangerous also because it proposes to remove a specific matter which, at present, must be taken into consideration by the Transport Board.

The hon. member, of course, asked a number of questions, and poured ridicule on the suggestion—if I remember rightly—that there was any necessity to have regard to the loss of traffic by rail that the Midland Railway Company might suffer by the installation of its bus service, but I submit that he lost sight of the fact that the Midland Railway Company's service must be regarded as a railway service not in competition with the State railways, because it serves a stretch of country that the State railways do not serve and, therefore, it should be dealt with on a basis precisely comparable with that of the Government railways. It was not very long ago that the Government railways did not make any contribution to the State Transport Board in respect of bus services, but such contribution was provided for recently and, as I have stated, the provision is now causing the State railways to make the same contribution, assessed by the Transport Board and subject to the conditions of the Act, as is made by the Midland Railway Company. In recent years it will have become apparent that both the Midland Railway Company and the Western Australian Government Railways have established road services complementary to their rail services.

Comment was also made on the use of Western Australian Government railway wagons on the Midland Railway, and vice versa. This, I would say, is governed by an interchange agreement in accordance with world-wide railway practice. Under that agreement, the Midland Railway pays the Government railways a hire charge for every Government railway wagon retained for more than 24 hours on the Midland Company's system and, similarly, the Government railways pay the Midland Company a hire charge for every wagon retained for more than 24 hours on the Government railway system. It will interest members to know that over the past six years the balance, under this agreement, has been in favour of the Midland Railway Company, which indicates plainly that during that period there were more Midland Railway wagons in use on the Government railways than there were Government wagons in use on the Midland Railway Company's system. The company has recently increased its stock of wagons by ten per cent. and a further increase of ten per cent. is proposed in the near future.

Reference was also made to the use of W.A.G.R. tarpaulins on the Midland Railway. For many years the Midland Railway Company provided its own tarpaulins but, in the course of normal traffic interchange, they became so widely distributed over the Government railway system that it was impossible to keep any check on them. Comparatively recently, therefore, it was decided that the W.A.G.R. should supply all tarpaulins necessary both for its own and the Midland Railway Company's systems, and it raises a charge for its tarpaulins, sufficient to cover costs incurred in this connection.

The position, shortly, is that certain concerns now have the exclusive right under Transport Board licenses to carry

fish and other goods by road between Carnarvon and Geraldton. The Midland Railway Company has established and is operating a satisfactory road service from Geraldton to Perth and has offered to provide for the road transport from Geraldton to Perth of fish and other commodities consigned from Carnarvon to Perth. The operators of the service from Carnarvon now want the right to be able to invade the Geraldton-Perth area of the Midland Railway Company while continuing to exclude the Midland Company from the Carnarvon-Geraldton route. They want a fence around their own area and, at the same time, desire to break into other people's areas.

I have previously explained the reasonable consideration given by the Transport Board to the application of these people which was not, I think, unsympathetically dealt with. I suggest that the matter is exclusively one for the judgment of the Transport Board. It is impossible to exclude the non-Government railways from the provisions of the State Transport Co-ordination Act, but if one did there might be more far-reaching consequences than the mere alteration of the law for the purpose that is contemplated by the Bill. As the Transport Board has acted reasonably in the past and, I believe, is to be relied upon to act reasonably in the future, the Bill should not pass, and I oppose the second reading.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [4.47]: Originally, I had intended to speak to the Bill as one who had been extremely critical of the Midland Railway Company for a long time, more particularly as to its treatment of the people in the mid-distances of the line run by it. I was particularly interested in what the Leader of the Opposition had to say when he introduced the Bill but, after carefully studying the parent Act, I came to the conclusion that this amendment to the State Transport Co-ordination Act could do nothing but harm to the people in the Midlands, because under the Act as it now stands it was quite possible for concessions to be given to any section of the people living in districts which were at a disadvantage. I therefore concluded it would be extremely unwise to accept the amendment presented to the House by the Leader of the Opposition. For a long time I have been dissatisfied because of the treatment which has been meted out to those people living within, say, 140 miles of either the port of Geraldton or Fremantle.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Are you satisfied now?

Mr. ACKLAND: I was also very conscious of the fact that over the distance from the metropolitan area to the port of Geraldton the freights were considerably lower than they were over comparable distances in other parts of the State. I understand that was because the Midland Railway Company in the first instance wished to offset the possibility of the shipping lines undercutting its freight charges and thus reducing its traffic. However, some time ago I asked some questions in the House as to wheat freight charges, and the information I received was that people who live at Carnamah and cart their produce to Geraldton were penalised to the extent of 1s. 6d. per ton over a distance comparable to any similar distance over the Government system. The same principle could be applied to people living in Coomberdale, who have their produce carried to Fremantle.

I wondered whether it would be possible under this amendment, when it was introduced, to do anything to alleviate the position of those people, but, of course, it would not. At a later stage I intend to ask the Government if it will not make it compulsory for the Midland Railway Company to work in with the State Government Railways and have a through rate for a whole distance, each railway system charging its proportionate rate over the whole of the mileage. There is no disputing the fact that the Midland Railway Company is rendering a great service to the State. The people who live along its line and who use it as a transport medium not only have to bear these extra freight charges, but also have to bear their proportion of the deficit on all the transport systems run by the Government throughout the State; and not only the deficit on the railways, but also the deficit caused by the operations of the North-West shipping service and the metropolitan Government transport system; more particularly the tramways.

If I supported this amendment I would do so at least with the full knowledge that because the Bill, if passed, would result in the taking away some of the cream of the traffic from the Midland Railway Company—as it must do—it would be essential for the company to approach the Government for an increase in its freight charges, and so the people who are being served by it would receive a worse deal than they are receiving at present. At the same time, the Government would be lacking in its duty if it did not make sure that the Midland Railway Company provided all the transport facilities which the people could demand or reasonably expect, or else allow other interests to come in and cater for those for whom the Midland Railway Company did not cater efficiently.

I see no reason whatever why the Midland Railway road service should receive concessions over other road systems run by private enterprise. The Minister said the company is working under the same licensing scale as is the Government with its own road services. I am of the opinion that that company should compete with private enterprise because, in the first instance, it was given

a charter for a railway service and not a road service, and it has been entirely at its own wish and convenience that the present road services which it is operating came into existence. Its vehicles must be just as heavy on the bitumen roads as are any other heavy transport vehicles using the roads throughout the State, and it is the Government's duty to ensure that those roads are maintained in a good state. I will say that the Midland Railway Co. runs a most efficient service whether it be for passengers or for parcels and goods traffic—

The Minister for Works: And it was the first in the State.

Mr. ACKLAND: —and the people in the Midlands would have a great deal to say if there were any talk of discontinuing its services. I do not think there is much more I need say, other than that there have been many Royal Commisions, not only in Australia but in America and South Africa, that inquired into the matter of road transport in competition with railway services. I believe that in every instance, at least in those that have come under my notice, their findings were that road transport should be complementary and not competitive as regards railway services. On that account I cannot support the Bill.

I believe the people of Shark Bay have been already given what they require in the way of transport services, but I understand that the people of Geraldton are suffering some disadvantage, particularly the small fishermen, because they can no longer get their small consignments of fish through to the metropolitan market. This is mainly on account of the bigger fishermen being able to arrange for their boats to arrive back on certain days so that the available tranport facilities are taken advantage of by them. I am of the opinion that the Government should make provision for transport services in the interests of the people I mention, if the Midland Railway Company is not prepared to do so. In the circumstances, I oppose the second reading of the Bill.

HON. F. J. S. WISE (Gascoyne—in reply) [4.52]: I have listened to some interesting comments on the Bill, much of which indicated a complete lack of understanding of what is desired. The Deputy Premier, in handling what I would describe as his brief for the Midland Railway Company, had obviously been presented—knowing him as I do, I should should say it had been presented to him very recently—with the case against the Bill and did not do himself justice in the handling of the opposition to it. The measure has been brought forward for the purpose of attempting to do justice to the people who are not receiving it under the provisions of the existing law. The Deputy Premier in his most interesting survey or what he termed his elaboration of certain points from someone's angle—he did not say whose, but it was certainly not from the Government's angle, as I shall show—attempted to treat by comparison or analogy, which was wholly misplaced, his criticism of the Bill.

Let me deal first with the analogy regarding his reference to somewhere north of Peak Hill which is served by transport dealt with in the Bill, and compare the case of the people there not only with that of others not served by an existing railway as occurs with Meekatharra and Peak Hill, not by an overland transport route as with Meekatharra to Marble Bar, but also with the various communities in the North-West, for some of whom I am putting up this special plea, seeing that they have no forms of transport there and are at a dead end. They have no aerial service, no landing ground and no shipping facilities since the lighters have been out of action.

The Bill is intended not only to do justice to one small community, but to deal with the anomaly in the law which, by means of certain amendments passed since the principal Act was first agreed to, have crept into the legislation. I would say on behalf of the North-West that it was a very great mistake when the original State Transport Co-ordination Act was amended to include areas north of the 26th parallel.

Mr. Rodoreda: It was the greatest mistake ever made.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I am afraid we were led up the garden path in that connection because of the promises of benefit to be derived from including those areas and which under the amending Act were included because of certain subsidies which we were promised would be forthcoming. It was one of the greatest mistakes ever made in that regard. Where a subsidy is necessary for bolstering up the interests of a part of the State, the matter should not come within the ambit of the Transport Board at all. It should be a matter separate and distinct for the State Treasury, just as the original subsidies and grants were initially made to deal with the difference between shipping freight and the overland extra cost caused by the shipping services having to cease operating beyond Broome during the war period.

That system was initiated by me, with the result that the transport of goods taken overland cost no more freight than if they had been despatched by ship through to Wyndham. That provision was made through the Treasury. The amendment of the State Transport Co-ordination Act, which caused all the trouble that I am seeking to remove by this Bill, brought all the State within the ambit of the principal Act. The Deputy Premier said that the legislation was brought in to protect the interests of the railways, which is acknowledged, and that its object was also to avoid economic duplication of services. If that was the purpose, then I should say that it has dismally failed.

Mr. Marshall: I'll say it has.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Take the position in the metropolitan area alone! I would say that the criss-crossing of the existing Government services in the metropolitan area during the past few years has taken hundreds of thousands of pounds from the railway revenue, because of the licenses freely granted by the Transport Board to operators other than the Government. In this particular instance, as it affects the Midland Railway Company, no-one can operate on the road from Geraldton to Perth, and I have not much objection to that; but if the board is to be consistent in its attitude there should not be this sanction of competing services in the metropolitan area, challenging the ability of the railways to continue in the passenger service here. That applies not only to the railways but to every other Government-owned form of transport.

Mr. Marshall: Such as the trolley-buses and the trams.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The Deputy Premier said that the conditions under the State Transport Co-ordination Act should apply to the Midland Railway system to give it protection against unfair competition. Those were his words.

Mr. J. Hegney: To protect private enterprise.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Even if that were the position, which I discount and criticise, it is not right that the Act or the board operating under its provisions should give to the Midland Railway Company or to any other privately-owned instrumentality any unfair protection, and that is the position that arises under the interpretation of the section whereby it is taken as meaning that the Midland Railway Company comes within the purview of the board. On the other hand, the Midland Railway Company has security and immunity under the transport Act from the necessity to accept many responsibilities.

How does it happen that not one ounce of wheat was hauled by road from any of the Midland Railway Company's bins when State transport, State trucks, were not in use to haul wheat from bins at Government railway sidings? How does that happen? How does it happen that the Deputy Premier, when answering a case for the Yarramony-eastward railway and the bins constructed on that route, said that, even when the railways were available to haul wheat from those bins, they would not be allowed to cart wheat at any time? How does that fall in with his argument tonight? The Yarramony-eastward bins for wheat on the route of the railway promised many years ago are not to have direct contact with the railways on either side at any time if the hon. gentleman has his wish, but the wheat at those bins must be hauled to Perth at his desire. It is in a minute on the files tabled in this House. How does that compare with the position of people not served by rail within 30 miles of them, but with no railway within 300 or more miles of them? Tonight the Minister put up a case to protect a private railway company when his whole attitude was anti-Government railway in connection with the Yarramony-eastward project. It is not only inconsistent, but it shows how unfair is the argument submitted by the Deputy Premier to the House this evening.

Mr. Graham: It stinks!

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The view expressed by the Deputy Premier concerned the generous attitude of the Transport Board. But those things have just not happened. When the board has given permits at times, it has had to be harassed into doing so on the basis of fairness, with full ships unable to take another ton of cargo north, and with no chance whatever of getting goods transported by surface methods, no chance of getting them by train within 300 or 400 miles, and yet with empty trucks in Perth not allowed a permit to transport goods waiting here by the hundred tons at times, and particularly during the period when the whaling station was being constructed at Carnarvon.

It is true that hundreds of tons of goods were taken by road, but the Transport Board required a lot of convincing as to what should be done in that connection. So I say that if the irksome controls which have been imposed had been removed and if particular attention could be given to cases north of the 26th parallel, we certainly would not have much complaint. But these permits are not given in good grace. There have been occasions when there have been trucks in Perth with loads awaiting them, and when the owners of the vehicles have been threatened with prosecution if they dared load them with goods to be transported north of Geraldton. Does that make sense? It is the unknown quantities in the case which the Deputy Premier endeavoured to handle this evening that present the great difficulties.

I point out that these fish trucks, in attempting to run to a timetable, often travel at night, and pass through Geraldton at night and during week-ends, when there would be no chance whatever of their competing with the railway system, unless the present schedule was considerably altered. There is nothing in the Bill that seeks to undermine the principle of transport co-ordination; but I say definitely that this House has not the right to give to a private company—which is not only afforded protection under the Bill but is given patronage—all sorts of favours. Such a system should not be tolerated at all.

As for the statement of the Minister that this Bill is a thrust at decentralisation, what about the poor people who live

500 or 600 miles from here under the remote conditions which I explained when introducing the Bill? The Bill is an endeavour to support Government policy in regard to the protection of State interests, and it is certainly designed to remove irksome controls from people who should have some relief from the difficulties under which they are labouring. I hope the House will support the Bill and attempt to give these people in the North an opportunity to secure better conditions.

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

Ayes	26
Noes	20
Majority for	6

Ayes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. Needham
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Oliver
Mr. Graham	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Read
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Mann	Mr. Styants
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. May	Mr. Wise
Mr. McCulloch	Mr. Kelly
	(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Brand	Mr. Nimmo
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hill	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Yates
Mr. Manning	Mr. Bovell
	(Teller.)

Pair.

Aye.	No.
Mr. Panton	Mr. Grayden

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT (NOTIFICATION OF TRANSACTIONS) ACT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [5.14] in moving the second reading said: This Bill was introduced in another place. It provides for the extension of the Act for a further 12 months to the 31st December, 1951. The Act has proved of considerable assistance to the Land Purchase Board in ascertaining properties that are for sale, thus giving the board an opportunity to negotiate with vendors or their agents with a view to purchase for inclusion in the scheme for the settlement of returned soldiers. Although 550 applicants have been allotted farms, there remain over 800 ex-Servicemen awaiting properties, and it is thought essential to provide every means not only of developing Crown lands but also of securing suitable properties that might be for sale. The present Act has been of considerable value and assistance to the Land Purchase Board since its inception ten months ago, and during that period a total of 763 properties has been offered for sale. However, many of these have been unsuitable and agents were notified immediately that the board was not interested in the purchase of them. This is rather more than the number of properties offered for sale in 1949, the year immediately preceding the operations of the Act.

Experience during the year has been that, generally speaking, agents and vendors have co-operated very closely with the Land Purchase Board in notifying properties for sale, and the board has been able to adopt measures enabling speedy negotiations for suitable farms. During the last ten months, 98 properties have been purchased, and it is thought that very few of these would have been acquired if vendors had not been required to notify the Land Purchase Board that properties were for sale, and to give the board an opportunity of a maximum of 42 days for finalising negotiations with vendors or their agents.

The Act is simple and causes a minimum of inconvenience to both vendors and purchasers as, beyond the requirement of notification of sales, the board and private purchasers meet on equal terms in negotiating with the vendors. Undoubtedly the notification of properties has assisted us greatly. We have been very reasonable in all cases that have come before us. Where it has been possible to withdraw, probably in the interests of a returned man, we have done so. If the Assembly will approve of an extension of twelve months with respect to the notification of properties that are for sale, we will be assisted still further. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Hoar, debate adjourned.

BILLS (4)—RETURNED.

1, Noxious Weeds.

2, Natives (Citizenship Rights) Act Amendment.
With amendments.

3, Judges' Salaries and Pensions.

4, Legal Practitioners Act Amendment.
Without amendment.

BILL—COAL MINING INDUSTRY LONG SERVICE LEAVE.

Committee.

Resumed from the 16th November. Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Minister for Housing in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after Clause 1 had been agreed to.

Clause 2—Interpretation:

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I move an amendment—

> That in the definition of "award" the following words be struck out:—"any award made by the Coal Industry Tribunal or the Central Reference Board on the fourteenth day of October, one thousand nine hundred and forty-nine and the twenty-fifth day of October, one thousand nine hundred and forty-nine, respectively, relating to long service leave benefits to employees to whom any such award applies and includes any order made pursuant to subclause ten of clause two or clause three of any such award, but save as aforesaid does not include any variation of any such award," and the following words inserted in lieu:—"the award made by the Coal Industry Tribunal on the fourteenth day of October, one thousand nine hundred and forty-nine, relating to long service leave benefits to employees to whom the award applies, and includes any order made pursuant to subclause (10) of clause two or clause three of that award but, save as aforesaid, does not include any variation of that award."

The Bill is complementary legislation to that already passed by the Commonwealth Government, and when we were introducing it we were asked by the Commonwealth to send a copy to the Coal Tribunal in Sydney. This was done, and a few days ago—it was after the introduction of the measure here—we received a telegram indicating that there was no necessity for us to include the words "or the Central Reference Board" as we have no unions in Western Australia which come under that body.

Mr. MAY: I have no particular objection to the amendment, but I draw attention to the fact that whereas the clause mentions two tribunals, the Coal Industry Tribunal and the Central Reference Board, the amendment deletes all reference to the Central Reference Board. To my mind, this means that only men who belong to the Coal Miners' Union will be entitled to long service leave because the Central Reference Board deals with all craft unions associated with the coalmining industry, but not the Coal Miners' Union. I do not know whether there is any specific reason for striking out reference to the Central Reference Board, but I take it that if the craft unions are not covered by the Minister's amendment an amending Bill will be subsequently brought down to cover them. I would like to be sure on that point.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: There seems to be some doubt at the moment about the position, as the member for Collie knows. I assure him that, if we are found to be wrong, an amendment will be brought down in the next session and the whole matter remedied.

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

Clauses 3 to 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Validation of awards:

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I move an amendment—

> That in line 1 the brackets, number and word "(1) Each" be struck out, and the word "The" inserted in lieu.

This amendment is consequential on the alteration to Clause 2.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I move an amendment—

> That Subclause (2) be struck out.

Mr. MAY: I do not know the reason for the amendment. As the subclause reads, I think it would be useful so far as this State is concerned, because we have a board of reference which deals with this matter. However, if the Minister can show a reason for his amendment, I will be quite happy about it.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I must confess that I was advised by the Mines Department that the Crown Law Department intimated that in view of the alteration to Clause 2, it would be necessary to move this amendment. I agree with the hon. member that on looking at the subclause it does appear as though it would be useful. But, I am advised by the Mines Department and the Crown Law Department and have moved the amendment accordingly.

Mr. MAY: I know the Minister's difficulties in this regard and I realise his desire to bring the measure into operation as quickly as possible. I thought the Coal Industry Tribunal in the Eastern States could have exercised its powers by referring to the chairman of the Board of Reference in Western Australia, Mr. Wallwork, in order to deal with these matters and this subclause may have been helpful to him. But, if the Minister is satisfied that the amendment is necessary then I can see nothing to quarrel about.

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

Clause 12, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 23rd November.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [5.35]: This Bill, as was pointed out by the Minister during its introduction, seeks to safeguard any member of Parliament who may be in a position which could be described as an office of profit under the Crown. The Bill will prevent disqualification or liability of any such member in view of the doubtful situation which prevails throughout the world at the moment. There is already protection under the Constitution Acts Amendment Act where a state of war exists and, with international affairs as they are at the moment, it is somewhat doubtful whether we are at peace or war. This Bill merely provides that if the Minister of State for Defence considers that a member of Parliament is holding an office, even though it be one of profit under the Crown, which is to the benefit of the defence of the country, he can certify to it in writing and the member concerned will be secured and suffer no disqualification or penalty. That is all the Bill seeks to do and I wholeheartedly support it.

Question put.

Mr. SPEAKER: As the Bill must be passed by a majority of members, I have counted the House and assured myself that there is an absolute majority present. There being no dissentient voice, I declare the question duly passed.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. A. F. Watts—Stirling) [5.37]: I move—

> That the Bill be now read a third time.

Question put.

Mr. SPEAKER: As the Bill must be passed by an absolute majority of members, I have counted the House and assured myself that there is an absolute majority present. There being no dissentient voice, I declare the question duly passed.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [5.39] in moving the second reading said: The main object of the Bill is to try to prevent pollution of the Swan River and to put a stop to some of the abuses which are taking place. Over the last three years, in practically every other issue of the Press there are either leaders, subleaders or letters pointing out the manner in which the river is being abused and just how badly it is becoming polluted and dangerous to the health of the community. The writers of these articles and letters bring forward different features on this aspect. Some refer particularly to the fact that the port is contributing mainly towards the pollution of the river, because sewerage is being tipped from the boats and is drifting upstream. This fertilises the algae and in turn the algae causes pollution in the river.

There is another section of the community which believes that industrial concerns situated along the river banks, extending from Fremantle to the other side of Midland Junction, are causing this pollution. There is another section which feels that the effluent being tipped into the river, from both banks by various people and institutions, Government and otherwise, is also contributing to the pollution. In view of all these complaints one realises that there must be something happening and that there should be some body to prohibit this nuisance.

My Bill proposes to amend the Act to give the Health Department the right to prevent these abuses. Under the Health Act, Division 7 deals with the pollution of water. Section 129 states—

> Any person who—
>
> (a) defiles or pollutes any water supply, or the catchment area thereof; or
>
> (b) permits or suffers any water supply or the catchment area thereof to become defiled or polluted,
>
> shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding one hundred pounds, or to imprisonment, with or without hard labour, not exceeding six months.

It goes on to say—

> "Water Supply" in this division of this Act includes any river, stream, watercourse, creek, swamp, water hole, well, tank, lake, or reservoir containing water intended or available for human consumption.

If the words "intended or available for human consumption" were not in the Act, there would not be any need for my Bill. The aim of the measure is to prevent water being polluted so as to enable decent recreational facilities to be made

available to the general public, either by sailing on the river or swimming in the river, they being the main forms of recreation connected with the Swan River. The Bill has four clauses which, if agreed to, will assist in preventing some of the pollution now taking place.

During the last two or three years numerous deputations have waited on members of the Government in an endeavour to do something about pollution of the river. Those deputations contained a good cross-section of the community because they were representative of practically all road boards and local governing bodies with districts bordering on the river. They were also composed of representatives from the University and the various private schools. So, it is evident that something is desired by these people in connection with the river. I understand that there are two committees now in operation which have for their purpose the making of recommendations to the Government as to methods to break down the pollution of the river.

One of the committees to which I refer is the Swan River Committee and the other is the Swan Pollution Committee. As far as I know the Government has not seen fit, up to date, to bring in anything in the nature of an amendment to the Act or to bring in any special Act, to stop pollution. I hope the clauses contained in this Bill will help to bring about the desires of those committees, and of these various deputations that have waited on the Government. I am quite mindful, in introducing this Bill, that it would not be desirable to try to bring about overnight the aim which it sets out to achieve. The abuses that have been going on for many decades have to be tapered off gradually so that ultimately the river will be restored to somewhere near its normal state —or as near as practicable having regard to the various activities going on adjacent to it.

When the late W. D. Johnson was in the House he drew attention to the fact that he had made an effort to take a launch up the river as far as Guildford. But invariably the launch would get stuck on the sandbanks. That indicates that the river is silting up in many parts, and proves positively that the river is much shallower than the water would indicate. That is one of the main features to which I am going to refer this evening. Looking at the river one sees a huge expanse of water extending from Fremantle to Maylands— I believe the area is somewhere in the vicinity of 7,000 acres. What most people fail to realise is that there are only very special parts of the 7,000 acres of the river where there is any depth of water. Quite a large proportion of it is shallow and, because of the industrial waste, sewerage and all sorts of refuse that have been entering the river for many decades, this shallow water is becoming polluted and a lot of refuse is left in the sands adjacent to the water and along the foreshore.

One thing we have to consider in a Bill of this kind is the fact that the activities on the river itself are growing at a considerable rate. We know the population of Western Australia has been stepped up by anything from 5,000 to 10,000, and over, by natural increase, and by the fact that immigrants are coming in very fast. Large numbers of these people are settling in the metropolitan area and raising their families. They look to the river for their recreation, particularly in the summer months. That fact in itself helps to make it necessary for us to look ahead and provide that the river shall be in such a state as to offer decent recreation to these people.

Whilst the number of people who are using the river for many purposes is growing, we have the other aspect of the yachting fraternity sailing their yachts on the river. There are also small and large crafts such as motorboats, and sailing boats of all descriptions which use the river in large numbers. They in turn are having a certain effect in regard to its pollution, particularly if they are permitted to let their crude sewerage and other material flow into the river. There are thousands of craft on the river extending from Maylands to Fremantle. Not only do we have these people on the river, but we have also the various industries that are building up along its foreshore.

These industries are not only building up and in some cases turning their industrial waste and crude sewerage into the river, but those already in existence are expanding their activities and, whereas probably 20 years ago they might have tipped out a few thousand gallons of effluent, they are now probably doubling or trebling that quantity, as may be seen from the wool scouring works at Fremantle. In my own area the super. companies are growing tremendously, and if they are tipping into the river effluent and industrial waste in keeping with the rate of their growth I would say that the river is being polluted at a very alarming rate.

The Minister for Works: Does the discharge from there go into the river?

Mr. BRADY: Quite a lot of it from the super. works, particularly from the acid section, goes into the river. They have a form of trying to break down the acid content by diluting it with lime. I am only mentioning these few industries as an indication of what is going on. I understand there are a thousand and one industries along the river bank and a number of these are polluting the river. Surprising as it may appear, in the last 24 hours I have read in the paper where private companies are allowing the industrial waste and crude sewerage to go into the river. I have also had rings on

the telephone directing my attention to the Government institutions which are permitting this sewage to go into the Swan River.

The Minister for Works: What are they?

Mr. BRADY: One is the Old Women's Home at Woodbridge. A man rang me up and said that near-crude sewage is going into the river at Woodbridge. I drew the attention of the Minister and also the attention of the Under Secretary to the matter, and when the gentleman rang me up recently I told him to get in touch with the Under Secretary if needs be. I am only bringing this point forward so that members will realise what is going on. I could quite easily have brought here anything up to 20 letters, four or five subleaders and leading articles, articles from chairmen of road boards and various members of the Swan River Pollution Committee. They are all quite lengthy, and all drawing attention to the fact that the river is being polluted at an alarming rate.

I was hoping that the Government would introduce a Bill to amend the Health Act, or bring in a separate one to deal with this matter. As the Government has not done anything I felt I should try to do something myself to amend the Health Act. I am not going to take credit for any of the amendments I am going to suggest, nor am I going to say that I thought out the ideas in the clauses. As a matter of fact I think the clauses were distributed around to local governing bodies by a committee that had for its purpose the setting up of a Swan River conservancy board. I think that board was to have a standing similar to that of the Thames River Conservancy Board in the old country. I can only assume that these clauses were taken from the Thames River Conservancy Board Act and that the same proposals were to be instituted by the Swan River Conservancy Board when it was set up.

The Minister for Works: Who drew up the onus of proof clause?

Mr. BRADY: I did not draw it up, but I will accept responsibility for it at this stage. But seeing that the Minister for Works has drawn my attention to it I am quite prepared to see it deleted if the House should think fit. I am not tied to any word or few words in this Bill. If members of this House think the Swan River is worth conserving for the people of this State in order to give them something in the nature of a decent river they will no doubt amend this Bill wherever they think that is necessary. Instead of the Minister trying to be facetious about this Bill I would have liked him to do something to bring about the sort of conditions on the river that we all desire.

The Minister for Works: What about the local government?

Mr. BRADY: It is unfortunate that a Bill of this nature has had to be brough down to indicate to the Government wha is required. When it comes to doing some thing for the poorer section of the com munity the Government takes a lot o moving. That is one of my regrets and that is why, as a private member, I though fit to introduce these proposed amendment to the Health Act. In order that member may have some idea as to what the clause are about I will try and convey their mean ing. In Clause 132 there is a proposal t stop people emptying refuse, waste and suchlike matters into the river whereby they are likely to pollute the river, or in any way to impede its flow.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. mem ber must not quote the numbers of clause in the Bill.

Mr. BRADY: There is another provisio to stop people emptying material into th river or allowing material on the banks o the river to be blown or washed into it, an so have the effect of poluting it. A furthe provision would stop people from cuttin down shrubs or any weeds or timber ad jacent to the river, and allowing them t drop into it and decay thereby causing source of pollution. Vessels on the rive must provide decent sanitation so that th crude sewage or anything of that natur shall not go into the river.

These, I think, are the main provision in the Bill, and I feel that members wil not have any great objection to them Some of the clauses might appear to b harsh but if they are given due considera tion it will be seen that they are not a harsh as they appear. There is not muc else I want to say except that I have ha to draw attention to the greater growt in population, the greater activities on th river by motorboats, sailing vessels an other craft, the growth of industries an the expansion of existing industries. Thos facts are probably more material tha any others. Now that the Mundar ing Weir is being raised to conserv a greater amount of water there will no be anywhere near the flushing tha there has been over the decades gone by In addition, quite a lot of silt from th sandbanks is passing into the river. A these factors indicate the need for some thing to be done.

I repeat that I am not wedded to th actual wording of the Bill. If member can suggest worthwhile amendments, hope they will be moved, and if the object to the onus of proof provision, shall be agreeable to its deletion. My de sire is to see something done to preserv the river in a decent state and not hav it deteriorating to the condition of th Torrens in Adelaide or the Yarra in Mel bourne, which have become little bette than sewers. In the Swan, we have fine river which is the pride of the people while visitors viewing it from King's Par

invariably express their admiration and say what an asset it is to the city. The pollution that is occurring, however, makes it a source of danger to swimmers, if not to people walking along the banks. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [6.3] in moving the second reading said: The amendments contained in the Bill cannot be considered to be of a major kind; in fact, I deliberately went out of my way not to include anything likely to cause embarrassment to the Government because I realised that, if I did so, there would be little likelihood of getting the measure passed this session.

The amendments are such as I think represent the minimum that should be made applicable to workers in industry. Apart from one or two small amendments made in 1946 and 1947, one dealing with fees and the other with standard holidays, no amendment has been made to the Act for approximately 11 years and, because of this, our legislation lags far behind that of the Eastern States. If I attempted to embody the amendments that have been adopted in the Eastern States in recent years, it would take many hours to deal with them. Therefore I have contented myself by proposing minimum requirements to give employees in industry some protection in regard to health, accidents and fire, and to provide a few amenities such as canteens, change-rooms and so forth.

In the State Arbitration Court yesterday, one of the Commonwealth economists stated that the growth of industry in the post-war period had been greater in Western Australia than in any other State of the Commonwealth. Further, the Premier, in referring to activities of the State in a brochure issued by the Government last year, pointed out that pre-war the number of employees in industry in this State was approximately 23,000 and at present the number is 37,500. Thus in industry we have about 14,000 additional employees, and it is reasonable to assume that many of these people are working in congested conditions, due to the fact that the shortage of premises has led to many buildings being used as shops and factories that would not have been permitted to be so used before the war.

Disused sheds, stables, garages, storehouses and similar premises are today being used as shops and factories, whereas before the war their use would not have been tolerated. The result of this is that many employees are working under difficult conditions. In recent times many new industries have come to Western Australia. Employees are now engaged in crushing minerals and dealing with poisonous substances such as D.D.T., arsenical compounds, ant exterminators and weed killers. It is probable that such preparations have a detrimental effect on the health of employees working in those industries and my amendments are for the purpose of trying to relieve the conditions of those to whom I have referred.

In the heavy and semi-heavy industries as well as the chemical industry men are working in contact with fumes, gas, dust, smoke, heat and other factors which constitute disabilities under which men should not be asked to work. Some of the managements have gone to a great deal of trouble to install fans or air conditioning, but others have done very little in that regard. These amendments to the Factories and Shops Act are necessary to enable inspectors to police the conditions of male and female employees, both young and old. I have pointed out to members the necessity for the Bill and hope the Government will accept it, as the amendments are the minimum that a representative of the workers in industry could be expected to put forward. I would rather have seen the Government bring down a measure containing comprehensive amendments of the Act. Many reforms that have been put into operation in the Eastern States should be applied here. A number of amenities, the provision of which has been made compulsory in other States, are not mandatory here and I feel that I am putting forward the minimum requirements.

The measure provides firstly that shops coming under the Fourth Schedule, which are now excluded from certain provisions of the Act, shall still be excluded, but that any bakehouses attached to them shall come under the Act. While bakehouses are provided for under the definition of "factory" in the Act, small bakehouses attached to some of the shops under the Fourth Schedule are able to evade the provisions of the legislation. It is desired to bring them within the ambit of the Act. A further provision is intended to bring hairdressers within the provisions of the law in this respect.

In the Eastern States a hairdresser is dealt with under the definition of "a shop," but in this State that is not so, no matter whether it is a men's or women's hairdressing establishment. The result is that hairdressers can refuse to be dealt with by the department, and I therefore desire that they should be brought within the definition of "a shop." It is necessary also to bring indent and commission agents under the definition of "warehouse." Such agents often handle the same goods as are handled by warehouses but claim to be excluded from the provisions of the Act.

If they are brought within the definition their employees will be enabled to receive the same benefits of the Act as are enjoyed by warehouse employees. If that provision is agreed to indent and commission agents will be covered by the provisions that are applied to warehouses that may be adjacent to them in the same lane or street.

The Bill contains provision for the deletion of two provisos, one of which appears in Section 22 and the other in Section 45 of the Act. The first deals with boys working in factories. The boys who worked in factories when the Act was introduced 25 years ago are now adults, and that proviso is therefore no longer necessary. The proviso to Section 45 lays down that only tenants who have their premises on lease can compel owners to make certain improvements. Nowadays it is difficult to secure a lease and in many instances tenants have been paying weekly rent for anything up to 20 years but, because of this proviso, have not been able to force the owners to do certain things that the Act requires.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. BRADY: Before tea, I dealt with two provisos that the Bill proposes to delete from the Act. The next provision seeks to increase from 350 to 400 cubic feet the space required for each employee in a shop or factory. I understand it is considered by the Health Department that 400 cubic feet is the minimum space necessary for a worker, and that is borne out by the Factories and Shops Acts of Victoria and New South Wales, where the regulations provide that not less than 400 cubic feet of space shall be available for each employee. The next item dealt with is the provision of fans and efficient appliances to protect employees from heat, dust and so on. The present statute lays down that such appliances must be provided "where deemed necessary by the Chief Inspector," but the Bill proposes to delete those words. It is felt that where dust, heat, fumes and similar disabilities exist, fans and so on should be provided, because when the onus is placed on the Chief Inspector to give approval, apparently he has to satisfy himself that the conditions are dangerous, before he will insist on the appliances being installed. We think the appliances should be provided wherever those conditions exist.

The Bill also contains provision that shops shall provide the same facilities for employees to take their meals as are compulsory in factories. The Act lays down that in a factory certain amenities shall be provided for the employees who are not, for instance, permitted to have their meals in the factory. A proper canteen must be provided for them and it must contain certain amenities. This measure seeks to make it obligatory for shops as well as factories to install such amenities for employees. Under the shop assistants' award of the State Arbitration Court there is provision that, where more than six employees are working in a shop, they shall be provided with change-rooms and a canteen. The relevant provision lays down that the one room can be both change-room and canteen. As the provision is already contained in the shop assistants' award, no harm could be done by including it in the Act which this Bill seeks to amend. If the relevant section is amended as I desire, it will have the effect that I have explained to the House.

Another provision contained in the Bill is for dressing-rooms for factory workers in certain circumstances, and for the facilities to be provided when employees are working under disabilities where poisonous substances are used. The Bill contains an amendment of the section of the Act which lays down that there must be 15 people working on a floor above the ground floor before a fire escape need be provided. If even one person is working where his life is likely to be endangered by fire, a fire escape should be installed. The amendment seeks to delete the word "fifteen." In any case, references to factories often include a minimum of four or six persons, and therefore the measure provides that where a factory is operated on a floor above the ground floor, a fire escape shall be installed.

Finally, the measure provides that the Chief Inspector of Factories may require the owner of the factory to provide amenities for his employees where the inspector considers them necessary. As I have already stated, in the last two or three years many new industries have been established in the metropolitan area, some of them never having operated in this State previously. It is obvious that employees in those industries should be provided, where necessary, with uniforms, goggles, leather aprons, or silk gowns, to protect them from the risks involved in their work. Those items were not provided for under the Factories and Shops Act, and are not covered by awards, and therefore employees at present cannot demand them.

In order to protect employees against having to work without such facilities in factories, the Bill contains a provision under which the Chief Inspector of Factories is given power to order, where he thinks it necessary, that protective clothing shall be provided by the owner of the factory. I do not think either the Minister or any member of the Government could object to the major provisions of the Bill as they are the minimum amendments that should be made to the Act. We lag miles behind the Eastern States—particularly New South Wales and Victoria—in our factories and shops legislation, and had I attempted to introduce a measure that would bring our factories and shops

legislation up to date, I do not think there would have been any possibility of getting it through the House this session. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Labour, debate adjourned.

BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it did not insist on its Amendment No. 6 but insisted on Amendment No. 5, disagreed to by the Assembly, and disagreed to the Assembly's amendment to the Council's Amendment No. 4, and insisted on its original Amendment No. 4.

BILL — RAILWAY (PORT HEDLAND-MARBLE BAR) DISCONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. A. F. Watts—Stirling) [7.40] in moving the second reading said: It will be clear from the title of this Bill that it seeks parliamentary sanction for the closure of the railway line from Port Hedland to Marble Bar. The measure further provides that it shall not come into operation until a date to be fixed by proclamation. In a few moments I will give an indication of why that is so. This 114 miles of railway track was opened on the 1st July, 1912, the primary object of its construction being to assist mining development in the district. Not much use of the line was made in that regard but it was of considerable importance in opening up the hinterland to pastoral pursuits. The line is nearly 500 miles north of the nearest point on the main railway system, and that remoteness created many operational difficulties and made operating costs relatively high, while its revenue has at all times lagged far behind expenditure.

Some time ago, the question of considering the closing of this line was referred to a committee consisting of the Under Treasurer, as chairman; the Commissioner of Main Roads; the Director of Works, Mr. Dumas; and the then Commissioner of Railways, Mr. Ellis. That committee examined the question and had regard to several factors, among which were the transport requirements of the district, the comparative cost of maintaining rail and alternative road facilities, respectively, other related financial considerations, and the strategic value of the railway. At one time it was felt that local control might lead to improved results and efforts were made to lease the line—that is, of course, some time ago—and suggestions were made to the local governing authorities that they might administer it. None of those suggestions bore any fruit. Efforts were made to improve the financial standing of the line by means of reductions in maintenance and running costs and by means of keeping to a minimum the standard necessary so that the line might remain open according to the amount of traffic offering.

During the last war, and particularly after May, 1943, the line was used fairly extensively, especially for the transport of defence supplies, and particularly for the Air Force establishments that were stationed there, but after the war the line reverted to its normal traffic of about five trains a month. However, to return to the committee which was appointed to give consideration to what should be done with this railway! The decision of the committee, the Commissioner of Railways dissenting, was that the retention of the railway was not justified and it recommended that the Government authorise the early commencement of a suitable road, the railway to be closed as soon as the roadwork was sufficiently advanced. This report was submitted on the 10th November, 1948, that is, just over two years ago.

The committee said that prior to the war the line was carrying from 4,000 to 4,500 tons of freight annually but in the three years, 1946, 1947 and 1948, this had dwindled to less than an average of 3,500 tons annually, or somewhere in the vicinity of 60 tons a week which, of course, is an extremely small amount of traffic indeed. Of this—3,500 tons per annum—250 tons per annum represented the transport of water to Port Hedland. This low traffic resulted in abnormally high working expenses compared to earnings, and a substantial loss on operations. The capital cost of the line is £391,083 and the accumulated loss amounts to £572,000. For the years 1946, 1947 and 1948 the annual loss averaged £12,000 plus the interest charge on capital liability of about £13,000. The majority of the committee was satisfied that a properly constructed road could serve all the requirements of the area—

Mr. Marshall: That is true, but at what expense?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: —as efficiently as a railway service and at a much lower cost. The committee approached the Commonwealth Government to ascertain whether there was any objection to the closure of the railway line on the ground of defence. The Commonwealth Government replied that from a defence angle there was no justification for the retention of the line as any future requirements could be adequately met by the provision of the proposed road. The Commissioner of Railways, as he then was in 1948, Mr. Ellis, submitted a minority report, stating that he was doubtful of the adequacy of the proposed road to carry heavy traffic. However, in August of this year the present Commissioner of Railways, Mr. Hall, and the Chief Civil Engineer, made an inspection of the line,

following which they reported that it would cost approximately £100,000 to restore the line to good condition. I understand that that was with wooden sleepers, but if steel sleepers had been used, as was suggested as a sounder proposition, that cost would have increased by about £250,000. The decision of the committee was that such a large sum of money was not justified and it supported the closure of the line in favour of road transport.

The report on the line was that the track was precarious and dangerous, and that it was a tribute to the permanent way staff engaged there that it had been kept in operation. The construction of the all-weather road to replace the railways is progressing steadily and sufficient development has taken place to enable some traffic to travel over much of the road during varying weather conditions. The road has been used since October last year and a number of people travelling over it have made the 124-mile trip from Marble Bar to Port Hedland in 3½ hours. From time to time, as circumstances or increased traffic requires, the Main Roads Department states that it anticipates no difficulty in completing the road before the next wet season. Some doubt has been cast as to whether the road can withstand all weather conditions, but it has been pointed out that it can be as reliably and as easily restored after heavy rain as the railway could in the past. Suitable arrangements will be made to convey water to the town supply at Port Hedland until such time as the town water supply pipe-line is completed.

As I have already said, it is intended that the Bill should come into operation by proclamation on a day to be fixed and, of course, it is not proposed to proclaim the Bill until such time as the road can be considered reasonably complete. There are certain crossings at present used by the railway which can be converted into road crossings in order to give more efficient service than the present crossings which have been made to the road and also, which the railway, still there, can give. Members might think that the loss on the railway line could not and need not seriously be taken into consideration. If loss alone were the only question, I might be inclined to contribute towards the same view, but there has been such a very small quantity of traffic on the line—

Mr. Oliver: It is usual for the railways to be showing a loss, is it not?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: —especially when one takes into consideration the traffic of 60 tons per week, that it is quite clear that any reasonable form of road transport could effectively handle it. When one comes to consider that the line in its present state is becoming steadily more unfit for traffic and that it would involve heavy capital expenditure to put it in order—at least £100,000, as I said before—it would seem just as sensible a proposition to spend a similar amount on a trafficable road. When the railway line was built there was virtually no other kind of transport.

Railways at that time were the modern transport system. Today, on the other hand, many people prefer, if given the road facilities, to use various forms of road transport and so it is being more and more sought after in various quarters, particularly in respect of certain types of loading, than is any rail transport anywhere in the world. So members have to set off the very considerable loss that has already been made on the one hand against the greatly increased cost which will have to be incurred if the line is to continue, and the fact that the traffic the line is carrying is extremely light. I do not think any man with a knowledge of railway matters would consider that a traffic of 3,000 tons a year would warrant the retention of the railway and would not decide, if one can decide after looking at both sides of the question, that a proper road, which is intended to be constructed and is now partly constructed, will render a reasonable means of transport to the people concerned. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. OLIVER (Boulder) [7.55]: It seems to me that all we listen to nowadays are proposals to close some railway or to discontinue some service that people have enjoyed over the past years, and these proposals always seems to relate to the remote parts of the State where they are not noticed.

Mr. Nalder: Perhaps the Government is giving the people there a better service.

Mr. OLIVER: Perhaps the hon. member may think it is a better service, but I happened to be in the district quite recently and I can assure him it will be many years before there will be a reasonable road service in that area. With all the faults of the railway travelling between Marble Bar and Port Hedland, I can assure the House that the faults of the road system to serve the same route will be tenfold. The road has to travel over all those portions of the route that the line serves, which means that it will have to go through hills, up and down gullies, and it will also be subject to washaways which will mean the expenditure of equal sums of money for repairs that were spent on the railway, if not more.

I do not know what the member for the district will have to say about the closure of this railway, but I do know that the people of Marble Bar are very sore about it because they expressed their views to me about three or four months ago. They were not happy about the road substitute referred to by the Minister for

Transport, because they know the disabilities of road transport in that district. There are rivers with sandy beds one and a half miles wide which could never take a road and are always subject to flooding with resultant washaways. The railway goes over the bed of those rivers and often the passengers have to get out to clear the sand away to let the train go over them, but it has always got over. However, the Minister now tells us that the people will get a better service from road transport. The people in the district have other ideas. This sort of thing has not only happened in Port Hedland but in other places.

The Government, only recently, closed the railway between Boulder and Kalgoorlie to passengers. That centre holds 8,000 people and is tremendously busy and has contributed more wealth to the State than any other centre. The Government has closed that line without giving any thought for a substitute service. Today, the people in Boulder have to travel to Kalgoorlie by taxi. What does the Minister care about that? Nothing! He is not concerned what happens to the people in Boulder and I do not think he is concerned about the people in Marble Bar. He proposes to take away their railway and give them a road. I have travelled over that road and I know what it is like, and I suggest that members should go up there and travel over it and then see whether they consider it is an all-weather road. Miles of that road are still bush track which extends through rocky gullies.

Referring again to the closure of the Kalgoorlie-Boulder line, I point out that if a man wants to take his family from Boulder to Kalgoorlie he has to hire a taxi and pay 10s. or £1 for such transport. I do not know how long members are going to put up with that sort of thing. I raise a protest against the way the people in the back country are being treated.

MR. RODOREDA (Pilbara) [8.0]: It has been very truly said that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

Mr. Oliver: I was not talking with a little knowledge.

Mr. RODOREDA: While I admire the enthusiasm of the member for Boulder regarding the railway at Boulder, I do not think that question has much to do with the discontinuance of the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway. I am not the least bit worried about the inconvenience or disabilities confronting the people of Marble Bar if the railway is pulled up. As a matter of fact, when the line was first constructed there was no alternative method of transport to that centre apart from camel and donkey teams. Undoubtedly, the railway has served the district as a means of transport very well indeed, despite the tremendous cost to the State in keeping it running and in spite of long periods when no transport whatever was available to the district because of floods. Anyone knows when railway construction and repairs are contrasted with road construction and repairs, in the event of a flood roads are trafficable for weeks and weeks before a railway. The roads are trafficable even while the river is running. There have been instances of the railway being out of order for eight or ten weeks on end, several times during the season.

Mr. Oliver: Roads are untraffickable for four months at a time in the Kimberleys.

Mr. RODOREDA: I am not talking about the Kimberleys. Anyhow, I do not suppose the member for Boulder knows anything about the Kimberleys, either.

Mr. Oliver: That is rather smart.

Mr. RODOREDA: The hon. member would have been a lot smarter if he had left this matter to me as member for the district. He ought to go up and find out something about it first.

Mr. Oliver: Do not forget that this is all coming from the Opposition.

Mr. RODOREDA: There seems to be more opposition to me from the Opposition side of the House with regard to my proposals, than from elsewhere.

Mr. Oliver: We have not heard any proposals from you yet.

Mr. RODOREDA: The railway has served its purpose, but has become outmoded. Had I been member for the district at any time during the last six years, I would have agreed to the railway being discontinued and a road service instituted. The people of Marble Bar talk about difficulties associated with road transport, of the heavy machinery that has to go out and the tonnages that have to come in.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The haulage problem there is not like that at Wittenoom Gorge and Roebourne.

Mr. RODOREDA: And the people at Wittenoom Gorge are a considerably greater distance away than Marble Bar is from Port Hedland. At the Gorge there are 500 people and extremely heavy machinery has been transported overland without a hitch.

Mr. Oliver: At a cost of £10 a ton.

Mr. RODOREDA: Once again the member for Boulder is wrong in his facts. It did not cost anything like £10 a ton; it never has and never will. It has cost little more than half that amount and the return freight was less again.

Mr. Oliver: Yes; £8 10s. a ton.

Mr. RODOREDA: It was nothing like £8 10s. a ton. I do not wish to get into a discussion with the member for Boulder.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Pilbara had better address the Chair.

Mr. RODOREDA: If the member for Boulder wants to come at this matter again, he can deal with it in Committee.

The Minister for Lands: At any rate, we are getting the dinkum oil.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: With a bit of asbestos.

Mr. RODOREDA: The main opposition to the pulling up of the line comes from the township of Marble Bar itself.

Mr. Oliver: I thought you were going to say from the member for Boulder.

Mr. RODOREDA: It is claimed that business people in Marble Bar will lose their business and agencies if the railway is pulled up.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: How will it affect the hotels there?

Mr. RODOREDA: I do not know that we should consider those people because of the increased benefits that will be derived by others residing in the district. It does not matter what happens regarding agencies held in Marble Bar. The provision of the road will provide cheaper transport for the people residing in the districts around Marble Bar and they will have the benefit of a more frequent transport service. I can envisage a fleet of trucks going out to the back country just as trucks leave other centres in the North.

Mr. Oliver: That is why—

Mr. RODOREDA: Will the member for Boulder keep quiet? Why cannot he leave this matter alone?

Mr. Oliver: Keep going!

Mr. RODOREDA: How can I, if the hon. member keeps interjecting every two or three seconds.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has the floor from now on.

Mr. RODOREDA: I am doubtful about that, Mr. Speaker! As I was saying, I can envisage motortrucks providing a daily service to the outback, not one every fortnight or three weeks, or goodness how long —as was the experience in connection with the railway. The service was provided when someone thought the train should go out. That is the position that exists now. No-one knows when the train is going to start. It may be kept back for three or four days waiting for a boat. Someone may send a truck in to collect some goods, but no-one knows, or cares, when the train will get moving. In fact, the people up there have given away the train altogether!

I can see that the proposed new form of transport will be of great benefit by providing a more frequent and regular service, with the cartage of perishables more promptly undertaken and a smaller mileage having to be traversed. That will be of benefit to the people in the Marble Bar district because they will be involved in smaller costs, seeing that there will be no agencies and double handling at Marble Bar. There will be no loss of goods, and altogether the service should be much more suitable. As to the ability of road transport to proceed in quicker time, in the event of a washaway, than would be the case with a railway, everyone knows that it is a fact that the road transport would be quicker. If I get an assurance, as I have already from the Government, that the road will be properly constructed and that the crossings will be concreted to avoid the danger of washouts, I am positive that motor transport from Port Hedland will get to Marble Bar weeks or even a month or two before it would be possible under similar circumstances to get freight through by rail.

The Premier: The Commissioner of Main Roads says that it will be an all-weather road.

Mr. Marshall: That is all very well, but we know what happened regarding the assurances we had about the Mt. Magnet-Sandstone road.

The Premier: I am sorry I interjected.

Mr. Marshall: You look at the files and see what has happened.

Mr. RODOREDA: It seems to me that the Commissioner of Main Roads is the person vitally concerned in this matter, and seems to make the decisions, not the Government.

The Premier: He can say if a first-class road can be put through.

Mr. RODOREDA: And whether he will put it through.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is the trouble.

The Premier: That is the undertaking.

Mr. RODOREDA: I hope the Premier will keep him up to his undertaking. I know that he stood by his undertaking regarding the road to Wittenoom Gorge, and no difficulty has been experienced in that regard.

Mr. Oliver: There is an industry there.

Mr. RODOREDA: And there are industries at Marble Bar, too. In this instance we have a solemn assurance from the Government that a proper transport service will be provided, that the necessary crossings will be put in, and a good all-weather road put down. The member for Boulder talked about the road running through hills and gullies and creeks. His references were to the 20 or 30 miles that have not been dealt with yet, and they cannot be dealt with.

Mr. Oliver: Why?

Mr. RODOREDA: Because they have not got to that part yet. The plant is engaged on other parts of the road that have to be constructed before the section the member for Boulder refers to can be constructed. In any case, the road has

to be put through before the railway is pulled up, and, in fact, the line will not be pulled up within 12 months.

Mr. Oliver: Do you suggest—

Mr. RODOREDA: For God's sake, keep quiet!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Oliver: I want to find out.

Mr. RODOREDA: Have a go later on! I am making a speech under great difficulties. The member for Boulder is trying to make a farce of this very important Bill.

Mr. Oliver: No!

Mr. RODOREDA: I have no objection to the Bill. The proposal will be of benefit to the back-country, will save expense, will provide a more frequent service, and will benefit the town of Port Hedland as well. With the railway, men come from Perth for a period of what they describe as "semi-imprisonment." They take no interest in the town or its doings, and as soon as the work is finished they leave. With the road, we shall have twice the number of families there and they will settle down and remain in the district. That will be of benefit to the township. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (Melville) [8.11]: I do not wish to discuss the merits of the proposal, which is a matter for the member for the district. I had hoped, however, that the Minister would have taken advantage of the opportunity to tell the House why it is necessary to bring to Parliament a Bill to authorise the closing of a railway. When I mentioned the point the other evening, the Minister said there was something in the Railways Act and I asked him to find it.

The Minister for Education: I was under a misapprehension; I could not find it there.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Did the Minister find it elsewhere?

The Minister for Education: I have not sought any advice on the matter. I have had other things to do.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is time someone found out. We are told that we can do these things by means of regulations, and in other instances we are informed that it is necessary to bring a Bill to Parliament. The Minister ought to endeavour to find out why he has had to bring this Bill before Parliament. The position should be clarified. You will not permit me, Mr. Speaker, to make reference to a previous debate, but the same power to make regulations exists in the Railways Act as in the Act dealing with the Chandler works, almost word for word. The Government made regulations to give itself power to lease the Chandler works. Why cannot it make regulations to enable it to dispose of this railway? If it is right in one instance, it should be right in another. I agree that the Bill is necessary to authorise the discontinuance of the railway and I have my own reasons for saying that. In the same way, I think the Bill was necessary to lease the Chandler works. I trust the Minister will make some attempt to try to find out why it is necessary to introduce a Bill like the one now before the House.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. A. F. Watts—Stirling—in reply) [8.9]: I was interested in the remarks of the member for Pilbara concerning the road, and I would like to indicate for a moment some of the procedure followed by the committee I mentioned in making its recommendation that the railway should be closed. The matter was considered by Cabinet in January, 1949, and it was decided that the Main Roads Department should be required to spend £60,000 on road work before further consideration would be given to the introduction of legislation for the closure of the railway. The Commissioner of Main Roads is of the opinion that that amount has been expended, and that a considerable further amount will have to be spent in order to make the road serviceable at all periods of the year as far as possible; because, as the member for Pilbara implied, even with the best of conditions there are times when, although it would be less time out of commission than the railway has been, the road could be out of commission no matter how soundlly constructed, because of flood conditions. I have a note here which says—

> The road under construction in the vicinity of the railway crosses the major streams much higher up their courses and periods of interruption to traffic by river flow are not so prolonged. With the provision of river crossings built of stone at a suitable level it will be possible for road traffic to operate at all times except periods of high river flow.

So I think that those remarks, and my observations on the view of Cabinet in this matter in the first instance, indicate that there was no doubt in our minds of the need to ensure that serviceable road traffic was made available before even consideration was given to legislation for the closure of this railway. I thank the member for Pilbara for his interesting remarks on this subject and I leave the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Discontinuance of operation of railway:

Mr. RODOREDA: I was so disturbed at the interruptions during my second reading speech that I forgot to bring one matter before the notice of the Minister. I would like a definite assurance from the Government that this railway will not be pulled up from the 60-mile peg to Port Hedland until the water supply from the Turner River is a going concern. All water for Port Hedland is transported by railway tanks from the 60-mile peg on the railway line. There is practically no other source of supply, and the railway must be in operation to cart water into Port Hedland until the date of the opening of the water supply scheme which is now being constructed. If I can get that assurance from the Minister, and also an indication when the water scheme is expected to function, I will have nothing more to say about the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: With regard to the hon. member's first question, I assure him that facilities will be made available for the carrying of water as long as they are required. In regard to the second question, I cannot tell, without inquiry, when the scheme is likely to be ready.

Clause put and passed.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of four amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

No. 1. Clause 11, in Subsection (3) of proposed new section 13—Delete the words "or any by-law or regulation in force by virtue of this Act," in lines 37 and 38.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have read the debate in another place regarding this amendment. A member there with legal knowledge convinced that Chamber that the words proposed to be struck out were superfluous. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 11, in Subsection (3) of proposed new section 13—Delete the word "the" where secondly appearing in line 40, and substitute the word "this."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This amendment is consequential on the first. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; The Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 3. Clause 11, in Subsection (3) of proposed new section 13—Delete the words "or that by-law or regulation" in line 1 on page 5.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Here again the words proposed to be struck out are considered superfluous. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 4. Clause 30, proposed new Subsection (2), page 9—Delete the figures "¾" in line 17 of paragraph (b) and substitute the figures "½."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It will be remembered that, when the Bill was at the Committee stage here, the member for Melville was successful in having the clause amended to provide for a minimum rate of ¾d. to be struck. However, members in another place, who claim that they have a knowledge of road board matters, considered the minimum too high and reduced it to ½d. I do not think it is worth while asking for a conference on the alteration of the amount and I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am very disappointed at the Minister's attitude. One of the arguments moved many years ago when this matter was being investigated by a Royal Commission was that some local authorities neglected to take the necessary action to rate themselves sufficiently to obtain money to deal with vermin, and that was why vermin became so bad in those districts. When the Royal Commission investigated this matter it was very clear upon this position. I quote from page 10 of its report in which it said—

> We are not prepared to say that any local authority should be subsidised unless it has made a reasonable effort to raise funds within its own district. If there were no such considerations as these, all a local authority would have to do would be to strike the smallest possible rate and then ask for assistance.

That will happen under this Bill, which provides that the agriculture protection board may go to the assistance of a local authority which is not in a position to deal adequately with vermin. Surely there is some obligation on a local authority to make a reasonable attempt to deal with the matter before looking to the board for assistance. We should prescribe what we think is a minimum rate that local authorities should impose in order to raise funds for this very necessary work. The report of the Commission went on to say—

> There seem to us to be two ways of overcoming the difficulty. One is to require a uniform rate in every district. That we do not favour because

we desire to leave some initiative and considerable authority to local vermin boards. The other method is to require a minimum rate to be struck in every district, leaving the local authority to strike a higher rate if it considers it desirable or if, after consultation with the agriculture protection board, it finds that authority's funds will not permit of sufficient being made available to it to cope with the work it has in hand without such extra rate above the minimum. On looking through the list of rates struck by local vermin boards during the year mentioned, we find that rates have ranged from as low as one twenty-fourth of a penny to as high as twopence. The first, namely one twenty-fourth of a penny, had in conjunction with it, a rate of ¼d. per hundred acres on pastoral leases and raised a total of £108 7s. 5d. The board which struck a rate of 2d. in the pound on the unimproved capital value raised only £169. Neither of these amounts seem to us to be reasonable; the first because the rate was ridiculously low and the second because a very high rate will produce so little revenue. We are of the opinion that local authorities should be compelled to strike a minimum rate of not less than ¼d. in the pound on the unimproved capital value.

That is the opinion of the Royal Commission, whose report this Government said it would put into operation. That recommendation is a basic one towards the objective of enabling the agriculture protection board to do more effectively what the Government claims has not been done effectively before. It is proposed that the board shall assist a local authority where the local authority requires assistance. Surely it should be a pre-requisite to any such assistance that the local authority has already demonstrated it has taken reasonable steps to raise money to enable it to deal in the first instance with the vermin in its district.

The amendment is an attempt on the part of some members in another place to enable people in their districts to dodge their responsibility so that the general taxpayer will have to find money for the purpose. They have not a leg to stand on, and neither has the Government if it accepts this amendment. The Government says it wants to put into operation the recommendations of the Royal Commission, and this is an important one. If the Government is genuine in the matter it must stick to the Bill as it left this place, and not cave in at the first suggestion of opposition.

I raised no objection to the other amendments because they concerned only a matter of verbiage and did not affect the principle of the Bill, but this is vital to the principle involved which is that we shall in the first instance look to the local vermin boards to do the job and, if they cannot do it, they can then seek financial assistance from the agriculture protection board. They have first of all to demonstrate that they are prepared to help themselves and do a reasonable thing, but they cannot do that if we allow the ridiculously low rate of ¼d. in the £. That would raise no money at all, locally, and they would take advantage of it so that the agriculture protection board would have to find the necessary money. I hope members will not agree to the amendment. It cannot be said that ¼d. is an unreasonable contribution, and that was the recommendation of the Royal Commission when prices were much lower and returns from farms much less than they are today.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The officers of the department who are so keen on this legislation did not include any minimum at all.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Would you let us see the draft, to prove that?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I was in close touch with Mr. Tomlinson, and the other officers of the Agricultural Department who showed such a great interest in the Bill.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Can you assure me that it was not someone else who knocked it out?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I could not say. I introduced the Bill on the advice of those officers, and they did not raise any objection to there being no minimum mentioned. As a result of the recommendation of the Royal Commission the hon. member inserted a minimum of ¼d.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Why was there a minimum in regard to pastoral leases?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Another place argued that it might not be necessary to strike a minimum of ¼d. for wealthy boards. I thought it was not worth while having a conference to argue this point, and probably losing the Bill.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: They frighten you, up the other end.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, I do not give in too easily. If the agriculture protection board gives assistance it will have some control over the vermin boards. If a vermin board is not doing its job, the first thing the agriculture protection board will do will be to report to the Minister that it is not doing its job. If that occurs we can, next session, introduce a Bill to impose a higher minimum rate. As the legislation will not come into operation until the new year, I suggest we accept the amendment, having in view the point that if the boards are neglectful in their control of vermin we can increase the rate next session.

Mr. Graham: Why not compromise at ½d.?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That was suggested in another place. There is no harm in that except that it means disagreeing once again and sending the Bill back.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You are very agreeable.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Not always, but I am on this occasion. I feel that, generally speaking, the road boards will be anxious to take advantage of the legislation and will initiate proper control of vermin. I suggest that we accept the amendment.

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

Ayes	22
Noes	22
A tie	0

Ayes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Brand	Mr. Nimmo
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. North
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hill	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Yates
Mr. Manning	Mr. Bovell

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. Needham
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Graham	Mr. Oliver
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Read
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Styants
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. May	Mr. Wise
Mr. McCulloch	Mr. Kelly

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Panton
Mr. Mann	Mr. Fox

The CHAIRMAN: The voting being equal, I cast my vote with the ayes.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Would you, Mr. Chairman, check those figures, please? I can see only 21 in the Chamber on your right. I would like the division list for the Ayes called.

The CHAIRMAN: Very well!

The CHAIRMAN called the names of those included in the Ayes list.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I submit that Mr. North is not in the Chamber for the purpose of the division.

The CHAIRMAN: My ruling is that members within sight of the Chair are in the Chamber, and I rule that the division has been certified.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It certainly is not fair.

Question thus passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

Point of Order.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: May I get your ruling, Mr. Speaker? In the event of a division should a member sitting behind the line of your Chair be counted in the division?

Mr. Speaker: A line was not drawn with a rule. All I know is that the other night I was sitting in a chair, and was counted in a division. Profiting by the experience I again sat there tonight. It was not objected to on the first occasion.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Do you object to being counted in a division when sitting in a corner of the Chamber?

Mr. Speaker: I would if I were on the side, but I was sitting in the nearest chair. I learned from my experience the other night that I would have to be behind the boards here to be out of the Chamber.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Can we not get a definite ruling about it?

Mr. Speaker: I am informed by the Clerk that there was a ruling on the point in 1910.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Was that in the Indian Parliament?

BILL—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. A. F. Watts—Stirling) [8.43] in moving the second reading said: The Bill is to enlarge the power of the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners to make regulations, and is designed to limit their liability in certain instances. It seeks to permit of regulations being made for the purpose of limiting or exempting the Commissioners from liability for damage or loss suffered by any person in consequence of—

1, Act of God;

2, Act of war;

3, Act of public enemies;

4, Strikes, lock-outs or stoppage or restraint of labour from whatever cause, whether partial or general;

5, Riots and civil commotions;

6, The use for purposes of war or defence or training or preparation for war or defence of any of the property vested in the Commissioners.

A glance at the marginal note will indicate to members that the matters to which I have referred are similar to those contained in a British Act, the Title of which

is the Carriage of Goods by Sea Act, 1924. That Act was passed to give effect to rules in bills of lading, these rules having been agreed to unanimously by delegates to the International Conference on Maritime Law held at Brussels in October, 1922, and amended the following year by a committee, which committee was appointed by that conference.

The necessity for the regulations proposed in the Bill became apparent in 1946, following two stoppages of work in that year by employees of the Trust. The first strike was by pilots and was speedily settled, but it involved the Trust in a claim for compensation by shipboard employers. The other stoppage affected electricians and fitters required to attend to the bulkhandling machinery, and delayed the loading of a bulk wheat vessel for two days. All other disputes on the waterfront have involved both the Trust and shipboard employers, and on these occasions the Trust has not been faced with the responsibilities of meeting any losses incurred by shipowners. The solicitors to the Trust, and the Solicitor General, agree that at present there is nothing in the Act to protect the Trust against liability for losses occasioned by any of the causes mentioned in the Bill.

The Railway Department is protected by similar provisions for any loss of goods occurring as a result of industrial disturbances at the wharves under their control. Although there has been only one stoppage of work by its employees involving the Trust in a claim for compensation, it is possible at any time that industrial trouble, or any of the circumstances mentioned in the clause—which is the main clause in the Bill—might involve the Trust in a claim for damages. Because of the fact that the Trust, in the absence of some such protection, is supposed to be in a position to enable the handling of vessels to be carried on, it is only when both parties to that work are involved in industrial trouble that the obligation of the Trust can be completely cleared. So, to give the Trust the same protection as is afforded under the Carriage of Goods by Sea Act of Great Britain, and in connection, for example, with the Railway Department in the handling of wharves under its control, it is proposed that this amendment be inserted in the parent Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. B. Sleeman, debate adjourned.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Second Reading.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [8.49] in moving the second reading said: This Bill was introduced in the Legislative Council and is designed to clear up some confusion which may exist in regard to the qualifications of people entitled to be enrolled for that Chamber, and also to liberalise those conditions to some slight degree.

Mr. Graham: Don't you believe it!

Mr. W. Hegney: Is this the Lawson Flats Bill?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Yes.

Mr. PERKINS: If any member has a Legislative Council electoral claimcard in front of him, he will note that at present there are five qualifications under which electors may become enrolled for the Legislative Council. Those qualifications read as follows:—

> 1. Freeholder who has a legal or equitable estate in possession situate in the electoral province of the clear value of £50.
>
> 2. Householder within the province occupying any dwelling-house of £17 clear annual value.

There is a footnote to that qualification to the effect that—

> A lodger or person renting rooms from a legal occupier cannot claim "householder" qualification.

I understand that under that interpretation persons occupying flats in large buildings—such as exist in Adelaide-terrace—are not entitled to be enrolled as householders. These qualifications continue—

> 3. Leaseholder who has a leasehold estate in possession situate within the province of the clear value of £17.
>
> 4. Crown leaseholder who holds a lease or license to depasture, occupy, cultivate, or mine upon Crown lands within the province at an annual rental of at least £10.
>
> 5. A person whose name is on the electoral list of any municipality or road board in respect of property within the province of the annual ratable value of not less than £17.

There is a provision in the Bill dealing with the qualifications in respect of legal or equitable freehold estate. On page 165 of our Standing Orders—which contain the Constitution Acts Amendment Act—members will find that the Act provides for a clear value of £50 sterling. There is a provision in the Bill to delete the word "sterling". So, if there has been any confusion as to the clear value of £50 it will be well understood, if the Bill is passed, that the £50 refers to our own currency and not to sterling. Referring again to page 165, it is proposed to strike out a paragraph and insert another in lieu to give occupiers of flats to which I have already referred the right of enrolment for the Legislative Council.

Mr. Needham: What paragraph is that?

Mr. PERKINS: The paragraph at the bottom of page 165 of our Standing Orders, which contain the Constitution Acts Amendment Act. The amendment will provide—

> is a householder of a dwellinghouse or self-contained flat, the clear annual value of which dwellinghouse or flat is £17.

That £17 is in our own currency.

Hon. E. Nulsen: Will this new interpretation supersede the old interpretation of a dwellinghouse and flat?

Mr. PERKINS: I understand that the legal interpretation under the Act as it now stands is that the occupier of one of the flats, which I have mentioned, is not entitled to enrolment.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: What about answering the question, because it is important? Will this new definition supersede the existing interpretation?

Mr. PERKINS: If the interpretation is to the effect that those persons are not entitled to be enrolled, the Bill will provide for supersession of the old interpretation.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: But suppose it is in reverse, and that some already entitled to be enrolled are disfranchised because of this?

Mr. PERKINS: Possibly people have been enrolled under a loose interpretation—if I may put it that way—of the existing law.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: People are enrolled today if they live in flats where there are separate entrances. If they go into separate entrances they are entitled to be enrolled but, if they use the same entrance, only one family is entitled to be enrolled.

Mr. PERKINS: I understand that the legal interpretation is that the people to whom I have referred are not entitled to be enrolled, but if the Bill is agreed to they will become entitled to be enrolled. If members will look at the proviisons in the Bill, they will find that interpretations are provided. Towards the end of the Bill there is a definition of householder, as follows:—

> "Householder" of any dwellinghouse or of any self-contained flat means the person responsible for the payment of the rent, and whose usual place of abode is at such dwellinghouse or self-contained flat.

There is another provision, as follows:—

> "Self-contained flat" means part of any structure of a permanent character which is a fixture of the soil and ordinarily capable of being used for human habitation, provided such part is separately occupied for such purpose and has no direct means of access to, and is structurally severed from, any other part of the structure, which is occupied for a similar purpose by any other person, and has separate sleeping, cooking and bathroom accommodation.

So I think that perhaps under a loose interpretation of the law as it stands, some of these persons may have been enrolled. My information is that a strict legal interpretation would prevent them from being enrolled.

Mr. Graham: The fact remains that they are able to become enrolled today. Under this Bill, that will not be so.

Mr. PERKINS: My information is that this Bill, if it becomes law, will enable persons occupying self-contained flats to become enrolled.

Hon. E. Nulsen: That means that they will require to have a separate bathroom and kitchen.

Mr. PERKINS: It is obviously difficult to argue some of the details at the second reading stage, and it will be necessary to discuss them in Committee. There are one or two other provisions to clear up confusion, apart from the question of substituting our own currency in the case of £50 and £17 respectively. That will necessitate the striking out of the word "sterling."

Members will also notice that on page 166, paragraphs (5) and (6) there is provision for persons to be enrolled if they are on the electoral list of any municipality in respect of property within the province of the annual ratable value of not less than £17. It is proposed to add to that, to clarify the position to some degree, the words "or of the unimproved value of not less than £50." That will give an alternative qualification . In some cases, possibly the places which have an unimproved annual value of not less than £50 would have an annual value of less than £17. If the Bill is agreed to, it will give the elector an alternative choice, so that he can become enrolled for the Legislative Council. That is in line with the other provisions already existing in the parent Act. I think the Bill is designed to make the parent Act clearer and more precise than it is at present. It should not make it more difficult for a person to become enrolled for the Legislative Council; on the contrary, it should enable certain other persons to become enrolled. I move—

> That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. F. J. S. Wise, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1950-1951.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 23rd November; Mr. Perkins in the Chair.

Vote—Education, £2,275,865:

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. A. F. Watts—Stirling) [9.0]: In introducing the Estimates for the Education Department I would say that the vote last year was £1,852,311 and the expenditure £2,079,781, being £227,470 over the estimate. This was accounted for by increased expenditure on salaries of £126,126 and increased expenditure on contingencies of £101,344. The increased expenditure on salaries is due partly to adjustments following on basic wage increases and partly to marginal increases granted to teachers as from the 1st February, 1950, which in themselves involved additional expenditure at the rate of approximately £60,000 per annum. Increases in the number of buses and increased remuneration to bus contractors in a number of cases on account of rising costs, increase in expenditure on visual education—I think it amounts to something like £18,000 over the estimate —and certain increases in living-away-from-home allowances made up certain expenditure on the contingencies side.

The estimated expenditure for the current year is £2,275,865. On the salaries side, that represents an increase on 1949-50 of £121,353. This makes provision for a number of items, the major ones being basic wage adjustments and the expected increases consequent upon the reclassification of the service to take effect from the 1st January next. This reclassification will take place four and a half years after the last one. In the meantime, of course, there have been the marginal increases to which I refer. These marginal increases were designed to assist those on the lower rungs of the departmental ladder more than those in the upper regions.

It had been noted that, quite apart from the basic wage increases attained by workers generally from the ordinary operations of the Industrial Arbitration Court, there had in the great majority of cases been increases for margins for skill. While I think that phraseology and the method could not easily be applied to the teaching profession, nevertheless it seemed to me that relatively there was some need for temporary adjustment pending a general reclassification. That was necessary, however, pending this reclassification, and in giving consideration to this matter of what I called marginal increases—or at least it seemed so to me—to discuss this matter with the Public Service Commissioner so that there may be no lack of co-ordination between rates which were payable to officers in the Public Service and those engaged in the teaching profession, at least to any degree which may occasion any embarrassment to the Public Service Commissioner. As the result of that discussion it was decided to fix a marginal increase of 7½ per cent. on salaries of up to £400, of 5 per cent. on salaries above that figure up to £600, and 2½ per cent. on the remainder. An undertaking was given at the same time that a reclassification to take effect on the 1st January would be made.

In regard to that reclassification, consideration has to be given to salaries paid for comparable service in other States of the Commonwealth, partly because that is desirable in order to preserve some measure of uniformity and at least to ensure, as far as one can, that the Western Australian service is no less attractive than services in similar departments elsewhere, and partly because I think it is essential in the procedure of the Grants Commission in dealing with claims of the so-called claimant States and those of the standard States. Accordingly, Mr. Dettman, an inspector of the department, was asked to make necessary inquiries and draft the necessary reclassification. This is now almost complete although it is not yet submitted for final consideration.

Concurrently with this question I requested that consideration should be given to the matter known as remote allowances to teachers, particularly those obliged to accept appointments in areas of the State where certain conditions apply. Already, of course, there are district allowances paid in respect of services in the northern part of the State and in the Goldfields areas. But there are a number of places quite apart from the spots associated with those areas where the normal conveniences which can be found in larger centres are not present, and their absence can be severely felt by the teaching staffs in common, of course, with other servants of the Crown who are required to serve in such places. There might be another aspect of this matter which is perhaps of greater important than the convenience or contentment of the teacher himself or herself, and that is the desirability of attracting good types of teachers to give service in some of these areas removed some distance from the ordinary customary amenities we are used to in larger centres of population. Of course, as I said, it applies to other Government officials stationed in such places but these are not nearly so numerous.

Police officers, for example, are not to be found in places where small schools continue to exist and, moreover, the service that the teacher renders the children of the district is a very vital one. Access to the ordinary amenities of life owing to distance is perhaps frequently expensive. It may be necessary to travel a considerable distance to reach a doctor, a dentist, a hairdresser, or a decent shopping centre and many forms of public amusement. Even in places where there are some minor facilities, where everyday goods can be bought and where there may be even reasonable quarters in which to live, it is desirable to take into consideration the expense involved by the teacher in coming in contact with these necessities, partly, as I said, for his own convenience and

partly that the teaching of children in the outer areas may be a more attractive proposition.

It is obvious that the degree of remoteness will vary. In some cases there may be public transport of a suitable nature to a town where shopping facilities may be found comparable with those in the suburbs of Perth, or perhaps even better, but other facilities are lacking. Thus it is apparent that the basis on which these allowances are worked out cannot easily be arrived at. I am glad to say, however, that proposals are almost prepared and interim discussions have taken place with representatives of the Teachers' Union and it is hoped to submit a satisfactory arrangement, with the assent of the parties involved, to the Treasury in the near future.

Members will realise that the question of provision of quarters for teachers in country districts is one that is always likely to give considerable concern, and in present circumstances it is proving very difficult. It has been the practice for many years to make provision for quarters for head teachers only. This was done by the Public Works Department at the request of the Education Department. Five or six years ago the matter of supplying quarters for teachers was handed over to the Housing Commission, and in the intervening years consideration has been given to the claims of teachers—not only head teachers —sometimes where the recommendation of the Education Department could be obtained and mainly on the basis of hardship, because hardship appeared to be the basis on which all Commonwealth-State rental homes as a general rule were allocated.

I think one or two exceptions were made on the ground of the teacher being a key personnel but in the main it was on the basis of hardship. In consequence a number of teachers were provided with accommodation by way of Commonwealth-State rental homes and in July of this year or thereabouts, after a discussion with Commonwealth officers engaged in the housing question, the Housing Commission notified us that it did not intend to provide any more Commonwealth-State rental homes for departmental officers on the basis that operated since 1944 or 1945 because it was not considered that that provision was carrying out the intention of the Housing agreement which, as I said, was meant to be for persons on a hardship basis, and requiring the minimum of rent having some relation to their income. Whatever one may think of the reasons which actuated that decision, it threw the onus back on to the department of giving consideration to the provision of quarters in quite a large number of places.

An examination of the places in country districts where quarters for married teachers were required revealed that the number was between 20 and 30 and, probably, nearer the latter figure. Under the regulations the rentals paid by teachers to the Government for quarters erected through the Public Works Department in the earlier times were fixed really on the basis of the school enrolment because, under Regulation 44 of the Education Regulations, the rent had direct relation to the class of school in which the teacher was employed, and as the grades of school are regulated by the average attendances thereat I think it was reasonable to say that the rents were in relation to school attendance.

As a consequence, there were many anomalies in the rentals that were paid and many anomalies occurred when transfers took place; at least, so far as the teacher was concerned, he felt that the position was anomalous. Our difficulty was accentuated in all future transactions by the fact that the erection of new dwellinghouses was going to be extraordinarily dear even if some reasonable type of residence was taken into consideration. It seemed quite apparent to me that it was of no use building a house fit to accommodate only a man and his wife because, while that might suit the conditions when the premises were actually built, in a year or two there might be a married teacher with four or five children taking that school and much greater accommodation would be required.

It was therefore desirable that some standard premises should be devised at a cost that would not entail the teacher in excessive rental or, alternatively, involve the making of concessions along these lines and running the Government into further financial loss. If a decision was reached on that and a decision made to strike a reasonable rent, the question arose of altering the provisions of Regulation 44 and bringing these rentals more or less into line with modern practice.

At any rate, the Architectural Division of the Public Works Department has succeeded in devising suitable premises, but even those will be extremely costly. I understand that the cost, if the building is in close proximity to the metropolitan area, would be not less than £1,650 and, if erected at some distance from Perth, might be £200 or £300 greater, depending on the circumstances. That is an estimate, and we have yet to prove by the calling of tenders for the first one or two, which is now in contemplation, whether those estimates will be realised.

Unless every care is exercised, obviously the rent to be paid in respect of premises, which cost, say, £1,800, was likely to be a fairly considerable sum, and so we are now discussing with the Teachers' Union a proposition which will result in a rental being fixed at a maximum of 5 per cent. on the capital value of the premises, of which 1 per cent. will be paid into a maintenance trust fund with the idea of ensuring that regular maintenance is carried out at least every five years. That

would leave 4 per cent., of which 3½ per cent. would be represented by the rate of interest on the loan liability involved and 10s. per cent. for sinking fund. It is proposed in these discussions—and I think they will reach fruition—to assess the rental on the cost of the premises erected in close proximity to the metropolitan area so as to avoid there being an increased charge upon teachers simply because they happen to be stationed at some distant or inaccessible point.

Dealing with the maintenance aspect, many people will have noticed the lack of maintenance that these buildings ought to have received and of their deterioration in consequence. I think that the proposal to have a trust fund into which would be paid a percentage of the rental along the lines I have suggested would not only give a feeling of satisfaction to the occupants of the premises, but would also give a feeling of security as to the premises so far as the Government was concerned in that there would be some regularised proceeding for the maintenance of the buildings. No doubt the lack of maintenance in the past was due largely to the lack of funds during the depression period, and such a trust fund would apparently obviate any possibility of a recurrence of that state of affairs in future years.

There still remains the question of the older quarters. After making allowance for their age, it is obvious that in a number of them the conveniences afforded as compared with present-day conditions elsewhere are worth something more than is being paid. Therefore, in my opinion, there should be little or no relationship between the quarters and the teacher's salary. It appears to me that a teacher or anybody in any other profession should be paid for the service he renders and should be asked to pay a reasonable rental for the premises he occupies, having at least some relation to the value and the satisfactory nature of the premises. So it has been proposed that the older premises should be valued, and that a rental should be struck in respect of them at the same rate and that the same provision as to the maintenance should be made and that Regulation 44 should be repealed. I hope that these arrangements will come into operation in a very short time.

The number of new teachers showed a gain over losses of 64 in 1948 and 95 in 1949 and while the output from the Teachers' College at the end of this year will be in the vicinity of 230, which I understand will give an approximate increase of another 95, it has been realised that extra efforts must be made to maintain the recruitments thereafter. The intake of monitors in 1949 was 130 and in 1950 the number increased to 160, and there are a few recruits of more mature age who have been granted immediate entrance to the Teachers' College instead of serving the usual year as monitors. A recruiting campaign at the high schools has been inaugurated through the inspectors in the hope of obtaining for the profession many students about to take their leaving certificates. A circular letter was sent to every student sitting for the leaving certificate explaining the opportunities afforded and the duties involved in the teaching profession. Allowances for teachers in training were again raised and the salaries of monitors were increased to £259 for males and £211 for females, disregarding the living-away-from-home allowance. The assistance of Parents and Citizens' Associations was sought to place the need for teachers before their members. The "Teachers' Journal" has published articles in favour of the scheme but sometimes unfortunately has detracted from their value by stressing the difficult lot of teachers.

I have requested the Director to formulate a plan for the provision of scholarships for those students who have taken the junior certificate and who are unable, through economic difficulties, to continue to the leaving standard, provided they are willing to enter the teaching profession, in the hope of encouraging young people with brains to take up this profession when otherwise they might be deflected to other careers. It was at first thought that the Commonwealth might be prepared to entertain some such proposal as an adjunct to its University Assistance Programme. I thought this would be more desirable if it were placed on an Australia-wide basis, but upon inquiry it was ascertained that the Commonwealth view was that assistance along the lines I had mentioned did not include any such proposal. At present I am awaiting the Director's plan on the matter and I believe it is practically ready for examination.

On previous occasions, I have indicated that the rapid increase in our population in recent times at a rate much in advance of any rate of increase in the last half century and in recent times anywhere else in the world has considerably accentuated the department's accommodation problem. In the face of increased demands for housing accommodation for the same reason, it has been impossible to step up the normal building programme beyond the limits referred to in my previous speeches on the departmental Estimates. A considerable number of schools, however, have been added to, Treasury approval having been obtained and work is proceeding in the current financial year in respect of 34 places. In addition, contracts have been entered into for the construction of monocrete additions or new classrooms in three places, those contracts having been made with the Monier Pipe Co. Pty. Ltd. Before those contracts were entered into, careful consideration was given by the Public Works Department to the advisability of using

this type of building, which could be erected fairly promptly, and the plans as approved by the department will be satisfactory.

A number of similar buildings have been erected in the other States. Some of them have been seen by officers of the department and members of the Government, and they are considered to be quite satisfactory, being well lit and well ventilated, of standard size and pleasing appearance. They will be used only as separate buildings and, in at least one case, when normal additions can be made, will be used as craftrooms. The possibility is that similar contracts will be let in other places, both metropolitan and country. If they are used to provide new school premises on a small scale, then there would have to be a separate contract or sub-contract for the provision of the necessary sanitary conveniences and the like, but where they are to be used merely as an addition, this, in many instances, can be obviated.

The relief of overcrowding and the necessity for readjustment of classes in a number of places permitted the department to follow the example of at least one of the other States and order 30 prefabricated Bristol buildings, each of two classrooms. The same procedure was followed very largely in respect of those buildings. The design and specifications were vetted by the Public Works Department and certain minor amendments were made to measure up to Western Australian conditions. The Director himself saw buildings of that type in use elsewhere and formed the opinion that the Bristol building was far more satisfactory than the Hawkesbury—another type offered to the department. We anticipated that the first batch of five of these buildings, each of two rooms, would arrive in September last, but whatever has been going on in the Old Country whence they were to come has held up the delivery and transport of them and the first five will arrive during next month. So they will arrive approximately three months later than the original expectation when the purchase was made. After that they will arrive five at a time at intervals of approximately one month.

Twenty-six of these buildings have already been allocated to various centres. There is nothing cheap about them as they are dearer than those of monocrete construction and, when provided with electric lighting, washing facilities and the like, they will cost more per classroom than does the standard classroom that we have been erecting in brick in recent times. They are built largely of aluminium or of an alloy of that metal and are considered quite suitable for most parts of Western Australia. We have, however, been diffident about allocating them and have so far not allocated any to places in the hotter areas. Until we have had an opportunity to try them out under summer conditions in this State we will not allocate them to such areas.

From the opinions that we have obtained from those who have seen them elsewhere it seems that on account of their design, ventilation and so on, there are but few places in this State where these buildings could not be advantageously used in an emergency. During last year it was decided that any school where 50 or more post primary students were available would be established as a junior high school and provided with whatever extra and competent staff was required, together with facilities for science, domestic science, metal work, manual training and the like. At that time only five schools measured up to those requirements. They were—Manjimup, Harvey, Katanning, Narrogin and Merredin.

I have recently received a recommendation from the Director for approval for two more of these schools, one at Pinjarra and one at Mt. Barker. In the former case, the increase in population at Mandurah and the Fairbridge Farm School is expected to lift the number of post-primary students to the vicinity of 66 next year and to 131 if and when certain adjoining schools are consolidated, while at Mt. Barker the advance in population shows, on investigation, between 60 and 70 post-primary students next January, with an increasing number thereafter. At Pinjarra it will be necessary to make some additions to the school premises to cope with increasing numbers, while at Mt. Barker the making available of accommodation as a science room will be all that is necessary. No new centre north of the Eastern Goldfields line has yet shown any prospect of having a post-primary attendance of over 50 in the near future. It is obviously difficult to provide comparable facilities, and justify the staffing involved, unless there is a recognised number of post-primary students that could under reasonable conditions be accumulated in the one place, and that difficulty presents itself strongly in the areas mentioned.

I think it is well known that the Government has decided—and tenders are being called in regard to it in the near future—to erect a school and hostel at Hall's Creek. Investigations disclosed that from within a radius of about 200 miles of that place it would be possible to assemble about 25 children, but it would be possible to assemble and educate them there only if they were provided with residential premises. A complete investigation of the matter was made by the then Deputy Director of Education, Mr. Edmondson, and his recommendation was that a school and hostel should be founded there. An estimate of costs was obtained, and it was found that something like £25,000 would be involved in the provision of these two premises of a type suitable for that part of the country.

It was anticipated that the Australian Inland Mission would be good enough to take charge of the management of the hostel. That organisation was quite willing to do so, but faced the position that

it could do so only if its hospital, which had been conducted on the old site at Hall's Creek, was available in close proximity to the school and hostel. It was necessary then, if the project was to proceed, to devise new hospital premises adjacent to the proposed school and hostel. That has since been done and tenders are being called for the whole of the work in the course of the next week or two. I think that both the expenditure and the idea are well justified.

That brings to my mind what might be done in areas of the State where the population, it is true, is not as scattered as that in the neighbourhood of Hall's Creek, but where there is no substantial agglomeration of children within a reasonable distance of one point, and particularly if one desired to obtain—as one would in the matter I am discussing—a minimum number of post-primary students. I think we must be prepared in this matter to give consideration to post-primary education involving some lessening of the conditions laid down for the more closely settled districts or districts where larger centres are to be found, with a view to providing at least at one or two places the same facilities where some number less than 50 post-primary students are available. I have, therefore, asked that an investigation be put in hand to obtain the necessary data, to ascertain whether such a plan can be worked out.

It may be possible to aggregate a sufficient number of post-primary children without too much inconvenience of travel —or by some other means—at one or two places in the area and, if so, it would be my purpose to seek approval for the expenditure necessary to implement such a proposal. In addition, the Government has been concerned over the need for an increased number of high schools. The high school at Albany is substantially overcrowded and the one at Northam has no difficulty in filling itself to capacity. Over five years ago a site was selected at Narrogin and, in a communication from the department to the then member for the district, it was estimated that the number of children who would attend the high school at Narrogin—including an allowance of 40 on a part-time basis from among the 80 boys on the roll at the Narrogin School of Agriculture—would total 209, and the opinion was then expressed that those figures would justify the establishment of a high school. A site was selected for the purpose.

Nearly every high school in the metropolitan area was filled above capacity and the need to relieve that situation was very apparent. Accordingly the Government agreed, in the early part of this year, that an effort should be made to construct buildings for three high schools, the expenditure and work to be spread over two or three years at those three schools—one full high school in the country and two high schools in the metropolitan area or its vicinity. It was quite impossible to extend the building programme beyond that, over that period, or at least that was the considered opinion of all who looked into the matter.

The Director recommended that the country high school should be at Narrogin and that another should be provided at Armadale to accommodate the children of the south-eastern suburbs and to some extent relieve Kent-street. He recommended that the third should be provided at Monger's Lake to relieve Perth Girls and others and to serve children living between that point and the coast on the north-western side. The alternative to the Monger's Lake proposition was Midland Junction, but it was considered that the greatest relief would be afforded by the provision of premises at Monger's Lake as that would tend to assist children from some of the eastern suburbs lying between Perth and Bassendean.

At the same time steps were taken to relieve pressure at Midland Junction so as to make more accommodation available in the existing premises by the provision of a new infants' school now almost completed, and by authorisation of a school at Midvale and plans for further school accommodation at Middle Swan. It is my hope that these activities will mark the commencement of the carrying out of the desire of us all; namely, the expansion of secondary school facilities wherever possible and to the utmost degree possible.

The Mitchell school for spastic children was successfully established in premises attached to the Thomas-street school during the year. These premises were especially designed by the Chief Architect as being suitable for those children, and to provide accommodation of various kinds suited as far as possible to their peculiar and individual needs. Some screening took place to ascertain the number of educable children among the spastic group and something over 40 are, as a result, brought to the school daily by three buses which are contracted for by the department at a cost of approximately £2,800 per annum. These buses have been especially fitted up to suit the children and to provide as much comfort for them as possible, allowing them, in some cases, to be transported in a reclining position, and in every practicable way to meet the difficulties of these little ones. The buses travel in all about 180 miles per day.

Suitable staff has been provided at the Mitchell school, and I think it can be said to have made a successful beginning and to be affording a measure of comfort to the parents of many of these children. Discussions are taking place as to means whereby medical and therapeutical treatment can be given to these little ones in close association with their scholastic ac-

tivities. It is understood that this is the first school of its kind in Australia. During the year the agreement to take over the education of deaf and dumb children at the School for the Deaf and Dumb was completed and the department is now responsible for their education, the committee of the association, however, still being responsible for the residential side. The department has accepted responsibility for maintenance of the buildings and is paying the customary subsidy of 2s. 6d. per head per week, on the residential side, just as it does to other organisational hostels.

At this stage I would like to mention the sterling service the School Sites Committee has rendered during the year. In early times—I am referring to as far back as a quarter of a century or more ago—there was much confusion, as has been apparent in recent years and particularly in the activities of the School Sites Committee, as to the required areas which schools might need for recreation and playground purposes and, in consequence, one finds in many parts extremely cramped areas which are now difficult to enlarge. It has been the aim of the School Sites Committee, which I understand was set up by my immediate predecessor in office, to prevent any recurrence of that in the future, and to ensure whenever practicable that every case is remedied as far as it can be by the acquisition of more land, and generally so to plan the situation and the area of school grounds that they may in the future be not only attractive, but also extremely serviceable for all future requirements.

That it cannot always succeed perhaps in carrying out the desires that its members have in mind may be due to circumstances which are not occasioned by any fault of their own but by the difficulty, sometimes, of acquiring the necessary amount of land. I recall one case where in order to get a small area of land in the metropolitan area, it was necessary to resume three or four houses, and as it was not possible to ask the tenants to vacate those premises in existing circumstances the work of the School Sites Committee to improve the grounds will not come to fruition for some time.

Mr. J. Hegney: Some areas have been resumed for seven or eight years.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That is so. So the School Sites Committee has done a good job and everyone who has come in contact with its recognises that state of affairs.

In respect of the year 1949-50, assistance, amounting to £11,614, was rendered to the Kindergarten Union. Prior to 1947 the only assistance rendered by the Government to this union was the per capita subsidy with respect to children attending approved kindergartens. During 1949-50 this amount, on precisely the same basis, accounted for £3,314, leaving £8,300 additional assistance made up of the contribution towards administration, teachers' salaries and training—a total of £4,000—a grant to a new country centre at South Kalgoorlie of £100 and a special grant to the union to enable it to pay a bank overdraft amounting to £3,000 for the current year. The union has asked for assistance totalling £17,450. Of this sum, £5,000 has so far been paid, but as the Government could not see its way clear to grant such a substantial increase, all of which was proposed to be spent on increased expenditure by the union without prior consultation, it has been decided that a responsible senior officer of the department should conduct a departmental inquiry as soon as possible and a decision will be arrived at in the light of his report as to what additional assistance, if any, can be granted. It is expected that this inquiry will commence next month.

In October, Mr. T. S. Edmondson, who had been in the department's service for 50 years, retired from the position of Deputy Director and Superintendent of Primary Education which he had filled with distinction in recent times. I think every one of us will subscribe to an expression of appreciation of the services rendered by Mr. Edmondson to the department and the cause of education generally, and to wish him a happy period of retirement. The Director of Education, Mr. Murray Little, will retire on the 31st December. It was decided that applications for the directorship should be called throughout Australia. A number of applications have been received and a decision may be expected in the near future. Mr. Little will retire from the service with a considerable record of achievement behind him. He has served in many capacities in many places and has done much in the difficult times which have ensued, since his appointment as Director towards the end of the war, to further the cause of education in this State. His successor will face, however, considerable problems both in administration and the need for changes in the light of changing circumstances.

At this stage I say that of the increased amount on the Estimates approximately £80,000 has been set aside to provide for the increased classification of salaries, while the more serious adjustments of special amounts will absorb an additional £30,000, but that does not take into consideration the probable effect of any Industrial Arbitration Court decision which may be made in respect of an increase in the basic wage during December which, I think, we all anticipate. So it has to be expected that the figure for salaries will, in consequence, be rather substantially increased.

I said, in answer to a question, I think by the member for Cottesloe a few days ago, that the department had under consideration a scheme for craft instruction

for boys in primary schools on a parallel to the existing organisation for sewing for girls. It is hoped the scheme will be put into operation at the beginning of next year. The proposal is to conduct an annual three-term course the first of which—"the measure and make"—will be followed by two optional crafts, e.g., bookcraft and weaving or leathercraft and modelling, etc. The estimated initial cost of equipment is £18,000 which covers the purchase of 94 kits for large schools, 800 kits for small schools and 94 kits for special crafts. The recurring annual expenditure for material is estimated at £12,750. Handcraft has not hitherto been given the attention which the training of hand and eye requires, principally because of the department's inadequate issue of free stock in respect of tools and materials. It is hoped that the introduction of this, if it can be brought about—which I expect it will—will considerably improve the position of boys in primary schools.

During the year a further hostel for high school children was opened at Albany. There the Government was fortunate in being able to take possession of Government property known as "The Rocks" but was obliged to spend, I think, a sum of £3,000 or £4,000 on adjustments and improvements mainly to the ablution block and so forth, to lease it to the Country Women's Association for the accommodation of approximately 32 high school girls. Prior to that time there was the very great difficulty in Albany in obtaining accommodation for these young people, and the Country Women's Association expressed itself as willing to undertake the responsibility of these premises if they could be provided for this purpose. There was a tenant in "The Rocks" at the time and therefore there was some delay before vacant possession could be obtained. But if I remember rightly, the hostel was open for business some four months ago and today is filling a want which I do not think we could have dispensed with.

I remember one of the first things I undertook as Minister for Education somewhere about June or July in 1947, was an excursion with the Director of Education to Albany in connection with this very purpose. At that time "The Rocks" was not seriously considered as a possibility. More attention was paid—and we made an inspection—to the huts at the fort in Albany, if I remember rightly but, owing to the various difficulties, mainly, I think, because they were too out of the way for that purpose, and in addition, because of the difficulties with the Commonwealth in regard to the use of the premises, nothing came of the idea. So even at that time it was quite apparent that there was some demand for such premises at Albany, and latterly that demand became more pressing, with the result that some steps had to be taken.

There have been suggestions that further hostel accommodation will have to be provided at various other places. Those obstacles can be jumped when one comes to them, but it is not possible, I would say, at present to build premises for such a purpose if suitable accommodation at not too great a cost can be obtained, and if suitable people can be found to manage them and, if there is actually a sound demand for the facilities thus provided, the department would be prepared to give consideration to the provision of further premises elsewhere.

Mr. J. Hegney: Is there a hostel at Mandurah?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Not that I know of.

Mr. J. Hegney: There is one at Bridgetown, I think.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, that is run by the Country Women's Association. It was formerly known as "Sandridge," but now it is in fact in the premises known as the Goldfields Fresh Air League. There is a proposal from the Country Women's Association, in view of the increased waiting list at that centre, that there should be an expansion of these premises, but I have nothing definite to say on that subject yet, because there is no final request for determination. I have given a brief review of the major concerns of the department during the year, and made reference to some of its expectations in the future, and I have pleasure in moving the Vote.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (Melville) [9.58]: The Minister for Education, as has been his wont, has given quite an interesting and fairly full account of the activities of his department, and I must say that I do not disagree with any of the things which have been done and which, as the Minister has mentioned, are being contemplated. I think the Minister and the Government must have a proper appreciation now of the difficulties confronting their predecessors, and how unfair their criticism was when they were on the hustings in 1946, when we were subjected to very stringent criticism because of the shortage of teachers, shortage of accommodation and consequent overcrowding in classrooms. It is no exaggeration to say that classes are larger today, on the average, than they were in 1946. Therefore, we are shorter of teachers today than we were in 1946, and however far we might have been from putting into operation the legislation providing for the extension of the school-leaving age to 15 years in 1946, we are even further away today. So it is well to get those matters firmly fixed in our mind before we start to look for reasons and explanations. Those are indubitable facts. Not only are numbers in classrooms greater today than they were in

1946, but also, they are much greater. Not only are we experiencing a shortage of teachers, but the shortage is more acute than it was in 1946. I will readily concede that there are explanations for this.

The great demand for housebuilding has made such a call upon the pool of materials that there are not sufficient materials and labour remaining to enable the Government, however desirous it may be, to provide the necessary new schools and additional classrooms. That position will continue for some considerable time. We cannot bring large numbers of people into the country, particularly those who already have families and will increase them when they reach here, without realising that their being here will put considerable pressure on the school accommodation problem and make it necessary for additional schools and classrooms to be provided. That is the situation confronting us and we are likely to have that difficult for a number of years to come.

The Minister outlined proposals for the establishment of additional post-primary classes in country districts, but he cannot establish them without the necessary accommodation and teachers. If the Minister reduces the number previously regarded as necessary to justify the establishment of such classes, he can do it only at the expense of some other areas. That is so because he has no method whereby he can divide one teacher into two. There is no hope for the Minister in that respect, unless he can step up the recruitment of teachers, which is sadly lagging. This is the most disquieting side of the education system in Western Australia. The whole system will fall to the ground if there is not a continuous and adequate supply of teachers. We can have the most palatial classrooms in greater numbers but, if we have not teachers to work in them, however grandiloquent one's schemes may be they are foredoomed to failure.

Progress depends absolutely upon having a sufficient number of properly trained teachers to carry out the programme, and that problem is not peculiar to Western Australia. It is the experience everywhere. Special problems require special measures. We must get off the beaten track and try something else. If we were engaged in war and needed a certain number of pilots to be able to man the aeroplanes which the high command told us were necessary to put into action, we would get those pilots. We would adopt one scheme and then another until we obtained them; and that is precisely what we have to do in regard to teachers.

Mr. Yates: You would still be short in the meantime, and that is the position now.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister did not indicate what was done in that direction beyond a few references to the Deputy Director having addressed some students and to a few scholarships being provided. All that would help, but could not obtain the results that are necessary. The Minister cannot be happy about the situation. If he is, the outlook is bad. I would hope and expect him, as I would myself if I were in his position, to be very unhappy about the present situation.

The Minister for Education: There is, of course, concern about it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: There must be. We must do everything we possibly can to solve the problem, because for the Education Department it is the No. 1 priority. It is the very basis of the whole system. We can have schemes for the education of the deaf, the subnormal and the blind; proposals for alterations to the curriculum; proposals for reducing the size of classes—they all depend upon having the requisite number of properly trained teachers to put such schemes into operation. Everything is dependent upon that factor. If we are to get anywhere with an improvement—no-one would be satisfied with the existing state of affairs—we must go out and try everything we can to get the necessary teachers. I suggest to the Government that it immediately looks about, in the teaching service or outside of it, for a few recruiting officers, male and female.

I want men and women selected who have special qualifications for the job, outstanding personalities, complete knowledge of the teaching profession, ability to become friendly very quickly with children and to gain their confidence. I would not care what we paid them in salaries. If we paid each £2,000 a year, it would be money well spent if we could get the right men and women whose job it would be to recruit the necessary teachers. We should fix the target and tell the people selected that we must have so many recruits each year. We should tell them that if they had any proposals to step up recruitment, they should bring them to us. If we regarded them as helpful, we would meet whatever expenditure was involved. We should tell them that their job was to get teachers, because teachers we must have. I think if we could get the right men and women, they could go to the children in the post-primary courses, even though they would be four or five years younger than are those required as monitors, and could make them feel that the teaching profession is worth while and that we must have teachers in the interests of the community generally, we should get some results. If we were to bring that prominently before the children, and make the way easy for them by providing book allowances or scholarships or other training, paying their travelling allowances and anything that is necessary to get them, it would be worth while.

It is no good saying that we did not get teachers this year or last year; we have simply got to get them! If we do not, in three or four years' time we shall be in such a hopeless mess regarding the staffing of our schools that the education system as a whole will be chaotic. Children are coming on in increasing numbers. The Government is doing its best to increase the number of schools and classrooms to provide for them, but what is the good of all that if we have no teachers to instruct the children? So it is that we must ensure a steady stream of recruits enabling a sufficient number of teachers to come forward. If we find that competition is experienced from banks or commercial houses, we must meet it. It is no good sitting down and saying that it is just too bad, that the banks and commercial houses want the young people. That may be the situation, but it is no good accepting it. We must go out in competition with them, for we must have plenty of teachers.

I hope the Minister will do more than he has started to do, so far, and that he will not let up on this problem until he can see that the required number of teachers are coming forward and that future recruitments are assured. I would like more attention given to that subject than has been apparent hitherto. In Victoria, the authorities have done much better because they went out earlier for their teachers. If that can be done in Victoria, we can do it here. The inability to recruit the requisite number of teachers and to keep up with the demand for extra accommodation has brought about the disabilities apparent in the profession.

I have been a lifelong opponent to the taking of children into our schools in two batches. I cannot see the sense of it. We have had regulations for years which provided that we can admit a certain number of children who turn six in the first half of the year whose birthdays fall before the end of June. If they come between the 1st July and the 31st December, we will only admit them to school in the second half of the year. That has had results very detrimental to the children and the teachers concerned. This method of admitting children in two batches merely puts off the evil day for a few months. If there are in the State 5,000 children of an age necessary for them to commence schooling, and 2,500 of them turn six in the first part of the year and 2,500 turn six in the second half, at the end of June we have the whole 5,000 in the schools for the year. We cannot escape that number, and we have to accommodate them all at some time during the year. If that is the position, why not admit them in February? We still have only the same number and we gain the advantage that we do not have to accelerate children whom we deliberately retard for six months, which is what goes on; and we do not have to make the teachers commence a year's curriculum twice in one year.

In some schools, because of the difficulty where numbers are large, children who are admitted in July slip back. They mark time and they are no further forward than the children who do not commence school until six months later. The bright children who are admitted in July are accelerated to catch up with the children who were admitted in February. That is bad for such children, because we are saying to the younger ones, "You catch up with those children who are six months older than you," after having given them six months' start in the school. We should avoid that at all costs. If we refer the problem to the headmasters or to the teachers, we find they all say that even though it means overcrowding, they would prefer to have the children in the February term, instead of making them wait until July.

The departmental view sometimes is that the extra few months gives them a longer time to provide the accommodation necessary, but I have not seen that argument borne out very much in practice. In those places where children have been obliged to stay home for a further six months, there have been very few instances where, in the meantime, the necessary additional accommodation has been provided for them. As a rule, it is not provided until long after those children are admitted in the July period. Until we get those extra classrooms, those additional schools and those extra teachers, we will have overcrowded classrooms, and these over-large classes which in some cases, as the Minister must know, exceed 70 children in number.

The Minister for Education: There are a few.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, and I know where a few are. That is a tremendous number for any teacher to be loaded with.

The Minister for Education: We are trying to get rid of them.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No teacher can do justice to the children in his charge if he is expected to teach day after day numbers as large as that. We come down by various stages from 70 to 60 and to 50. When I point out that the Liberal propaganda was for classes no larger than 25, it will be seen just where we are in relation to the objective which the Liberal Party placed before the people in 1946. It will be many years—we will all be dead—before classes in primary schools are reduced to 25; but we must aim at a considerable reduction as quickly as possible. The new buildings with which the department is experimenting will, to a very large extent, relieve the position in certain districts and we will await the results to see just how they will work out.

I was greatly concerned, however, when I was reading some few months ago about the use of aluminium classrooms in England, to discover that their life was much less than had been anticipated and that maintenance was terribly high. We may find that a big difficulty if we go in for any large numbers of such buildings. I had hoped that those buildings would enable us to catch up more quickly, but there is quite a possibility that the rigours of the climate will make maintenance a very difficult problem and we may find that these buildings will not last very long, will be costly to maintain and will have to be replaced. However, I suppose we cannot do anything else than experiment with a few.

I was interested in the Minister's statement about the establishment of a school for spastic children. We made a start in this State quite a long while ago with regard to the education of spastic children at the Children's Hospital and built a special school there for the purpose, having in charge a teacher peculiarly well fitted for the job. I understand that the department assisted that teacher, Miss Morrisby, to go to England for the purpose of observing the latest methods in teaching spastic children. I have not seen much evidence of the department's making use of her extra knowledge since she has returned.

It seems to me to be a waste if the fullest advantage is not taken of additional knowledge acquired by a teacher when that teacher is assisted to go away for the purpose of getting more experience and knowledge; and that is a matter to which the Minister might give personal attention with the idea of making a far wider use of Miss Morrisby's services. They must be more valuable now than before she went away. I can speak from personal knowledge of her ability because she is an outstanding teacher in this regard. If the Minister has any doubt, he need only talk to the doctor in charge and the matron at the Children's Hospital, and he will realise what a wonderful contribution she has made towards the recovery of children.

The Minister for Education: I have no doubt of her ability.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: All right! She is a woman who would be able to profit to the maximum from her experience in England, and I feel that very extensive use should be made of her knowledge and experience now that she has returned. But so far as I know she is doing much the same job as she did before.

I am sorry that the Minister has not made some move towards following what is no longer an experiment but what has proved to be advantageous to the educational system. I refer to the gradual elimination of the examination method. Education does not mean passing examinations, and we have been tied to the examination system for far too long. Every year we have these scholarship examinations, the junior examinations and the leaving examinations, and we feel that we have to stick to them year after year. In Victoria, Tasmania and New Zealand they have tried to dispense with examinations at certain levels with much success.

I am advised, and I inquired very carefully into this, that in Victoria students who go to the university from accrediting schools and who do not pass examinations for the purpose more than hold their own with those who gain admission through the examination system. They definitely are not inferior in any way. It would require some alteration in the set-up we have had here over the years to bring about this change, and also some education of public opinion, because the examination has become part of a large number of us and we would feel that we had lost something if we did not have an examination for which to sit. But it would not take long to educate the public to the new system, which has been proved to be successful elsewhere and permits of such a change in the type of education that can be given.

Where we have an examination to pass, a curriculum laid down and certain requirements of examiners, teachers will naturally direct their energies towards enabling their pupils to meet the requirements of such examiners and that necessarily must restrict their activity and limit their scope. In countries where they have been able to adopt accrediting instead of examining, a different type of education has developed, with beneficial results. There is more freedom for the teacher and for the children, and I think every one of us will realise that it is not always the youngsters who pass examinations that do well and it is not always the youngsters who fail to pass examinations that do badly.

I have known some who were very poor examination students; who would get an attack of the jitters at the mere thought of an examination; and who would not be able to do themselves justice in such a test. They would have the necessary knowledge—often far more knowledge than others who succeeded in passing examinations—but the thought of sitting for an examination would cause them to get all worked up. Some of them, the nervous type, would get very sick in the stomach and be unable to do themselves justice in the examination room. Life does not consist of being able to pass a series of examinations, and education should not be dependent upon pupils being able to pass them.

There are very few teachers—very few indeed—who could not assess the abilities of pupils in classes if they were asked to do so and who would not be able to assess them accurately. A teacher can tell quite readily the children in the class who are

successful students and those who are not, without requiring an examination to provide the information. So it is time we stepped ahead a bit and got more into line with progressive States and countries in this connection. There are quite a lot of other aspects of education with which I would like to deal but I realise this is a subject upon which a number of members will have something to say; and, further, there are other departments to be discussed before the 7th December, and it would be unfair of me to take up more time than I have already. So I do not propose to do so.

MR. HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [10.30]: I desire to make a few comments on the Education Estimates. I was interested in the Minister's remarks, and found many of them instructive. While there yet remains much to be done in the field of education in this State, I think the Minister is handling the matter in a most capable manner, and any apparent imperfactions cannot be laid at his door. From conversations I have had with many teachers I can say that he has, as the Minister handling the portfolio of Education, impressed the general run of teachers. It is pleasing to note that in recent years there has been a growing public regard for the teaching profession. I can remember the time—and those older than I will remember it even better—when a teacher was looked down on. Instead of being given a high rating as a profession, teaching was regarded as being somewhere between a trade and a profession, and an occupation in which anyone might find a place.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That must have been a long time ago.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I do not think so. In recent years there has certainly been a growing regard for the worth of education generally, and teachers in particular. I noted with interest the remarks of the member for Melville when he said that teachers were the basis of education, and that upon them more so than upon any other factor depended the education of our future generations. It is rather disturbing to realise that we are faced with a teacher shortage. It can be justly said that there is not one class in the State without a teacher, but, of course, as has been stated before in this Chamber, there are many teachers who have almost insuperable difficulties, with regard to the size of their classes, to overcome. The Minister gave some facts as to the output of new teachers from the Training College. The estimated output for this year is in the vicinity of 230, which represents a gain over losses of about 95.

Mr. J. Hegney: Are some of them rehabilitated students?

The Minister for Education: Some are, but not a large proportion. It is not nearly as large as last year.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: They are just about finished, are they not?

The Minister for Education: Yes.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: The intake of monitors in 1949 was 130 and in 1950 it increased to 160. The fact that there is an increased output of new teachers from the Training College and an increase in the number of monitors offering for service in the department in the present year is pleasing, but it must be remembered that these additional teachers and trainee teachers will most probably be inadequate to cope with the increased numbers of children now flowing into our primary schools.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The increase you talk about is more apparent than real. There are fewer trainees at the Training College today than in 1946.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I am prepared to concede that point. I have not the figures with me, but I am quite willing to believe that what the hon. member says is true. At the same time, there has been a lift in the present year. I do not feel that the increase will be sufficient to cope with the added number of children going into the primary schools. The extra enrolments are due to natural increase and to the large number of children who have immigrated here with their families. The point about the increased numbers is this, that we must not forget that there is a general desire, difficult though it may be of fulfilment, to decrease the size of classes so as to give, what might be termed colloquially, a fair go to the teacher.

We could talk generally on the subject of teacher shortage for some time, but I imagine there are two solutions. One which has received some prominence, is that salaries must be increased, despite the fact that some people seem to regard increased salaries for teachers with alarm. But as the member for Melville pointed out, when it is found that business firms, banks and other commercial enterprises can offer bright intelligent young people, salaries in excess of what the teachers in the Education Department receive, it is not to be wondered at that these young people perhaps forgo a desire to become teachers for the sake of the higher remuneration. I believe we must compete in this matter with the commercial firms. The other solution is that there should be some increased amenities given to teachers.

This point has not received great prominence, but if it were agreed to it would attract teachers into the department. Perhaps it would not so much attract them as retain them. If their comfort in the schools was considered more, and better quarters and living conditions provided in the outback areas, I feel that the numbers of teachers who annually give up their profession would definitely lessen. Those are two solutions of our teacher shortage

problem. The Minister might well convene a round table conference to which he could invite representatives from the union, the administrative section of the department, the inspectorial staff, the Teachers' Training College, and any other sections of the department which he felt would give some constructive thought to the problem of teacher recruitment, and at that conference the problem could be thrashed out to the mutual benefit of all. The Minister may one day adopt that suggestion.

A fact I neglected to mention, when speaking about teachers, is that today their task is made more difficult by having in their large-sized classes a number of new Australians with a most immature knowledge of our tongue. The teaching of these youngsters calls for considerable individual tuition. When a class is so large that individual tuition is impossible then the education of all suffers, but particularly that of the young new Australian.

I was pleased to note in the Minister's remarks a further reference to the fact that an attempt is to be made to provide handicraft work for boys in primary schools. This subject has been a thorny one for many years. The fact that it is being tackled shows that the Minister is fully aware that there has been a decided lack in the education of these boys. I do not know whether the scheme enunciated by him will be put into operation within a short time, and I do not even know whether financial arrangements are made for it in this year's Estimates, but I trust that the Treasurer will approve the sum required for this vital need in the school curriculum.

Another important point made by the Minister, and on which I would like to comment, is that dealing with the granting of a remote allowance to those in the distant country centres. That is something which must receive the commendation of all thinking people. Just as there are Goldfields allowances and North-West allowances, so thinking people will realise that there are outback places in the South-West of our State where the teachers suffer great disabilities owing to the distance from the amenities of life, and allowances should be made accordingly.

Finally, I want to touch on one or two matters affecting my own electorate. I am moderately content with the treatment afforded to the State schools in my electorate and two of them, the Mosman Park State school and the North Cottesloe State school, had work commenced upon them a few months back. This covered new classrooms, inside renovations and the bitumenisation of playgrounds. However, there is one disappointing feature in relation to the North Cottesloe school. The original plans submitted by the Architectural Division of the Public Works Department contained provision for a head teacher's room and a storeroom plus an entrance hall. That would have made the old head teacher's office available as a staff room, a room that is not in evidence at the school at present. However, the Minister in his wisdom, or the Education Department, decided that that plan would have to be altered and the head teacher's office, storeroom and entrance hall have been omitted. I am disappointed about that because I had hoped that the school would be provided with a staff room. Teachers must have amenities in schools so that they can retain their interest in the profession. I do not know whether the present plan can be altered but it is disappointing to the staff of the school and the Parents and Citizens' Association in the area.

Several years ago the interior of the Cottesloe school was renovated and its playground bituminised. Unfortunately, the private contractor who did the interior renovations has had his work spoilt because there has been a shortage of iron roofing and guttering. This shortage has prevented the Public Works Department from repairing the roof and guttering and a most definite blotchiness, or patchiness, of dirt on the walls of the classrooms has become evident. I am led to believe that that will be fixed up in the process of time.

During the last couple of months work has commenced at the Mosman Park school on the construction of new classrooms. Unfortunately, the work has been in abeyance for some three or four weeks owing to the shortage of material. Generally speaking, I am pleased with the work done in my electorate and I feel that the Minister has done and is doing a good job.

Progress reported.

BILL—FAUNA PROTECTION.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it insisted on its amendment No. 5.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray) I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 3 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.52 p.m.